



• EVERY MEAL •

— Tells A —

STORY

• A FAMILY COOKBOOK •

by Vicki Salton

Acknowledgements

Thank you to . . .

My mom, Glenna Lamma, for indulging my desire to learn to cook at a young age. Although you always worked outside our home, and cooked all the meals, you were never too busy to show me how you made things, even though you rarely used a recipe for anything you cooked. (I'll never forget the "French Fudge" for a school project.) I have always aspired to be as good a cook as you are.

My dad, Bobby Lamma, who taught me that everything you do, you do well or not at all, and that you finish what you start. These qualities proved essential in getting this book finished.

My mother-in-law, Ruth Salton for teaching me to cook some of your specialities, and sharing your intriguing life stories while doing so. A special thanks to you for painting the cover picture. You and George have always treated me with love and respect and have welcomed me into your home and to your table for holidays or just everyday dinners. I love our conversations about cooking and different ways of cooking.

My children and their spouses, Matt Vecchio, Ben Salton, Josh Salton, Charlie Vecchio, Barb Vecchio, Joe Vecchio, Susie Vecchio, Sara Frank, and Hayden Frank. You have been the reason I love to cook meals and present them in an interesting way. You inspire to be the best cook I can be, and I applaud your willingness to try any and everything, both at home, and when we travel. Without your willingness to eat, cooking wouldn't be any fun! I wouldn't have put this book together without your continued encouragement. You've made me feel that it was a worthy project.

My handful of close friends, who I consider and love like family, for sharing in life's simple pleasures of eating, drinking and celebrating.

Caroline Wizeman Gerenyi for the cover design. I would have been lost at the end without your creative genius.

Last but certainly not least, the BF, Alan Salton, for putting up with years of me holding up meals so that I could take pictures, for stopping whatever you were doing to come to the kitchen and photograph me rolling pie dough or stuffing a turkey or whatever task I was trying to document at the time. I really appreciate all the hours you proofread for me, even though I kept pointing out things you missed, and for brainstorming on our walks to try to come up with a title for this. Thanks for being my partner, not only in this cookbook project, but on the road of life.

I know on the surface this is just a compilation of family recipes, but I hope that it will be more than that to each of you. As you see all the pictures of us eating and celebrating, I hope you'll know that every meal we've shared really does tell a story.

Foreword

by Matt Vecchio

I have been eating my whole life.

Filet and Béarnaise Sauce. Crème Brûlée. Meatloaf and Mac. Chicken and Cream Cheese.

To be brief, I was always spoiled with my exposure to exceptional cooks. It took a simple college culinary disaster to realize this. A freshman at Radford University, I stared at the pack of E-Z Mac in my hand. This was a far cry from the golden-crust-topped Mac-and-Cheese of my youth. I started to miss home (I also forgot to add water and nearly burned down my dorm with the microwave, but that's a foreword for another book).

My mom rarely looks as happy as when she's in the kitchen – spatula in hand – working multiple pots on the fly. We're often “encouraged” to join in and cut or stir something. Some of our best conversations as a family have taken place while prepping a meal in the kitchen.

Food is just one of those common bonds that all people share. But there's a lot that goes into every meal. Creativity, thought and ingenuity. Time and effort. Patience and consistency.

Food is fuel. But cooking is love.

My mom loves to cook. But – more so – she loves to share that love with all of her “eaters” out there. As you enjoy this cookbook, take a minute to appreciate your final creation. Eat slowly and embrace the tastes. Acknowledge the effort and love that goes into making and presenting a great dish. That's all mom has ever wanted.

Introduction



"DINING WITH ONE'S FRIENDS AND BELOVED FAMILY IS CERTAINLY ONE OF LIFE'S PRIMAL AND MOST INNOCENT DELIGHTS, ONE THAT IS BOTH SOUL-SATISFYING AND ETERNAL."

-JULIA CHILD

Several years ago I decided I would put together a collection of recipes that I have cooked for my family through the years, and try to create a cookbook that I could pass along to my kids. Was this precipitated by calls asking how I make macaroni and cheese or spaghetti sauce or

how to poach an egg? Or was it because I now had this big box of disorganized recipes that I have been collecting since I started to cook when I was just a young girl myself? Or does the fact that I've gotten older - and am more apt to reminisce - remind me of my own

childhood and its connection to food? I'm not sure exactly what started me down this path, but as I've been working on it, it certainly has brought back memories reminding me of a lot of joyous occasions in my life surrounded by family, good food and lively drink.



For those of us who love to cook, it goes so much deeper than just preparing a meal. We are not just preparing food, we are creating memories.



Some of my earliest and most cherished memories involve people getting together and eating. Both of my parents came from large families and there always seemed to be some kind of picnic or get together where everyone brought their best dish to share. Now this particular pot luck style of eating is not for everyone, but I will admit I have always loved the opportunity to see and taste what other people were cooking.

Pop culture influenced my cooking just as it does yours today. In the 1960s, I watched Julia Child's cooking show and wondered if I could ever make Beef Bourguignon when I grew up (I can and do) and did I really want to be able to make a salmon mold? (No!) In the 1970s, I watched "The Galloping Gourmet" who spent more time drinking wine than he did

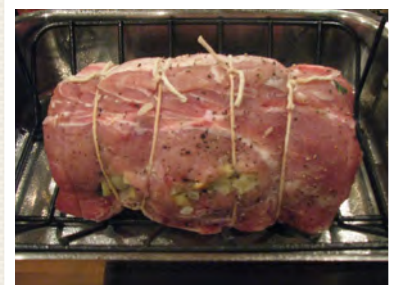
cooking, and of course in the 1980s, I bought Martha Stewart cookbooks, watched her cook on TV and longed to have her innate sense of creativity with food and decorating (although not insider trading).

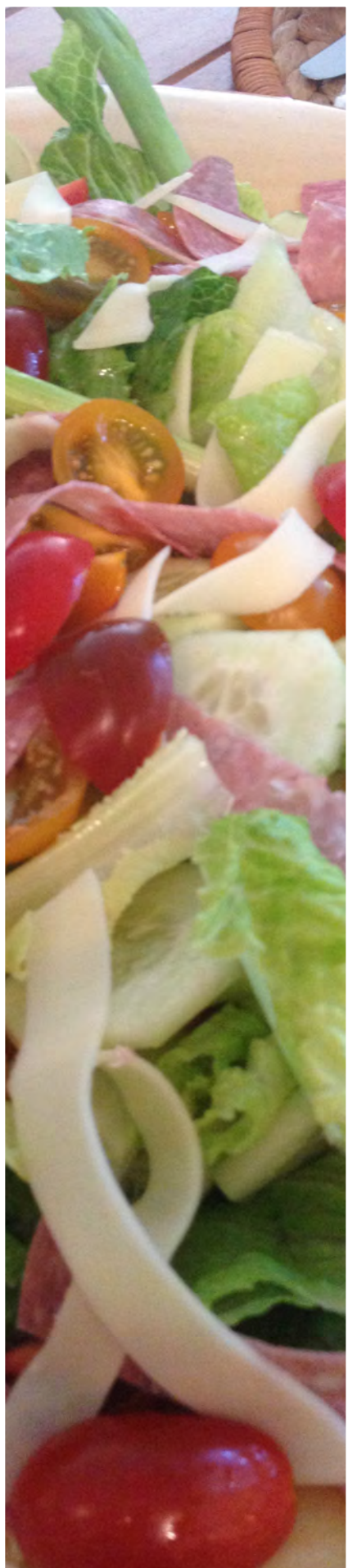
When I was growing up, we very rarely ate a meal out. My parents always had a garden, usually several - a potato patch, a strawberry patch, and a vegetable garden. You can be sure my brother and I didn't like pulling weeds or planting seeds or pulling carrots or picking beans, but we did reap the benefits of eating fresh foods. We also got to experience raising chickens and eventually plucking them, as well as butchering hogs and cows. My grandparents had big gardens and both of my grandfathers raised hogs. My mom and both of my grandmothers cooked



Use fresh ingredients . . . contrasting colors, textures, and flavors.

and baked fresh bread and canned fruits and vegetables, and made their own jellies. At the time I thought that all meant we were “country folks,” sort of poor even, but as I started to get older I came to realize how fortunate I was to be exposed to lots of foods . . . real foods that were fresh and preservative free, and made with love. I learned to set a proper table by researching it in some old encyclopedias we had, and I would practice setting the table complete with candlelight. My dad would make fun of the candles, but I think he secretly liked them and I have told my own kids that you haven’t finished setting the table unless there are candles on it. I learned many skills from my family that I would not otherwise have, like the basic art of making strawberry preserves or cranking the homemade ice cream maker, how to beat egg whites into a stiff meringue, how to make a flaky pie crust from scratch or how to sharpen a knife. Now that doesn’t mean for a minute that I’m not the first one rushing out to Williams-Sonoma to buy some newfangled kitchen gadget that makes many of these tasks simpler. I will also readily admit that I have often bought pre-made pie crusts, used an electric ice cream maker, have all kinds of pasta making gadgets for my industrial Kitchen-Aid mixer, and usually waited until my dad visited so he can sharpen my knives. Rather, what it does mean is that I have a sincere appreciation for the artistry that is cooking. Julia Child said, “Non cooks think it’s silly to invest two hours’ work in two minutes’ enjoyment; but if cooking is evanescent, so is the ballet.” There have been many Thanksgivings when I looked around at the mound of dirty dishes waiting to be cleaned and wondered if that meal preparation meant anything to its participants. By my kids requesting I put together this cookbook, I am assuming it did.





AL



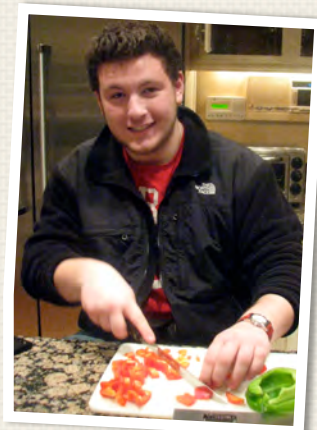
“Meal times are always special in our house. We would all gather in the kitchen, do our part in preparing the meal, tease each other, laugh and have fun. Then we would sit around the table, enjoy a meal and a glass of wine and create new memories we would talk about for years. These times are what these recipes are really about.”

SUSIE



“I’ve always loved cooking. It’s something I remember doing with my mom all the time when I was growing up. I remember watching her make dinners and asking if I could help, making Christmas cookies and cooking Thanksgiving dinner. We also used to spend a day in the fall with my Grandma after apple picking making her famous apple pie (she never used a recipe, but it always turned out perfect). Now it’s nice to spend time with Joe cooking at home. It’s fun to test out different recipes and try new foods. I love having something to do together that we both really enjoy!”

JOSH



“I’ve always loved to eat, but I didn’t love food until I met Vicki. I preferred Popeyes to a home cooked meal; since then I’ve found myself saying that I prefer Vicki’s homemade crème brulée to that of a five star French restaurant. Vicki showed me that the best meals are the ones you (help) make in the kitchen. Although I’m still barely a subpar chef, I am now a master eater.”

SARA



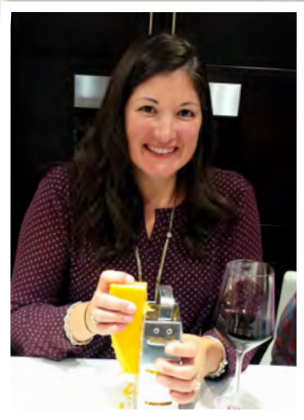
“We would get soooo excited when Vicki would make us milkshakes in Colorado. We were so happy and because they were from her made them the best we'd ever tasted! I remember running around the kitchen in anticipation!!!!”

I have so many memories of cooking, eating and sitting around in the kitchen with family and friends, talking about all kinds of things while anticipating the taste of what's about to be served. I still walk into my parents' house and walk right over to the stove and taste something my mom is cooking. I can recall the aroma wafting through the house when my mom was making jelly as if it were yesterday.

“I LOVE TO COOK WITH WINE . . . SOMETIMES I EVEN PUT IT IN THE FOOD.”

- WC FIELDS

BARB



“We have had so many memories over the years with the Salton-Vecchio crew. Memories of Italy, Turkey Bowls, our Valentine's Weekend Celebration and many more. These memories are near and dear to my heart. They are each unique yet they all have one thing in common. All of these memories involve food and most of them include cooking delicious food in Vicki and Al's kitchen.”

While putting together recipes for this book, I was going through pictures and many that I came across were taken in the kitchen . . . my grandmother's or my mother's or my own. I started thinking that that is one way an older generation gives way to the younger one, by preserving some of these mealtime traditions, by nourishing each of you with food and with love.

BEN



“I never really had an interest in cooking until hanging out with Vicki and really paying attention to what she was doing in the kitchen. The science and art of creating one finished delicious product from lots of pieces was so interesting (plus, who doesn't love to eat?). Now, I cook every night I have time to, watch cooking shows and am always looking for new things to make.”

For those of us who love to cook, it goes so much deeper than just preparing a meal. We are not just preparing food, we are creating memories. We can demonstrate love for someone by cooking their favorite dish; we can nudge someone to be more adventurous and open minded by getting them to try new foods; we can teach them George Bernard Shaw quotes

at the dinner table - all over food we love.

I have discovered through the years what I believe to be some key elements to cooking: first and foremost are the ingredients, and the fresher they are the better the dish you're cooking will be. Secondly, pay attention to the appearance of what you're serving by combining contrasting colors and textures and flavors of foods, and take just an extra minute or two on the presentation of what you're serving your guests and your family. You may think they won't notice, but I guarantee they will. Because "we eat with our eyes," everyone enjoys eating food that looks good. And if you're going to have to cook for the rest of your lives, you might as well make it fun.

"ONE CANNOT THINK WELL, LOVE WELL, SLEEP WELL IF ONE HAS NOT DINED WELL."
- VIRGINIA WOOLF

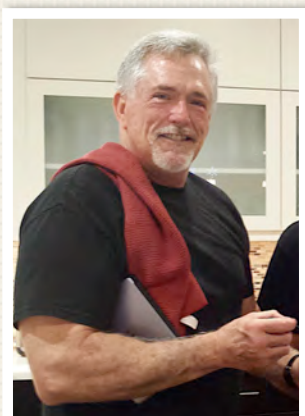
Focus on building your repertoire of basic dishes and then try a new dish or two every week, trying different themes. Some new dishes will be keepers and others will be ones you will never cook again. Invite friends over and give everyone a task in the kitchen, because we all know the kitchen really is the heart of the home and where everyone is most comfortable hanging out.

CHARLIE



"I remember always wanting pizza when we would come to visit and Vicki would always refuse to let us get pizza and always made us try something new. I remember the first time I had her chicken cordon bleu I was shocked how amazing it was and now it is one of my favorite meals."

JOHN



"One of my favorite memories is when we spent several days up in Sonoma after Drew and I were married. Visiting vineyards and choosing wine, shopping for food and preparing our meals together was the perfect way to celebrate one of the most joyous moments of our lives. From California to Virginia to Provence, sharing these family times over meals we create together is something we always look forward to and will never forget."

JOE



"I remember always getting really excited when Vicki would crack eggs on our heads. I would always get scared I would get yolk on my head but magically I never did. I also remember eating potato pancakes, I had never heard of them before but I remember them being very good."



DREW

"I've been blessed most of my life to have really great cooks around me...and eating great food and drinking excellent wine have been top pleasures in my life...the coming together of dear friends and loved ones over tasting food, smelling food cooking, tasting great wine provides a connection between us that then is unbroken over decades.

Watching Vicki and Al and John cook a meal and then eating it with them, or dining together in other places in the world with their children and their wives or girlfriends has given me many hours of gustatory joy, laughter, and fond memories that will last a lifetime."

I've organized this cookbook by seasons as that tends to be the way I eat and cook. I make soups and robust slow cooker dishes in the winter, and eat lots of salads and grilled meats in the summer, and of course, there are those holiday specialties. Cooking by season keeps your menus varied and gives you the opportunity to buy and cook with foods when they are in season.

I smile thinking of how many times we sat down to dinner, and I had to stop everyone so that I could take pictures of the food before we dug in, or I had to call Al to run in the kitchen and photograph me in the process of making something so that I could include "how to" pictures. I was looking through the thousands of photos of food recently, and was surprised to see that I have been taking pictures of things we cook since at least 2005. I've been photographing what I cook since starting this project, so that means I've been working on this cookbook for ten years. This is particularly amazing when you consider Tolstoy wrote his epic novel, *War and Peace*, in only six years!



MATT

"We had some great times in the family kitchen. One of the most memorable parts of growing up was putting Al's little spice on the meals my mom's been cooking since I was a tot. *Weeknight Pasta*, despite its ease, became one of my favorite dishes. But let's be honest, not even 'Saucemaster Al' can topple the culinary beacon that is Chicken and Cream Cheese."

My cooking was very limited in the early months of 2014 as our French Country kitchen was gutted to the core, and our new sleek, modern German kitchen became a reality. It only seems right to include some photos of it here. I'm sure there will be many memories made in the new kitchen just as in the old one.

I love nothing more than standing at the helm of my kitchen - in front of the stove - with a glass of red wine in my hand, creating a meal for people I care about. I am excited to share this compilation of recipes and some of the memories associated with them with you all.

I will reiterate that this is not meant to be a book show casing what Al and I can cook. In fact, most of the recipes are basic and simple and easy enough for a beginner, but still considered "heirloom recipes," many of which I received from my grandmother or mom or mother-in-law or daughter or son or friend or random person along the way, and that I can now pass on to you. I encourage you to use these recipes as a guide and put your own twist on them.

THE NEW KITCHEN



I decided to assemble this book in a ring binder so that we can periodically add new recipes (or replace pages in the event corrections are required). I also wanted it to be functional, and lie flat when opened to a recipe. All the pictures in this book are from real dishes we've cooked over the years. Actually, most of them have been taken with my phone which I keep with me in the kitchen so I can capture various steps in the cooking process.

As you continue to build your adult lives and your families and your own culinary traditions, I hope we can continue to share life's abundant experiences together . . . over delicious food and maybe a glass or two of wine. Now go cook something!

Bon appétit . . . いただきます . . . Guten appetit . . . Buon appetito!

Vic's 10 Rules Of Cooking:

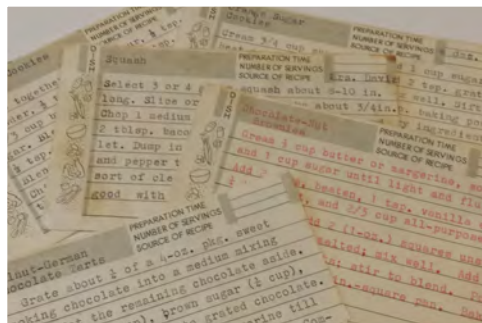
1. Use Fresh Ingredients
2. Presentation Counts
3. Complement & Contrast
4. Only Cook With Wine That You Would Drink
5. Quality, Not Quantity
6. Be Open Minded
7. Variety Variety Variety
8. Experimentation Is Good
9. Set A Nice Table
10. Cooking Is An Art Not A Science

Bonus - Know A Lot Of George Bernard Shaw Quotes



"THERE IS NO SINCERER LOVE THAN THE LOVE OF FOOD."

- GEORGE BERNARD SHAW





Spring



Spring brings holiday celebrations like Easter and Passover, and when spring arrives, I tend to start cooking lighter. Pasta dishes are now made with a little olive oil instead of heavy sauces; fresh strawberries are in season; and of course, it's time to fire up the grill.

Grilled lamb chops, salmon, and salads, often eaten al fresco, define the season. Fresh fruits and vegetables will begin to become more abundant, so take advantage of these ingredients in your cooking.

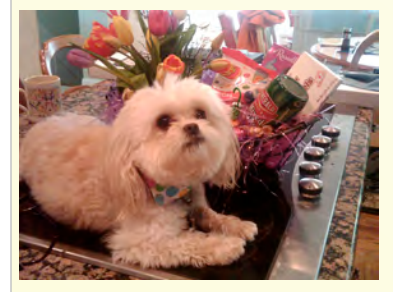
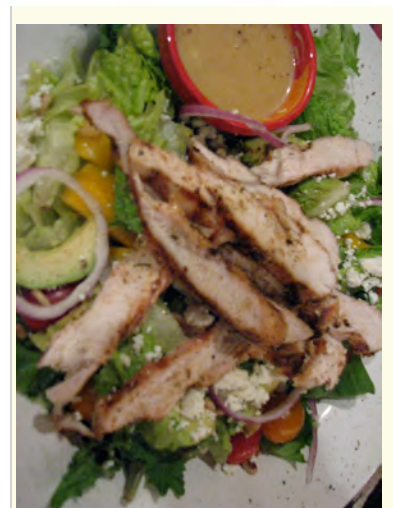


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Measuring Tools & Techniques



Some cooks measure everything, and others, like my mom, never measure ingredients when they cook. When baking though, it's much more important to carefully measure your ingredients to ensure consistent cooking results.

If you cook at all, I would recommend at a minimum, investing in a set of metal measuring cups and spoons. Measuring cups usually come in a set of 1/4 cup, 1/3 cup, 1/2 cup and 1 cup, and are designed for measuring dry ingredients as they allow you to level the ingredient with the top of the cup for accurate measurement. I use mine for both dry and liquid ingredients. Standard measuring spoons are used to measure both liquid and dry ingredients and typically come in sets of 1/4 teaspoon, 1/2 teaspoon, 1 teaspoon, and 1 tablespoon.

Now that you have the proper measuring cups and spoons, it's time to start cooking!

Table of Equivalents

Dash/Pinch = less than 1/8 tsp
3 teaspoons = 1 tablespoon
4 tablespoons = 1/4 cup
2 tablespoons = 1 ounce
1 cup = 16 tablespoons
1 cup = 8 ounces
2 cups = 1 pint
4 cups = 1 quart
1 quart = 32 ounces
1 gallon = 4 quarts
1/4 pound = 4 ounces
1 pound = 16 ounces

Measuring Dry Ingredients

Flour - Fill measuring cup and level off with a knife or spatula. Do not pack down.

White Sugar - Fill cup and level with a knife or spatula.

Brown Sugar - "Pack" or press into cup with your fingers, and level with knife or spatula. Brown Sugar should hold the shape of the cup when it is turned out.

Confectioner's Sugar - Pile lightly into cup and level with knife or spatula.

Measuring Sticky Liquids

Pour honey, molasses or syrup into a measuring cup sprayed with cooking spray. This will make it easier to pour out the liquid and clean the cup.

Ingredients

Onion

1/4 cup chopped

Carrot

1/4 cup shredded

Garlic

1 clove minced

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Fresh Tomatoes

1 lb. peeled, seeded and chopped

Water

1/3 cup

Tomato Paste

2 tablespoons

Fennel Seed

1/8 teaspoon crushed

Fresh Basil

1 tablespoon finely chopped

Salt

1/8 teaspoon

Cracked Black Pepper

1/8 teaspoon + 1/4
teaspoon

Chèvre (Goat Cheese)

6 oz.

Italian Bread Crumbs

1/2 cup

Egg

1 beaten

Goat Cheese Balls



Good food is about so much more than taste, as other components such as color, texture and smell come into play. In this recipe, you have the subtle taste of the chèvre, complemented by the fresh basil and tomato sauce. But it's the texture that really makes these Goat Cheese Balls interesting. A slightly crunchy outer coating gives way to a smooth inside that melts in your mouth.

This dish makes a perfect starter, and adds a touch of elegance without a lot of effort.

1

To make the sauce, cook the onion, carrot, garlic and oil in a small saucepan until the onion is tender, but not brown. Stir in tomatoes, water, tomato paste, salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, and fennel seed. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in basil. Cook an additional 10 minutes, or until desired consistency.

2

Shape chèvre into twelve 1-inch balls. Combine 1/2 teaspoon pepper and bread crumbs. Dip cheese balls into egg and roll in breadcrumbs to coat. On an ungreased cookie sheet, bake in a 425° F oven 4 to 5 minutes, or until soft. Spoon sauce on small plate, place 2-3 cheese balls on top. Sprinkle with fresh basil. Garnish with a sprig of fresh basil.



Cook's Tip:

When using a spice like Fennel Seed, you will want to make sure it is ground really fine. Kenny demonstrates how to use a spice grinder like this one I bought at the Spice Market in Istanbul.



Josh has always loved hanging out in the kitchen with us while we cook.

Fettuccine with Red Pepper Flakes

Ingredients

Garlic

3 cloves minced

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Fresh Italian Parsley

4 tablespoons, minced

Fresh Basil

3 tablespoons, minced

Crushed Red Pepper

1 teaspoon

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 cup, grated

Fettuccini

16-oz.

Salt and Pepper

To taste

Eating pasta reminds us of great times we've had together in Italy as a family.



- 1** Cook fettuccine, with a dash of salt and 1 tablespoon of olive oil, until al dente.
- 2** Sauté garlic in 1 tablespoon of olive oil until golden. Add basil and parsley and cook for 30 seconds.
- 3** Toss cooked fettuccine with skillet mixture, remaining olive oil, red pepper flakes and cheese. Salt and pepper to taste.

Grilled Lamb Chops with Balsamic Reduction



Grilled lamb chops are one of my very favorite meals. The key is to use fresh, good quality chops and add flavors that enhance the meat. If the weather is inclement, or if you don't have access to a grill, just roast the chops in the oven on 375° F for 15 - 20 minutes.

- 1 Mix the garlic, rosemary, lemon peel, olive oil and salt and pepper into a paste. Rub paste onto both sides of the lamb chops.
- 2 Grill the lamb chops on a hot grill until they are cooked to taste - medium rare to medium is best.
- 3 Drizzle some balsamic glaze onto a plate. Arrange the lamb chops with a few sides, such as roasted potatoes and steamed green beans.

Ingredients

Garlic

4 cloves minced

Rosemary

2 tablespoons chopped fresh

Lemon Peel

1 lemon

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Salt & Black Pepper

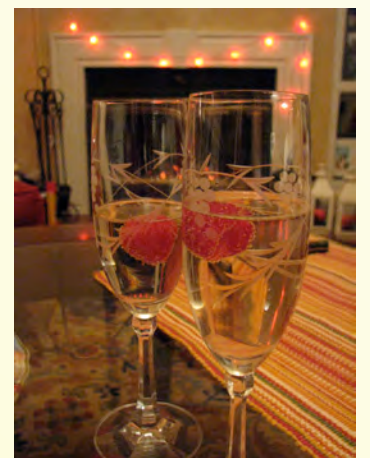
To taste

Lamb Chops

8 - 10



Lamb is a good choice for any romantic dinner as it's not so filling. It's a great choice for Valentine's Day dinner.



Ingredients

Russet Potatoes

2 lbs. peeled and thinly sliced

Heavy Cream

3 cups

Kosher Salt

1 teaspoon

Garlic

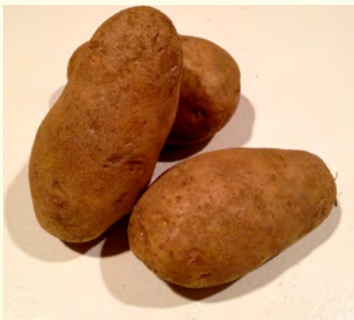
2 cloves peeled and smashed

Gruyère, Emmental or Comté Cheese

1 cup finely shredded



Moreen (shown here with Joris) made her delicious version of these potatoes when they stayed with us for a few weeks.



Cook's Tip:

You can use any type of potatoes, but I find russets or Yukon Golds to be best in this dish.

Potatoes au Gratin



Potatoes “in the cheese” is a classic dish that looks impressive when you serve it, but is really very simple to make. One differentiator for this version is the addition of a little fresh garlic.

Serve as a side to steak, lamb or chicken, using either Gruyère, Emmental, or my personal favorite - Comté cheese.

1

Preheat oven to 400° F. Wash, peel and slice the potatoes. To get the potato slices the same size (so that they cook evenly), use the slicer attachment on the food processor.



2

Put the potatoes in a large heavy saucepan and add the cream, salt, pepper and garlic. Cook the mixture over medium high heat until the cream is boiling, stirring occasionally (very gently with a rubber spatula so you don't break up the slices.) When the cream boils, pour the



mixture into a 3-quart baking dish (or use individual serving size baking

dishes). Shake the dish a bit to let the slices settle and then sprinkle the surface with cheese. Salt and pepper to taste.

3

Bake in the hot oven until the top is deep golden brown, the cream has thickened, and the potatoes are extremely tender when pierced with a knife, about 40 minutes. (Don't worry if the dish looks too liquidy at this point; it will set up as it cools a bit.



Al, Ben & Josh do a little dance while I cook.



Matt and Hannah spend some quality "cousin time" together in the kitchen.



Sometimes while I'm cooking, Al and Brady hang out together in front of the TV.



Ben (looking "gansta") and Mel check out something interesting on his phone while sitting at the kitchen island waiting for food.

Artichoke Dip with Homemade Pita Chips

Ingredients

(for Artichoke
Dip)

Artichoke Hearts

2 14-oz. cans, drained

Red Bell Pepper

1 chopped

Mayo

1 1/4 cups

Oregano

1/2 teaspoon dried

Feta Cheese

8 oz.

Garlic

2-3 cloves finely minced

Scallions

6 with green tops, diced

Almonds

1/4 cup slivered



When Al and I got married, we decided to have the wedding in our home, and to do most of the catering ourselves. Although we did do most of the cooking, we hired a few people to come and “work the kitchen” so that we could concentrate on the task at hand and mingle with our guests. One of the girls working the kitchen brought this dip with her and we were all immediately hooked. This Artichoke Dip is not only delicious, but it’s really colorful as well.



We got married in our house on March 16, 2002.

1

Chop artichoke, bell pepper and cheese. Press garlic and add to chopped ingredients. Add mayonaise, cheese, green onions and oregano. Mix well.

2

Pour mixture into baking dish, top with almonds and bake at 350°F for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly.

3

Cut pita bread into triangular pieces and arrange on a cookie sheet in a single layer. Brush lightly with olive oil. Sprinkle with garlic powder, sea salt and coarsely ground black pepper to taste. Bake at 375°F until crisp and lightly browned.



Since the wedding, this has been one of Ben's favorite dips.



Ingredients

(for Pita Chips)

Pita Bread

1 package

Olive Oil

1/2 cup

Garlic Powder

To taste

Sea Salt

To taste

Black Pepper

To taste



Ingredients

Eggs

3

Milk

1 tablespoon

Olive Oil (or Butter)

Just enough to coat
bottom of pan

Chorizo

1/8 - 1/4 lb.

Scallion

1, including green stems
chopped

Tomatoes

4 cherry tomatoes
quartered

Baby Asparagus

3 stems chopped into 1/2
inch pieces

Boursin Cheese

1 tablespoon



Al whips up some omelettes
after securing a 2nd place
finish in the Turkey Run 5k.

Omelette



Making an omelette can make breakfast a little more exciting, or can also serve as a simple weeknight dinner. The beauty of an omelette is that it can be made with whatever ingredients (including leftovers) that you might have. For example, if I have some baby new potatoes from the night before, I love to add those to this particular recipe.

When we were dating, Al and I spent a birthday weekend at The Boars Head Inn in Charlottesville, Virginia. At breakfast one morning we had omelettes with asparagus and Boursin cheese and found the taste and the texture to be amazing.

All you need to make a great omelette is an 8" nonstick pan, a heat resistant rubber spatula, eggs, and a little imagination.

1 Brown the sausage and chop into pieces. Dice up scallions, peppers, asparagus or whatever vegetables you have on hand. Lightly sauté them until warm throughout.



2 Whisk 3 eggs in a bowl and add just a bit of milk (this makes the omelette fluffier). Drizzle a little olive oil on a paper towel and rub on the inside of the pan (or use PAM cooking spray) and warm the pan over medium-high heat.



When you flick a few drops of water in the pan and it sizzles, the pan is ready. Pour in the eggs. Using the spatula, gently push one edge of the egg into the

center of the pan while tilting the pan to allow the still liquid egg to flow in underneath. Repeat this until there is no liquid left.

3 Add the ingredients, keeping them to one side, and top with Boursin cheese (cheddar or swiss if you prefer). With your spatula, flip the empty side of the omelette over the ingredients. Cook until just done, then slide onto a plate. Garnish with a sprig of fresh parsley and serve with fresh seasonal fruit.



Cook's Tips:

Having the proper equipment makes cooking easier and more fun. Use plastic heat-resistant spatulas like the ones above and an 8" non-stick pan as shown below for sure success. Using colorful cookware makes the job more fun as well!



Heathy Tip:

If you're really trying to limit the number of eggs you eat, make this omelette with egg whites. Matt actually makes his with one egg and the whites from two additional eggs. This keeps the color the same with much less cholesterol.



Ingredients

Bacon

4 oz.

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Stewing Steak

2 lbs. cut into 1-1/2 inch pieces

Carrot

1 sliced

Onions

1 sliced, 16 small button

Flour

1 oz.

Red Wine

2 cups

Beef Stock

1 cup

Tomato Puree

1 tablespoon

Garlic

1 clove mashed

Thyme

1/e teaspoon dried

Bay Leaf

1

Butter

2 oz.

Button Mushrooms

12 oz.

Fresh Parsley

1/4 cup chopped

Boeuf Bourguignon



Julia Child's recipe for Boeuf Bourguignon is the quintessential recipe for anyone who really likes to cook, because once you make this you feel you've arrived as a cook. I included the recipe here exactly as originally published, because I feel it would be sacrilegious to change it. I've added a modernized slow cooker version of this recipe as well (See *Winter* section), but nothing can replace this original.



When I was growing up, I used to watch Julia Child's cooking show. She was absolutely fearless in what she would attempt to cook, and she exemplified the real joy of cooking in every way.

1

Preheat oven to 450° F. Remove bacon rind and cut into lardons (sticks 1/4-inch thick and 1-1/2 inches long). Simmer rind and lardons for 10 minutes in 1-1/2 quarts water. Drain and dry. Sauté lardons in 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a flameproof casserole or dutch oven over moderate heat for 2 to 3 minutes to brown lightly. Remove to side dish with a slotted spoon.

2

Heat fat in casserole until almost smoking. Dry beef in paper towels; it will not brown if it is damp. Add beef, a few pieces at a time, and sauté until nicely browned on all sides. Add it to the lardons. In the same fat, brown the sliced vegetables. Pour out the excess fat.

3

Return the beef and bacon to the casserole and toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Then sprinkle on the flour and toss again to coat the beef lightly. Set casserole uncovered in middle position of preheated oven for 4 minutes. Toss the meat again and return to oven for 4 minutes (this browns the flour and covers the meat with a light crust). Remove casserole and turn oven down to 325° F.

4

Stir in wine and 2 to 3 cups stock, just enough so that the meat is barely covered. Add the tomato paste, garlic, herbs and bacon rind. Bring to a simmer on top of the stove. Cover casserole and set in lower third of oven. Regulate heat so that liquid simmers very slowly for 3 to 4 hours. The meat is done when a fork pierces it easily.



Brown the meat and cook the vegetables.



Stir in the wine and beef stock



Brown the mushrooms.



During the time it took to put this cookbook together, not only did we redo our kitchen, but the dining room as well. It's nice that our dining room furniture stayed in the family.



Matt and Ben cut up vegetables and catch up on what's going on in their lives.



For me being in the kitchen is a time where I can relax and be creative (above).

Joe and Al are all smiles cooking up a meal (below).



5

While the beef is cooking, prepare the onions and mushrooms. Heat 1-1/2 tablespoons butter with 1-1/2 tablespoons of the oil until bubbling in a skillet. Add onions and sauté over moderate heat for about 10 minutes, rolling them so they will brown as evenly as possible. Be careful not to break their skins. You cannot expect them to brown uniformly. Add 1/2 cup of the stock, salt and pepper to taste and the herb bouquet. Cover and simmer slowly for 40 to 50 minutes until the onions are perfectly tender but hold their shape, and the liquid has evaporated. Remove herb bouquet and set onions aside.

6

Wipe out skillet and heat remaining oil and butter over high heat. As soon as you see butter has begun to subside, indicating it is hot enough, add mushrooms. Toss and shake pan for 4 to 5 minutes. As soon as they have begun to brown lightly, remove from heat. When the meat is tender, pour the contents of the casserole into a sieve set over a saucepan.

7

Wash out the casserole and return the beef and lardons to it. Distribute the cooked onions and mushrooms on top. Skim fat off sauce in saucepan. Simmer sauce for 1-2 minutes, skimming off additional fat as it rises. You should have about 2 1/2 cups of sauce thick enough to coat a spoon lightly. If too thin, boil it down rapidly. If too thick, mix in a few tablespoons stock. Taste carefully for seasoning.

8

Pour sauce over meat and vegetables. Cover and simmer 2 to 3 minutes, basting the meat and vegetables with the sauce several times. Serve in casserole, or arrange stew on a platter surrounded with potatoes, noodles or rice, and decorated with parsley.

Balsamic Vinegar Reduction



Use this Balsamic Reduction as an accompaniment to meat dishes or add a drizzle on a Caprese salad or in Pumpkin Soup. The vinegar has been reduced to a thicker, fuller flavor, so it's less acidic and has a lot more complexity to its flavor than just plain balsamic. It adds a nice bolt of flavor as well as making a plain dish festive.

- 1** Add the vinegar and sugar to a small sauce pan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the sugar has dissolved.
- 2** Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer until glaze is reduced by half, about 20 minutes. Glaze should coat the back of a spoon. Let cool.

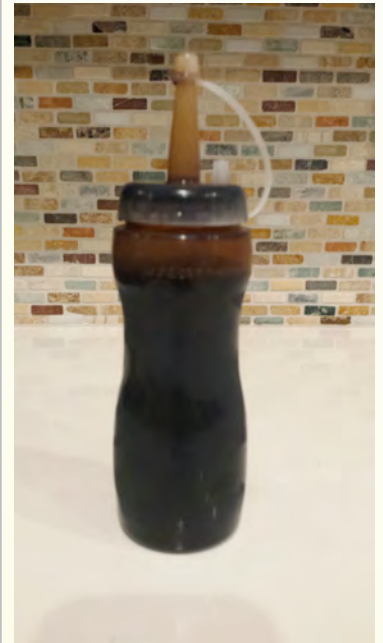
Ingredients

Balsamic Vinegar

2 cups

Brown Sugar

3/4 cup



Cook's Tip:

Store the Balsamic Reduction in a squirt bottle and keep in the refrigerator. You'll be amazed at all the uses you will find for it.



The first time I made this was a snowy weekend in December when John was visiting us.

Ingredients

Lasagne Noodles

9

Cream of Mushroom Soup

1 can

Cream of Chicken Soup

1 can

Sour Cream

1 cup

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 - 2/3 cup grated

Onion

1/2 cup finely chopped

Pimento (optional)

1/4 cup

Garlic Powder

1/2 teaspoon

Cooked Chicken

2-3 cups

Cheddar Cheese

2 cups shredded



Susie's Mom's Chicken Lasagna



We all have memories of certain foods that remind us of our childhoods. Sometimes it's the taste; sometimes it's the circumstances around eating these dishes that immediately take us back and make us feel safe. For me, it's always the aroma of the food that has the strongest impact.

Chicken Lasagne is one of the recipes from Susie's mom's repertoire that not only conjures up good memories for Susie, but it's also a dish that Joe and Susie make frequently for themselves.

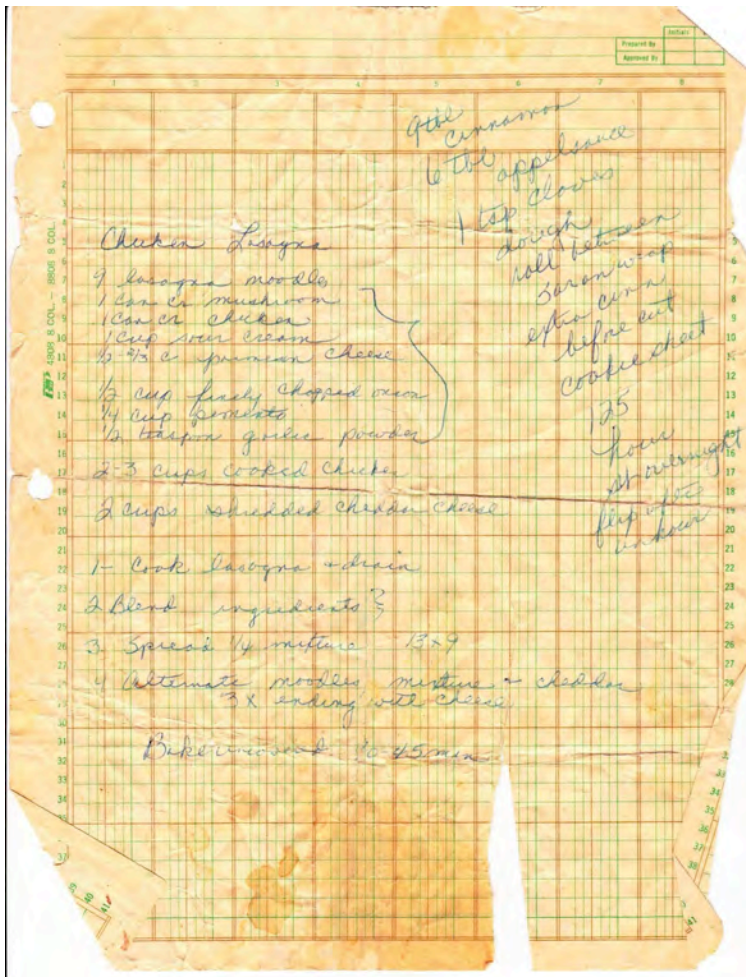
1 Cook lasagne noodles according to package instructions. Drain.

2 Blend all ingredients together. *Note: the pimento is optional - Joe and Susie elect to skip it.* Spread a quarter of the mixture into the bottom of a 13 x 9 inch baking dish. Alternate noodles, mixture and cheese.

3 Bake uncovered 40-45 minutes at 350° F.



Susie learned a lot about cooking from her mom, pictured with her (above) when Susie was just a tot, and (below) at Susie's wedding.



Above is a picture of Susie's mom's original handwritten recipe. Notice it's on ledger paper - which makes perfect sense given all the accountants in Susie's family.



Not-Your-Mother's Chicken Salad

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

4 blackened cut into chunks

Mayonnaise

1/4 cup

Pickle Relish

2 heaping tablespoons

Curry

1 teaspoon

Salt & Pepper

To taste



I've been making chicken salad for a long time, but have recently switched my go-to recipe to Al's version of this classic. The flavor combination of the blackened chicken and the curry is slightly unusual and always delicious.

Make a sandwich on crusty bread adding fresh greens and tomato slices to the chicken salad, or hollow out a tomato and stuff it with the chicken mixture and serve on a bed of greens for light lunch fare.



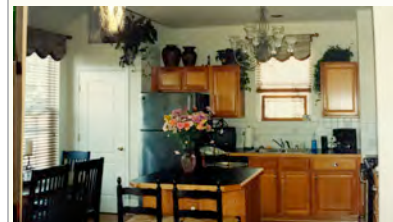
We wish we could find bread here that's as good as what we can find in Europe. Here, Al poses in front of a mural of local bread in Aix-en-Provence.

1 Cut cooled blackened chicken breasts into chunks and add to a medium size mixing bowl.

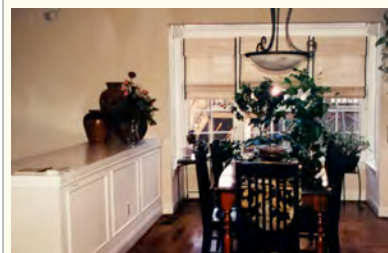
2 Add other ingredients and mix well. Chill for an hour or so before eating. This dish is actually better if you let it sit overnight so that the curry flavor can infuse the chicken.



I have to give Al a lot of credit for getting me to cook by combining flavors in a way I might not normally do. He really is a great cook and a constant inspiration to me . . . and he's hot!



In each house I've lived in, the kitchen has always been the hub of the home. Pictured above is the kitchen in "the yellow house" where Matt and I lived when we met Al, Ben and Josh. We shared some great meals in that house as well.



Our Butterfield home has undergone several make-overs in the kitchen and dining room since we moved here in 2001.

Ruth's Chicken Soup

Ingredients

Roaster Chicken

1 4-5 lb.

Water

5 quarts

Parsnip

1 peeled and cut into thirds

Onion

1 large peeled (but left whole)

Turnip

1 peeled and cut into quarters

Celery

2 stalks with leaves cut into thirds

Carrots

3 peeled and sliced into 1-inch lengths

Dill Sprig

3 fresh

Parsley Sprig

2 fresh

Salt & Pepper

To taste

Kreplach (or noodles)

To taste



There are lots of foods that are considered to be comfort foods, but this one is the epitome of a feel good dish. This soup makes a hot and hearty meal, and is especially good when it's cold outside. Additionally, it always makes you feel better when you're a little under the weather.

Ruth uses Kreplach, which are small, flat noodles, but I often substitute other types of noodles, whatever I have on hand.

The picture above is before the herbs are removed and the broth is strained because it's such a beautiful array of color while cooking.



1

Cut the chicken in 4-6 pieces and place in a 4-quart soup pot and cover with water. Bring the water to boil and simmer for 10 minutes, skimming the foam from the top.

2

Add the remaining ingredients and cook over a low heat until the chicken is quite tender and the vegetables are soft, about 2 to 3 hours.

3

Remove the chicken with a slotted spoon. Discard the dill and parsley. Spoon out the vegetables and discard all except the carrots. Strain the soup until it is clear. Place the soup in a clean pot, add the carrots and the cooked Kreplach (or noodles) and heat until hot.



Cook's Tip:

Pair with a sandwich and you have a perfect light dinner.



Ruth loves to hang out with her grandchildren (pictured with Josh above), and they love to hang out with her.

After making a big pot of soup, Ruth takes a snack break.



Origin of Recipe

Ruth Salton

Eggplant Parmesan

Ingredients

Eggplant

2-1/4 pounds (about 2 large)

Kosher Salt

1 teaspoon

Tomatoes

1 28-oz. can whole peeled

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Garlic

1 clove, peeled and minced

Flour

3/4 cup

Breadcrumbs

1-1/2 cup

Eggs

4 large, beaten

Mozzarella Cheese

1-1/2 lbs sliced into 1/4 inch slices

Parmesan Cheese

1-1/4 cup grated

Fresh Basil

1 cup finely chopped



Eggplant Parmesan is Italian comfort food, and is a perfect meal to serve if you need something vegetarian. The preparation takes awhile, but the result is definitely worth it.

1 Slice the eggplants into 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch thick rounds. Lay the eggplant slices out on a rack over a rimmed sheet pan (or on several layers of paper towels). Sprinkle both sides of the eggplant rounds lightly with salt. Let the eggplant rounds sit and release moisture for 2 hours. *Do not skip this step!*

2 Heat 1 Tbsp olive oil in a 4-quart saucepan on medium heat. Add the minced garlic and gently cook for 1 minute or until fragrant. Add the tomatoes and their juices. Increase heat to bring to a simmer, then lower heat to maintain a very low simmer for 15 minutes, uncovered. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add the minced basil and remove from heat.

3

Combine 1-1/2 cups of breadcrumbs with 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, and place in a shallow bowl or rimmed dish. Set up your station so that you have flour in one shallow bowl, beaten eggs in another bowl, and the breadcrumb/cheese mixture in another, in that order.



4

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spread a tablespoon of olive oil each over the bottom of two rimmed baking sheet pans. Pat dry the eggplant slices with paper towels. Working one at a time, dredge the eggplant slices first in the flour, then dip in the beaten eggs, and then dredge in the breadcrumb-parmesan cheese mixture. Place on oiled sheet pan. Drizzle a little oil over the top of each breaded eggplant round. Place breaded prepared eggplant slices in the oven. Cook for 18 to 20 minutes, turning the slices over at the half-way point, until they are nicely browned. Remove from oven, and let cool to touch.

5

Spread 1/2 cup of the tomato sauce over the bottom of a 9x13-inch casserole dish. Place a third of the eggplant rounds in a single layer covering the sauce on the bottom of the pan. Layer half of the sliced mozzarella on top of the eggplant rounds. Sprinkle 1/3 cup of grated Parmesan cheese. Place another third of the eggplant rounds over the cheese. Spread 1 cup of the sauce over the eggplant rounds. Layer the rest of the sliced mozzarella over the sauce. Sprinkle with 1/3 cup of grated parmesan. Add the remaining eggplant in a single layer on top of the cheese. Top with the remaining sauce and the remaining Parmesan. Bake uncovered at 350° F for 35 minutes. Remove from oven and let sit for 10 minutes.

Cook's Tip:

Eggplants hold onto moisture, and they absorb oil like a sponge. If you're not careful you can end up with something mushy and oily. The trick to Eggplant Parmesan is to drain the eggplant slices of excess moisture first, before cooking.



We've enjoyed drinking wine with dinners, and the addition of this decanter has made drinking wine even more fun.



Egg Rolls

Ingredients

Chicken

1/2 lb.

Shrimp

1/2 lb.

Carrot

1 shredded

Onion

1 small diced

Wrappers

2 bags of 25 each

Clear Noodles

4 oz.

Dry Mushrooms

4 oz.

Sugar

A Pinch

Salt & Pepper

To Taste

Oil

1 qt. peanut oil for frying



I first had these egg rolls at a pot luck lunch at work, and I asked my friend who made them for her recipe as I wanted to make them when Al and I catered our wedding. Not only did my friend give me the recipe, but she made several batches of egg rolls for us for that special day. They take a while to make, but they're fresh and delicious, especially when served with spicy hot mustard.

- 1** Grind chicken and shrimp in a food processor. *Use the Pulse button as you don't want to turn the meat into mush.* Soak clear noodles in warm water, drain and cut into 1-inch pieces. At the same time soak dry mushrooms in water, drain and cut into 1-inch long pieces. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Add sugar, salt and pepper to taste.



2



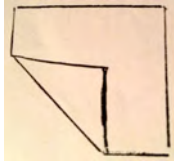
Add all ingredients in a wok and cook for a few minutes. Remove from heat and let cool.

3

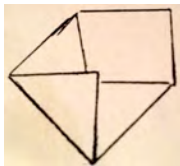
How to roll . . .



1.) Take a portion of the mixture and place it on the wrapper as pictured.



2.) Fold one end of the wrapper as shown.



3.) Fold the sides to meet the other tip.



4.) Roll it until it meets the other end, put some cornstarch (mixed with water) on the end to make it stick to the roll.

4

Put oil in a large sauce pan and heat. (When you add a drop of water and it crackles, oil is ready.) Drop the egg rolls into the oil and cook until they turn golden brown, about 20 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the egg rolls from the pan and place them vertically in a bowl lined with paper towels. Serve hot with some spicy hot mustard and duck sauce.

Cook's Tip:

Ingredients for the egg rolls can be purchased at an Asian market.

Eggrolls are perfect for as an appetizer or as a side to stir-fry dishes.



Al bandaged my finger I cut while chopping onions. Next time I should wear my cutting gloves Matt gave me for Christmas!



Alan and I were actually crazy enough to cater our own wedding, and these eggrolls were a big hit.

Bolognese Sauce

Ingredients

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Butter

1/4 cup

Celery

4 stalks finely chopped

Carrots

4 small finely chopped

Garlic

4 cloves minced

Onion

1 large yellow, finely diced

Pancetta

4.5 oz.

Ground Beef/Pork/ Veal

2 1/4 lbs.

Tomatoes

1 28-oz. can diced

White Wine

1 cup dry

Milk

2 cups

Beef Stock

1 cup

Salt and Pepper

To Taste



A nice change from pasta with a tomato sauce is Pasta Bolognese. This is always one of my favorite dishes when we go out for Italian food, so I decided to start making it at home. Plus . . . it reminds me of being on vacation in Italy. Nothing beats a bowl of bolognese paired with homemade pasta and a big, full-bodied glass of wine.



As much Bolognese as we ate in both Milan and Sicily (on vacation in 2014) I'm sure one of us ordered it at the meal pictured above.

1

Heat the butter and oil together in a large saucepan over medium heat. When the butter is melted and the pan is hot, add the onion,



carrot, celery and garlic and a good pinch of salt. Sauté for 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the diced pancetta and cook for another 10 minutes, until the vegetables are softened



and the pancetta is golden brown.

2

Increase the heat to high and add the meat a third at a time, stirring and breaking up any lumps. ***Adding the meat gradually allows its liquid to evaporate - which is key if you want to brown your meat not boil it!*** After all the meat is brown, set a timer to 15 minutes. You want the meat to caramelize and become crispy in spots. More liquids will evaporate and the flavors will concentrate. You want golden bits of meat to stick to the bottom of the pan, which will be deglazed later. Watch over your pan though, as you don't want the meat to burn.

3

Over medium heat, pour the wine into the sauce pan. With a wooden spoon, scrape all the golden brown bits stuck to the bottom of the pan. Push the meat around to make sure you scrape it all off. By the time you're finished, the wine will be evaporated (2-3 minutes). Add the milk, diced tomatoes and their liquid, the beef stock and a good grinding of black pepper. Bring to a boil, and then lower the heat and let simmer very slowly, half covered, for 4 hours. Stir occasionally. If the sauce starts sticking, then lower the heat further. In the end, the sauce should be thick like oatmeal. Taste again and adjust the seasoning one last time. Serve over fresh pasta.

Cook's Tips:

Tip 1:

Traditional Bolognese Sauce is made with veal, pork and pancetta. Use a combination or use ground beef, depending on your taste preference and what you have on hand.

Tip 2:

This dish is best with Tagliatelle or Pappardelle pasta, but again you can vary the dish based on your taste and pasta availability.

Tip 3:

When chopping the carrots, celery and onion, try to keep them the same size. This ensures even cooking.



Serve Pasta Bolognese with a nice bottle of Italian wine.



Ingredients

Flour

2 cups, plus extra for rolling the pasta

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Eggs

3 large

Cook's Tips:

To dry, lay the pasta over a clothes drying rack, coat hangers, or the back of a chair, and let air dry until completely brittle. Store in an airtight container for several weeks.



To freeze, either freeze flat in long noodles or in the basket-shape on a baking sheet until completely frozen. Gather into an airtight container and freeze for up to three months. Dried and frozen noodles may need an extra minute or two to cook.

Homemade Pasta



- 1 Combine all the ingredients in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until combined, then run the processor continuously until a dough is formed. (If you do not have a food processor do this instead . . . Whisk together the flour and salt with a fork in a medium mixing bowl. Create a deep well in the middle of the flour and crack the eggs into this well. Whisk the eggs with the fork to combine. As you whisk the eggs, begin gradually pulling in flour from the bottom and sides of the bowl. Don't rush this step. Once enough flour has been added, it will start forming a very soft dough.)
- 2 Turn the dough and any excess flour out onto a clean counter. Begin gently folding the dough on itself, flattening, and folding again. It will be extremely soft at first, then gradually start to firm up. Once it's firm enough to knead, begin kneading the dough. Incorporate more flour as needed to prevent the dough from sticking to you or the counter. Slice into the dough with a paring knife; if you see lots of air bubbles, keep kneading.

3

Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (let it come back to room temperature before rolling). Sprinkle a baking sheet generously with flour. Divide the dough into four equal portions. Dust the portions with flour, place on the baking sheet, and cover with a clean dishtowel.

4

Set your pasta machine to the thickest setting. Flatten one piece of dough into a thick disk between your hands and feed it through the pasta roller. Repeat once or twice. Fold this piece of dough into thirds, like folding a letter, and press it between your hands again. With the pasta machine still on the widest setting, feed the pasta crosswise between the rollers. Feed it through once or twice more until smooth. If desired, repeat this folding step. This helps to strengthen the gluten in the flour, giving it a chewier texture when cooked. Begin changing the settings on your roller to roll the pasta thinner and thinner. Roll the pasta two or three times at each setting, and don't skip settings (the pasta tends to snag and warp if you do). If the pasta gets too long to be manageable, lay it on a cutting board and slice it in half. Roll the pasta as thin as you like it to be. For linguine and fettuccine, I normally go to 6 or 7 on the KitchenAid attachment; for angel hair or stuffed pastas, I go one or two settings thinner.

5

Cut the long stretch of dough into noodle-length sheets, usually about 12-inches. If making filled pasta or lasagna, proceed with shaping. If cutting into noodles, switch from the pasta roller to the noodle cutter, and run the sheet of pasta through the cutter. Toss the noodles with a little flour to keep them from sticking and gather them into a loose basket. Set this basket on the floured baking sheet and cover with a towel while you finish rolling and cutting the rest of the dough.

6

To cook the pasta immediately, bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt the water, and cook the pasta until al dente, 4-5 minutes.



Spaghetti Alla Carbonara

Ingredients

Eggs

2 large at room temperature

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 cup freshly grated

Pecorino Romano Cheese

1/2 cup freshly grated

Pancetta

4 oz. cubed

Spaghetti

1 lb.

Salt

1 teaspoon

Freshly Ground Pepper

To taste



Eat, Pray, Love Pasta!

During our last few trips to Italy, there was a lot of Carbonara eating going on. Frankly, I've resisted making this dish for a long time because I am not much of an egg eater, but after reading about one of the recipes Joe and Susie sent me where eggs were used to give a dish a creamy consistency, I decided to give this recipe a try. I'm glad I did and now will make it often.

This dish is quick and simple to make, yet is delicious and impressive. Serve it with a nice full-bodied red wine for a perfect meal.



Mike and Bethanne enjoy eating pasta in our newly refurbished kitchen.

- 1 Whisk the eggs in a small bowl until just combined. Whisk in the cheeses. Set aside. Place the pancetta in a large pan and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently. The outside should be crisp and much of the fat should be rendered out. This takes about 12 to 15 minutes.
- 2 Bring a large pot of water to boil and add the salt. Cook the spaghetti until al dente. Before draining the pasta, reserve about 1 cup of the cooking water. Drain the pasta and add to the pan with the pancetta. Over medium heat, toss the pasta well, making sure it is piping hot. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the egg mixture quickly, tossing to coat the pasta evenly.
- 3 Season with plenty of black pepper and toss again. Add a little of the reserved water, 1/4 cup to start, to thin out to the desired creamy consistency. Add salt if desired - we didn't really think it needed any additional salt. Divide among heated bowls, and serve with a few grinds of fresh pepper and a little parmesan cheese.



We have had many great trips to Italy, and eating is always a big part of those trips. Every time I'm back home, I'm motivated to cook new and different things. Shown above is the town of Lerici, with Cinque Terre in the distance (2013).



Al and I back in Tremezzo (2012), the town in Italy on Lake Como where we got engaged years ago. Below the guys at the Greek Theatre in Taormina, Sicily (2014).



Ingredients

Heavy Cream

2 cups

Milk

1 cup

Sugar

1/2 cup

Vanilla Beans

2 split in half lengthwise

Egg Yolks

5



Then . . . When I was a kid we always made ice cream in this 5-gallon hand cranked ice cream maker.

Now . . . my ice cream maker has a compressor in it and all you have to do is put the ingredients in and turn it on.



Vanilla Bean Ice Cream



I am not a big dessert eater in general, and certainly have never been a big fan of ice cream . . . unless of course, it's home made ice cream. When I was a kid my parents made ice cream in a hand cranked 5-gallon ice cream freezer that a friend of theirs gave them. I remember on Sundays when extended family was coming to visit my parents would make homemade ice cream, with either fresh strawberries from their strawberry patch or from peaches picked from their peach trees. My brother and I would always fight over who got to crank it, but we'd both tire of doing it after a few minutes and my mom would do most of the cranking. As it started to freeze, it would get harder to crank, so my dad would take over, Now I use an electric freezer, which still makes great ice cream, but I'll never forget how much fun it was to make in the old hand crank one, and the anticipation of opening the lid and tasting the ice cream!

If you are using an electric ice cream maker . . .

1 Combine the cream, milk, sugar, and vanilla beans in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook until hot but not boiling, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat. Carefully remove vanilla beans and scrape the softened seeds from the pods back into the saucepan; discard pods.

2 Place yolks in a bowl and whisk constantly, slowly pouring in 1 cup of the hot-milk mixture. Continue to whisk until smooth.



3 Slowly pour the egg mixture into the saucepan, whisking constantly until well combined. Place saucepan over medium heat and stir constantly until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon (6 to 8 minutes); it should never boil. Strain mixture into a bowl. Cool to room temperature, then freeze in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions.



Cook's Tip:

If you are using an electric ice cream maker . . .

The key to successful ice cream is using enough salt. Ice has to absorb energy in order to melt, changing the phase of water from a solid to a liquid. When you use ice to cool the ingredients for ice cream, the energy is absorbed from the ingredients and from the outside environment (like your hands, if you are holding the bag of ice!). When you add salt to the ice, it lowers the freezing point of the ice, so even more energy has to be absorbed from the environment in order for the ice to melt. This makes the ice colder than it was before, which is how your ice cream freezes. Ideally, you would make your ice cream using “ice cream salt,” which is just salt sold as large crystals instead of the small crystals you see in table salt. The larger crystals take more time to dissolve in the water around the ice, which allows for even cooling of the ice cream



Replace vanilla bean with 2 cups of strawberries for a delicious strawberry ice cream.



This ice cream is great by itself or drizzled with some caramel sauce . . .



. . . or raspberry coulis.

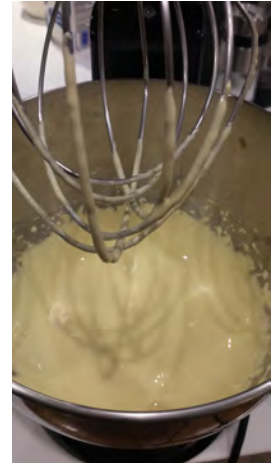


Every time we make ice cream, we try to achieve the same level of creaminess as the gelato we've experienced while vacationing in Europe.

If you are using an automatic ice cream maker . . .

1

Combine the cream, milk, and vanilla bean scrapings in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook until hot but not boiling, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile beat egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale and thick. Slowly whisk half of the milk mixture into the egg mixture. Then pour back into the saucepan.



2

Return mixture back to a low heat. Stir constantly until mixture has thickened and coats the back of a spoon. Pour



mixture into a bowl, cover and refrigerate until well chilled.

3

Pour into ice cream bowl. Set ice cream maker to ICE CREAM setting and turn on.

When using an ice cream maker with a compressor, you don't need to add salt to make the ice cream freeze.

Rich Chocolate Ice Cream



- 1** Place cream, milk and chocolate into a medium saucepan. Heat, stirring, until the chocolate is melted and the mixture just starts to simmer. Meanwhile, beat egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale and thick. Once cream mixture is hot, slowly whisk half of it into the egg mixture, then pour back into the saucepan.
- 2** Return mixture to a low heat. Stir constantly until mixture has thickened and covers the back of a spoon. Pour mixture into a heatproof bowl, cover and refrigerate until well chilled.
- 3** When the mixture is chilled, pour into ice cream maker and turn to *Ice Cream* setting.

Ingredients

Heavy Cream

2 cups

Milk

1/2 cup

Chocolate

6-7 ounces

Sugar

1/2 cup

Egg Yolks

5



The consistency of this ice cream rivals some of the best gelati we've had while in Europe.



Cook's Tip:

Use a good quality semisweet chocolate like Ghirardelli. My personal favorite is (German) Ritter Sport Alpine Milk Chocolate.

Ingredients

Bibb Lettuce

1 small head, leaves separated

Chicken Breasts

1 lb. ground

Onion

1 small chopped

Garlic

2 cloves minced

Soy Sauce

2 tablespoons

Hoisin Sauce

1/4 cup

Rice Wine Vinegar

1 tablespoon

Fresh Ginger

1 tablespoon grated

Scallions

2-3 sliced diagonally

Water Chestnuts

1 small can drained and diced

Sriracha

1 teaspoon, or more, to taste



Easy Lettuce Wraps



Lettuce Wraps can be a fun, easy, and healthy appetizer, or can even serve as a light dinner. These are very similar to those served in PF Changs.

- 1 Heat olive oil in a saucepan over medium high heat. Add ground chicken and cook until browned, about 3-5 minutes, making sure to crumble the chicken as it cooks; drain excess fat.
- 2 Stir in garlic, onion, hoisin sauce, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, ginger and Sriracha until onions have become translucent, about 1-2 minutes. Stir in chestnuts and green onions until tender, about 1-2 minutes; season with salt and pepper, to taste. To serve, spoon several tablespoons of the chicken mixture into the center of a lettuce leaf, taco-style.



Phyllo Triangles



These tasty hors d'oeuvres are made from paper-thin phyllo dough which is deliciously light and flaky. They can be filled with many things, the two fillings I use most are included here - spinach and feta cheese, and curried walnut chicken. You can also make larger size triangles and serve as a main or side dish.



Cook's Tips:

Have everything you need prepared and organized before you begin.



The spinach and feta mixture smells great with all that fresh parsley and dill. *Make sure to drain the spinach mixture well, otherwise the phyllo will be too wet to work with.*



Filled phyllo triangles can be kept in the refrigerator, unbaked, for 2 days, or frozen immediately for future use.

Ingredients

Phyllo Pastry

2 lbs.

Olive Oil

1/3 cup

Scallions

1 bunch chopped

Spinach

2 10-oz. pkgs. frozen
chopped

Parsley

1 bunch finely chopped

Dill

1 bunch finely chopped

Feta Cheese

1 lb. crumbled

Eggs

3 lightly beaten

Butter

2 sticks melted

Sara whips up something in our first house in Ashburn.



Spinach & Feta Cheese Filling

1

Thaw phyllo dough overnight in the refrigerator. To make the filling, heat olive oil and sauté the scallions until soft. Place spinach and scallions in a colander over a bowl and press out the liquid. In a saucepan, boil down the liquid until it measures 2 tablespoons. Add this back to mixture, along with the remaining filling ingredients and blend well. Season with salt and pepper and cool completely.

2

To assemble the triangles, melt and cool the butter. Place one sheet of phyllo dough on a flat surface (I use a large wooden cutting board) and brush lightly with butter.



Top this with two more sheets, buttering



each. Cut the sheets in half lengthwise, then cut each half crosswise into four equal parts. Spoon a teaspoon of filling onto the end of each strip and form

a triangle by folding the righthand corner to the opposite side (like folding a paper football).

3

Place triangles on a buttered baking sheet. Brush the tops of each with melted butter and bake in a 400°F oven and bake until golden brown, turning once, about 10 minutes.



Curried Walnut Chicken Filling

- 1 Broil chicken breasts until just opaque and cooked throughout. Cut into small chunks and cool.
- 2 Melt butter in a small pan, add flour and curry powder, and cook over low heat for 2 minutes. Add milk, whisk to blend, and continue to cook until thickened. Season with salt. Stir in walnuts and chicken and cool completely before filling phyllo.
- 3 Follow the same instructions as for the Spinach Feta filled triangles.



- 4 Place triangles on a buttered baking sheet. Brush the tops of each with melted butter and bake in a 400°F oven and bake until golden brown, turning once, about 10 minutes.

Ingredients

Phyllo Pastry

1 lb.

Chicken Breasts

3 blackened

Flour

2 1/2 tablespoons

Curry Powder

1 teaspoon

Milk

1 cup

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Walnuts

1/2 cup chopped

Butter

2 tablespoons



Cook's Tips:

To easily chop nuts, put them in a zip lock bag and gently smash with kitchen mallet.

Original Recipe

Martha Stewart's
Hors d'Oeuvres, 1984

Ingredients

Pork Tenderloin

1 lb., thinly sliced, and smashed with the palm of your hand

Peanut Oil

1 tablespoon

Garlic

2 cloves, minced

Green Beans

1/2 lb. fresh green beans (or 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen)

Sugar

2 teaspoons

Red Bell Pepper

1/2 large cut into strips

Soy Sauce

2 teaspoons

Crushed Red Pepper

1/2 - 1 teaspoon

Ginger

1 teaspoon fresh grated

Sesame Oil

1 teaspoon

Rice Wine Vinegar

1 teaspoon



Any time we eat Asian-inspired food, I'm sure we'll be reminded of our amazing 2015 Japan trip.

Pork & Red Pepper Stir-Fry



I did not grow up eating dishes like this, in fact, I had already graduated from college the first time I ate Chinese food. After tasting it though, I liked it and wanted to cook some of my own variations. I started cooking Stir-Fry before Matt was born and I like the fact that you can use whatever you have on hand to create a tasty dish. I prefer pork with this recipe, but chicken or beef would be good too.

I cut this recipe out of a magazine advertising “pork . . . the other white meat” years ago. I added fresh red peppers to the recipe, replaced frozen green beans with fresh ones and varied the amounts of the other ingredients to better suit our tastes. The ease and quick preparation of this dish makes it a perfect weeknight meal.

1

Heat oil in a hot skillet or wok. Stir-fry pork and garlic 3-5 minutes. Add beans and red peppers, stir-fry an additional 3-5 minutes until beans are tender.

2



Push pork, beans and peppers to one side of pan. Add remaining ingredients, stirring constantly to mix. Combine all ingredients.

3

Serve immediately with hot, cooked rice or shredded lettuce.



Cook's Tips:

If you have one, use a Wok to make this dish, otherwise improvise using a skillet.



Have your ingredients pre-measured before you begin cooking a dish like this that cooks very quickly.

I like vegetables very crisp, so this cooking time is perfect for me, but if you like your vegetables a little more done, either put them in at the beginning with the pork or steam them before adding to the wok.



I'm a little worried about Matt's knife-handling skills!

Then and Now . . .

In the top photo I'm making stir fry in the Manassas house in 1985. Below almost 30 years later, I'm making this pork dish

Ingredients

Egg Noodles

8 ounces

Applewood Bacon

1/4 pound, cooked and coarsely crumbled

Onion

1 medium, chopped

Cabbage

5 cups shredded

Caraway Seeds

1/2 teaspoon

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Serve with Pork Balsamico and garnish with a Balsamic Glaze drizzle.



Sautéed Cabbage, Bacon & Egg Noodles



Bacon, cabbage, onions and caraway seeds may sound like an unusual combination of ingredients, but the flavors work together beautifully. Serve this as a perfect side dish with your favorite pork recipe.

- 1** Put a large pot of water onto the stove and bring to a boil. Add the noodles, cook until al dente, and drain. (Cooking times will vary depending on thickness; see package directions).
- 2** Meanwhile, brown the bacon in a large heavy skillet over medium heat. Remove all the grease except about one tablespoon, then add the onion and sauté 10 minutes, or until tender. Add the cabbage to the skillet and continue sautéing until crisp-tender, about 8 minutes.
- 3** Stir in the cooked and drained noodles, and the caraway seeds. Toss well to mix. Lower heat, and cook an additional 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.

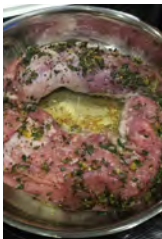
Pork Tenderloin Balsamico



This is a quick and easy pork dish that's perfect for weeknight meals or special occasions. I like to replace half of the Balsamic Vinegar with Balsamic Glaze to give a hint of sweetness to offset the tart taste of the capers.

1 Preheat oven to 450°F. Combine garlic, rosemary, lemon peel, salt and pepper to make a rub. Press mixture into tenderloins.

2



In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add tenderloins and cook, turning frequently until browned, 8-10 minutes. Transfer to oven. Roast 10 minutes. Remove pork from pan, cover with foil and keep warm.

3

Set pan over high heat and stir in broth and vinegar, scraping up brown bits. Bring to a boil and cook until reduced by 1/3 to 1/2. Whisk in butter, 1 tablespoon at a time. Stir in capers. Cut tenderloins into 2-inch thick slices and serve with sauce.

Ingredients

Garlic

4 cloves minced

Rosemary

2 tablespoons chopped fresh

Lemon Peel

1 lemon

Salt & Pepper

2 teaspoons each

Pork Tenderloin

2 (1 to 1-1/2 lbs. each)

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Beef Broth

1/2 cup

Balsamic Vinegar

1/2 cup

Butter

2 tablespoons

Capers

2 tablespoons



John washes fresh rosemary to be used with the pork.

Ingredients

Pie Crust

1 9-inch

Bacon

1/2 pound

Swiss Cheese

1 cup shredded or diced

Half-and-Half

2 cups

Eggs

4

Cayenne Pepper

1/4 teaspoon

Scallions

3 including stems, thinly sliced

Cherry Tomatoes

6-8 quartered



My Aunt Deb gave me my first cookbook, and got me started cooking things that I had never even eaten before. Sadly, we lost her to breast cancer several years ago. I think of her anytime I cook a recipe from that cookbook - like this one.

Quiche Lorraine



When I graduated from high school in 1977, my Aunt Deb gave me a Betty Crocker Cookbook, originally printed in 1969. I used this cookbook all through college and well into adulthood. It contained many practical things like how to hard boil eggs, how to steam vegetables, and had a recipe for homemade cinnamon rolls that I made throughout my college years for my roommates and friends. Unfortunately, somewhere through the years and all the moves, I've lost this cookbook.

With this particular recipe, I use the egg and half-and-half amounts, as well as the cooking time and temperature, but other than that, I make it up based on whatever ingredients I have in stock. Sometimes I use chorizo or hot Italian sausage, cheddar cheese and jalapeno slices. For something fancier, you could add crab meat and spinach, but our family favorite is the Quiche Lorraine version with bacon and Swiss cheese. Although this dish is perfect for a weekend brunch. I also like to serve it for dinner with a small green salad and a cantaloupe wedge or fresh mixed fruit.

1

Preheat oven to 425°F. Roll out pie crust and press into a 9-inch pie plate.

2

Cook bacon in a large skillet. Drain the grease and let cool. Crumble bacon, slice scallions, quarter cherry tomatoes, then distribute evenly over pie crust.

3

Whisk eggs slightly. Add the half-and-half and cayenne pepper to the egg mixture and whisk until just combined. Pour into pie plate over bacon. Sprinkle with swiss cheese. Cook uncovered in 425°F oven for 15 minutes.

4

Reduce oven temperature to 325°F. Cook uncovered until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 30-40 minutes. Let stand 10-15 minutes before serving, so that the quiche has time to “set.”



Cook's Tips

After the crust browns, cover just the outer crust with aluminum foil to keep it from getting too dark.



Lots of smiling goes on in this kitchen.



Al is always searching for the best and freshest ingredients. Looks like he's found a big tomato here in sunny California.

Origin of Recipe

Betty Crocker Cookbook
1969

Greek Lamb Chops

Ingredients

Russet Potatoes

3 peeled and cut into wedges

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Fresh Rosemary

1 tablespoon chopped

Roasted Garlic

4-5 cloves mashed

Tomatoes

1/2 cup chopped and seeded

Feta Cheese

1/2 cup crumbled

Kalamata Olives

1/3 cup pitted and halved

Lamb Chops

8 1-inch thick

Green Onions (optional)

2 thinly sliced



This easy to make dish is one of my favorite new recipes of recent years and has become a real “go to” dish. The Mediterranean flavors and colorful presentation remind of us our trips to Italy and the South of France. Fresh tomatoes, the bite of Kalamata olives, and the smooth texture of feta cheese all blend beautifully with the lamb and fresh rosemary making this an ideal choice to serve your family or guests.

Weather permitting, Al cooks the lamb on the grill, but it can be prepared in the oven as well.



Serve this dish “family style” as shown above, or plate it individually.

1

Preheat oven to 450°F. Combine potatoes, oil and half of the rosemary on a large baking sheet. Sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Roast until potatoes are tender, crispy, and golden brown, about 30 minutes.

2

Meanwhile press garlic, remaining rosemary and a little olive oil into a paste and rub onto both sides of the lamb chops; sprinkle with salt and pepper.

3

Grill the chops or arrange lamb on baking sheet next to potatoes. Roast until potatoes are golden and lamb is desired doneness, about 15-18 minutes.

4

Mound potatoes in center of platter. Surround with lamb chops. Sprinkle with tomatoes, cheese, olives, and serve. If desired, add some sliced green scallions.



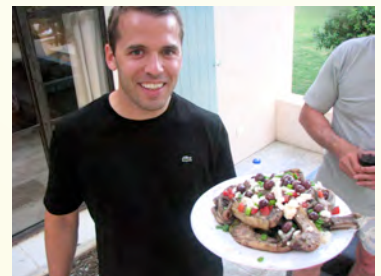
Ben demonstrates his grilling techniques.



Cook's Tips:

Fresh rosemary is a perfect complement to lamb.

To cook the lamb, use a very hot grill. This sears the outside and locks in the juices. It only takes 2-3 minutes per side for just a little pink on the inside.



Joe and Susie replicate this meal while we vacationed as a family in Provence, France. The cut of meat wasn't what we're accustomed to and what we thought was charcoal was really lava rocks. Nonetheless, the meal was served (eventually) and we all had a great time.

Goopy Chewy Brownies

Ingredients

For the Brownie . . .

Unsalted Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick)

Flour

1 cup

Unsweetened Chocolate

5 oz.

Sweetened German Chocolate

2 oz.

Eggs

3 large

Sugar

1-1/2 cups

Vanilla Extract

2 teaspoons

Salt

1/2 teaspoon



Countless times when we went out together as a family, Matt and Josh would order a brownie sundae for dessert. This one will put most of those to shame . . . guaranteed!

- 1** Preheat oven to 375° F. Brush an 8-inch square baking pan with butter; then dust with flour, tapping out the excess. Set aside. Place butter and chocolate in a double boiler over boiling water. Stir until melted. Remove from heat. Cool slightly.
- 2** Whisk together eggs, sugar, vanilla and salt until combined and sugar has dissolved. Whisk in cooled chocolate mixture, then stir in flour.
- 3** Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake until set, but a little soft in the center, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Cut into squares. To serve, add a scoop of homemade vanilla ice cream, a drizzle of fudge sauce, a dusting of confectioner's sugar, a few raspberries, and a sprig of mint.

Hot Fudge Sauce



Ingredients

For the Sauce . . .

Unsweetened Chocolate

6 oz.

Sweetened German Chocolate

2 oz.

Butter

4 tablespoons

Sugar

2 cups

Half and Half

1 cup

Sweetened Condensed Milk

1 14-oz. can

1

In a double boiler, melt chocolate and butter, stirring constantly. Add sugar and half-and-half, and continue cooking until thick. Gradually add condensed milk. Cook 20 minutes, stirring constantly.

2

Serve warm over brownie with ice cream.



Mike, Bethanne, Mel and Hannah pose for a picture before we dig in and start eating.

Basic Pizza Dough

Ingredients

Water

1 cup lukewarm

Flour

3 cups

Honey

1-1/2 teaspoon

Active Dry Yeast

1 1/4-oz. packet

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Kosher Salt

1-1/2 teaspoon



Bake your pizza directly on a pizza stone. Place the stone or tile onto the bottom rack of a cold oven and turn the oven to 500° F. Heat for 45 - 60 minutes before cooking the pizza.



Use a "pizza peel" to get your pizza in and out of the oven without burning yourself.



While on a trip to Sonoma with Drew and John, I had the most delicious pizza for lunch one day - arugula, fresh figs, goat cheese and balsamic vinegar. Al and I immediately tried to replicate it when we got back home, and although the ingredients were all perfect, we struggled with the crust as our recipe called for making it on the grill. So we made some adjustments to the dough recipe, bought a pizza stone and now we make it indoors.

The only limitation here is your own imagination. I would suggest remembering some of the best pizza you've eaten - probably somewhere in Italy - and trying to relive the memory by recreating it in your own home.

1

Pour the water into a mixer bowl. Sprinkle the oil, sugar and yeast over the water and pulse several times until mixed. Add



the flour and salt, and process until the mixture comes together in a “ball.” The dough should be soft and slightly sticky. If it’s VERY sticky, add flour -1 tablespoon at a time - until smooth. If it’s VERY dry, add water - 1 tablespoon at a time - until smooth. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand to form a smooth, round ball.

2

Put the dough in an oiled clean bowl; turn it over several times in the bowl to coat it with oil; drizzle a little oil on top; and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Place in a warm spot in your kitchen, and let the dough rise until it has doubled in size, about 1 hour.



3

Punch the dough down (I love this part!) and knead on a lightly floured surface for 1-2 minutes, until smooth. Divide into 2 equal size balls and proceed with your pizza making.

Cook’s Tip:

Your ball of dough should be the size of a softball. This will yield one medium size pizza, so you can make 2 pizzas from this recipe. Dough should be taken out of the refrigerator one hour before using it so that it can “relax.”

To roll out the dough, sprinkle a clean work surface with flour (or cornmeal, grits or polenta for a more rustic texture.) Flatten with the palm of your hand. Pull, roll and stretch your dough into a rectangle 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick. This insures the dough cooks all the way through and is crisp. I use a rolling pin as I like my pizza to be more like a flatbread. Remember - “Thin is In!”



When you place the raw dough onto the pizza stone, giant bubbles may form. This is a (good) sign that the yeast is active and the dough is rising. You can pop the bubbles or let them remain, adding organic artisan charm.

Ingredients

Tomato Sauce (See below)

1 1/3 cup

Olive Oil

1/4 teaspoon

Fresh Mozzarella

3 oz.

Fresh Basil

6-8 leaves, roughly torn

Italian Seasoning

1/4 teaspoon



After years of eating very little pizza, and proclaiming a general dislike of it, I did an about-face after our 2012 trip to Sicily. The crust was thin and crispy; the ingredients were simple and fresh. Now I love to experiment with many different combinations of flavors. Pizza Margharita is the quintessential Italian pizza, and should be everyone's starting point.

For the sauce . . .

In a food processor, mix together one large can of whole, drained tomatoes, a splash of olive oil and a sprinkle of sea salt. Keep leftover sauce refrigerated.

Pizza Margharita



- 1 Place a pizza stone on the middle rack of your oven and turn heat to its highest setting. Let it heat for at least an hour. Put the sauce in the center of the stretched dough and use the back of a spoon to spread it evenly across the surface, stopping approximately 1/2 inch from the edges.
- 2 Drizzle a little olive oil over the pie. Slice the cheese into thin slices and place these gently on the sauce. Scatter basil leaves over the top.
- 3 Using a pizza peel, pick up the pie and slide it onto the heated stone in the oven. Bake until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is bubbling, approximately 8 minutes.

Pizza with Caramelized Onions, Kalamata Olives, Feta Cheese & Balsamic Drizzle



- 1** Place a pizza stone on the middle rack of your oven and turn heat to its highest setting. Let it heat for at least an hour.
- 2** Drizzle a little olive oil over the pie. Spread the caramelized onions evenly; top with olives, feta and oregano.
- 3** Using a pizza peel, pick up the pie and slide it onto the heated stone in the oven. Bake until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is bubbling, approximately 8 minutes. After slicing, drizzle pizza with Balsamic Glaze.

Ingredients

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Caramelized Red Onions (*)

1 lb.

Feta Cheese

2 cups crumbled

Kalamata Olives

12 pitted and halved

Oregano

1/2 teaspoon

Balsamic Glaze (*)

To drizzle on top



I can't overemphasize the importance of good ingredients - especially olive oil. We fell in love with this olive oil from Dry Creek in California during one of our trips to Healdsburg.

Ingredients

Sesame Oil

2 teaspoons

Carrots

1/2 cup matchstick-cut

Scallions

1/2 cup thinly sliced

Garlic

2 teaspoons minced

Black Pepper

1/4 teaspoon

Brown Rice

4 cups cooked and chilled

Frozen Peas

1/2 cup thawed

Egg

1 slightly beaten

Soy Sauce

2 tablespoons

Water

1 tablespoon



Cooking is less of a chore if you try to make meals festive. When making Asian food, serve it with chopsticks, and on fun plates, like these inexpensive ones from World Market.

Fried Rice



Fried rice can be an easy side dish, or you can add some teriyaki marinated meat and it becomes a main dish. Chilled rice works best for this recipe, so cook some brown rice the night before and keep in the refrigerator until you're ready to make dinner.

- 1 Cook 2 cups of uncooked instant brown rice in 1-3/4 cups of water or chicken broth, following the package directions. (I always omit the salt and fat called for on the box. Cover and chill.)
- 2 Heat oil in large skillet or wok over high heat. Add carrots, onions, garlic and pepper. Fry until tender. Add peas.
- 3 Add cooked rice, stir fry for 2 minutes. Push rice mixture to sides of pan, forming a well in the middle. Add egg to center of pan and let cook for 30 seconds. Toss with rice, and stir-fry until the egg is cooked. Stir in soy sauce and water. Cook until thoroughly heated.

Asian Marinated Pork



Al is the “king of sauces and marinades,” and countless times I have said I need a sauce to go with pork or beef or chicken, and he has always delivered. Al’s style is very different from mine in that he just makes stuff up on the fly. I tend to be much more methodical, and usually start with a recipe. From there I begin adding my own touches until I arrive at a recipe that is my own. Al is much more creative, and just starts mixing all kinds of ingredients together. The downside of his style is that it is often darn impossible for him to replicate the same thing the next time.

This particular marinade was made at my request as I was looking for something with an Asian flare.

1 Wash and dry pork tenderloin. Add all ingredients in a large bowl and mix together well. Pour into large zip lock bag and add tenderloin.

2 Remove pork from bag. Grill until desired doneness. Meanwhile, pour marinade into a saucepan and just bring to a boil. Serve over tenderloin slices with fried rice.

Ingredients

Pork Tenderloin

1 3-4 lb.

Teriyaki Sauce

3/4 cup

Soy Sauce

2 tablespoons

Brown Sugar

2 tablespoons, firmly packed

Sherry

1 tablespoon

Rice Wine Vinegar

1 tablespoon

Sesame Oil

1 teaspoon

Garlic

3 cloves minced

Fresh Ginger

1-inch piece, peeled and shredded

Scallions

2 chopped fine

Red Pepper Flakes

A pinch (to taste)



Hot tea is a perfect complement to Asian food. Well . . . maybe not this green tea Josh, Matt and Ben are drinking at a Tea House in Tokyo.

Ruth's Linzertorte

Ingredients

Butter

1-1/2 cups (3 sticks)

Confectioner's Sugar

1 cup

Egg

1

Flour

2-3/4 cups

Hazelnuts or Almonds

1-1/2 cups finely ground

Salt

A pinch

Cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon

Raspberry Preserves

1-1/2 cups

Lemon Juice

2 teaspoons

Crystal Sugar

1/8



Ruth's Linzertorte is one of Al's favorite desserts, and one that he really developed a taste for when he was on a trip in the Black Forest of Germany. It was many years before that when Ruth learned to make it though. She was in Vienna more than sixty years ago, staying in a safehouse (as she was part of the partisans, the underground fighting against the Germans). This of course, gives it even more special meaning than it would have otherwise.

Aside from its amazing history, this torte tastes delicious. It's great as a dessert or with a cup of coffee in the morning.

This recipe will make two, so eat one now and freeze the other one.

1



Grind the nuts in the food processor until VERY fine. In a separate small bowl, mix the flour, salt and cinnamon.

2

Cream the butter, confectioner's sugar, and egg until it is light and fluffy.



Alternating some of one then the other, fold the flour and nuts into the creamed mixture.

3

Cover the dough with plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours. (*Do not freeze the dough as it will crumble and fall apart.*)



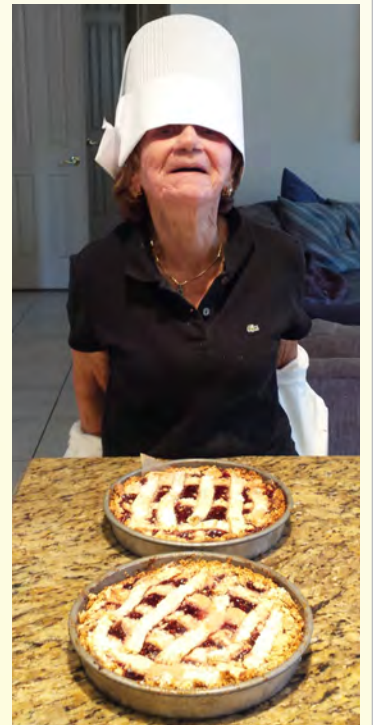
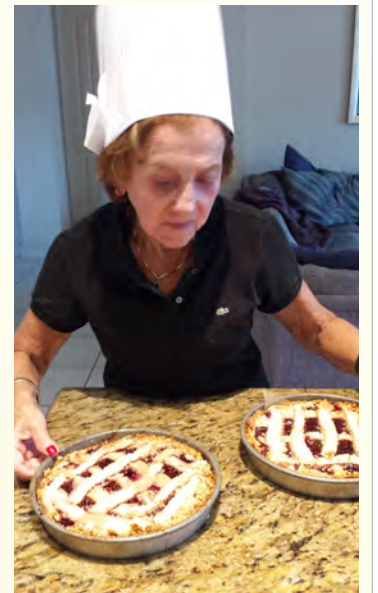
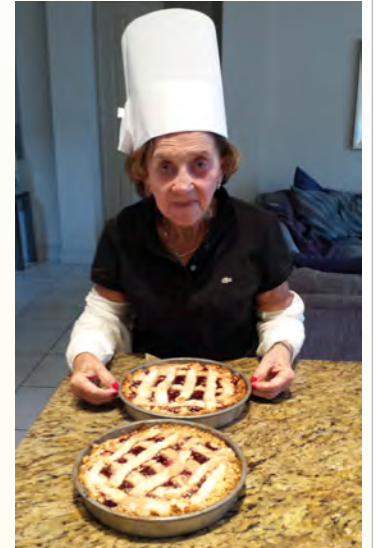
When you are ready to begin assembling the torte, take the dough out of the refrigerator and let it rest at room temperature for about a half hour. On a floured surface, roll the dough out 1/4-inch thick and use two-thirds of it to cover the bottom of a



spring form pan, making a rim about 1-inch up the sides of the pan. Note: you can also use an 8-inch pie pan. Put a little vegetable oil in the bottom of the pan and cover it with wax paper. Turn it over so the oil covers both sides of the paper.

4

Cover the dough with a mixture of raspberry preserves and lemon juice. Roll out the remaining dough, cut it into strips and form a lattice over the preserves. Bake in a 350°F oven 45-60 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Let cool. Remove the Linzertorte from the pan and serve.



Pan-Seared Scallops with Corn Coulis & Tomatoes

Ingredients

Scallops

1 pound

Corn on the Cob

3/4 cup (2 ears)

Shallot

1 teaspoon finely chopped

Garlic

1/4 teaspoon finely chopped

Olive Oil

4 teaspoons

Basil

1 teaspoon finely chopped for coulis and 2 teaspoons for tomato mixture

Salt

1/4 teaspoon

Black Pepper

1/8 teaspoon

Milk

1/2 cup

Plum Tomatoes

1/2 lb., seeded and diced

Cayenne Pepper

A pinch

Salt & Pepper

To taste



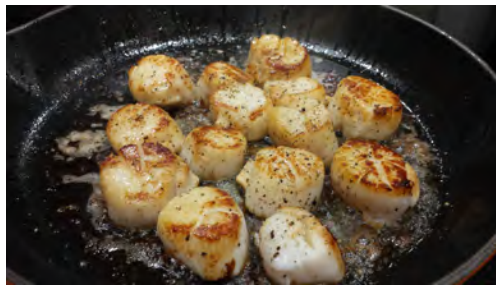
Pan seared scallops are easy to make and are delicious. Serve over this corn coulis with diced tomatoes for a dinner that is better than what you get in most restaurants. Add a pinch of cayenne pepper to give the coulis a kick, or leave it out if you prefer the sweet flavor of the corn to shine through. Either way, these scallops are great served with a side of risotto.

1

Cook shallot and garlic in 2 teaspoons oil in a small skillet over moderately low heat, stirring, until softened, about 1 minute. Add corn, basil, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until corn is tender and beginning to lightly brown on edges, about 4 minutes. Add milk and scrape up any brown bits from bottom of skillet, then remove from heat. Purée corn mixture in a blender at medium speed until very smooth, about 1 minute. Force purée through a fine-mesh sieve into a small saucepan, pressing hard on and then discarding solids. Cover coulis until ready to serve. (I use my Magic Bullet in lieu of using a blender, and I do not force through a sieve as I like the coulis a bit thicker.)

2

Toss tomatoes with basil and salt and pepper in a bowl. Pat scallops dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat remaining 2 teaspoons oil in a 12-inch nonstick heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then sauté half of scallops, turning over once, until golden and just cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes total.



Transfer to a platter and keep warm, loosely covered with foil. Sauté remaining scallops in same manner.

3

Reheat coulis over low heat, covered, then spoon 2 tablespoons onto center of each of 6 plates. Arrange 4-6 scallops per plate in a circle on coulis, then spoon tomatoes into center.



These scallops are great served with a side of risotto.



Joe developed a taste for seafood as he got older. Not only does he eat a lot of seafood now, but he's also a



It seems as though Joe spends a lot of time in our kitchen, cooking, eating and drinking.

Ingredients

Arborio Rice

1-1/2 cups

Chicken Stock

1 quart

White Wine

1/2 cup

Shallot

1 medium, finely chopped

Butter

3 tablespoons

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Parmesan Cheese

1/4 cup grated

Black Pepper

To taste

Fresh Parsley

To taste



Parmesan Risotto



I must admit that I didn't really develop a taste for risotto until I was in my fifties. Do NOT wait that long to eat risotto as it is so good. One of the great things about making risotto is that you can add seasonable vegetables like pumpkin in fall, asparagus in summer, or totally alter the taste by using gorgonzola or Swiss cheese instead of parmesan. It's great as a main dish as well as a side dish . . . plus it reminds us of being in Italy!

1

Heat the stock to a simmer in a medium saucepan, then lower the heat so that the stock just stays hot. In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat the oil and 1 Tbsp of the butter over medium heat. When the butter has melted, add the chopped shallot. Sauté for 2-3 minutes or until it is slightly translucent. Add the rice to the pot and stir it briskly with a wooden spoon so that the grains are coated with the oil and melted butter. Sauté for another minute or so, until there is a slightly nutty aroma - but don't let the rice turn brown.

2



Add the wine and cook while stirring, until the liquid is fully absorbed. Add a ladle of hot chicken stock to the rice and

stir until the liquid is fully absorbed. When the rice appears almost dry, add another ladle of stock and repeat the process. It's important to stir constantly, especially while the hot stock gets absorbed, to prevent scorching, and add the next ladle as soon as the rice is almost dry. Continue adding ladles of hot stock and stirring the rice while the liquid is absorbed. As it cooks, you'll see that the rice will take on a creamy consistency as it begins to release its natural starches. Continue adding stock, a ladle at a time, for 20-30 minutes or until the grains are tender but still firm to the bite, without being crunchy. If you run out of stock and the risotto still isn't done, you can finish the cooking using hot water. Just add the water as you did with the stock, a ladle at a time, stirring while it's absorbed.

3

Stir in the remaining 2 Tbsp butter, the parmesan cheese and the parsley, and season to taste with kosher salt. Risotto turns glutinous if held for too long, so you should serve it right away. A properly cooked risotto should form a soft, creamy mound on a dinner plate. It shouldn't run across the plate, nor should it be stiff or gluey.



I've loved hanging out in the kitchen cooking for as long as I can remember. Top picture is my Grandma Lula preparing dinner for the extended family, including Joe and Sara. At her house the men always ate first. The women cooked the meal, cleaned up afterwards, but always ate after the men. This is one tradition I chose NOT to carry on.



Again breaking with tradition, Mike drinks coffee with my Grandma Mertie in her kitchen. The men usually sat in the living room watching football and talking among themselves. In fact, I never saw any men cook or help clean at either of my grandparents' houses when I was growing up. My dad didn't cook either, but he was always in the kitchen offering helpful hints (usually unsolicited) to my mom while she cooked. He also loaded and unloaded the dishwasher. My generation and certainly that of my children now participate equally in the kitchen.



Here I am sitting with two of my aunts in my Grandma Mertie's kitchen in 1960 . . . looks like I am stirring up something already!

Blackened Spicy Shrimp

Ingredients

Shrimp

12 (21-25 per pound size)

Paul Prudhomme's Blackened Redfish Magic seasoning

1 tablespoon

Cayenne Pepper

1/4 teaspoon

Black Pepper

2 tablespoons (enough to coat shrimp)

Butter

4 teaspoons

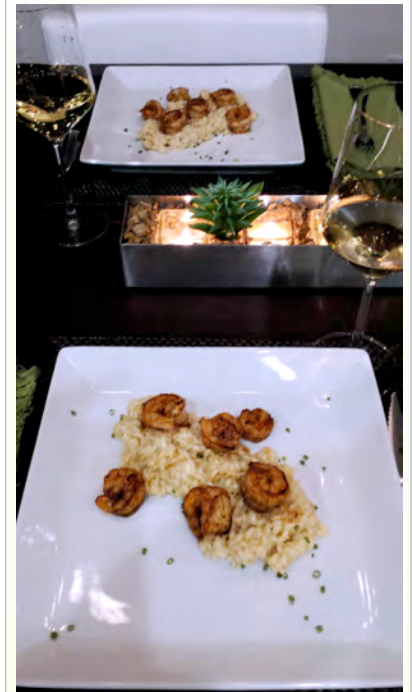


Risotto is a perfect base for these spicy blackened shrimp. This dish only takes a few minutes to make and is dressy enough to serve to guests. Adjust the amount of cayenne pepper to make the shrimp more or less spicy.

1 Peel, devein, and wash shrimp. Squeeze a fresh lemon over the shrimp. Mix the seasoning and peppers together, then roll the shrimp thru the seasonings.

2 Melt the butter over medium high heat. Add the shrimp. Sauté long enough for them to turn pink and be cooked through, about 5 minutes.

3 Remove from the pan and serve on top of risotto. Garnish with some chives.



Shrimp and Risotto make a simple yet elegant meal that goes great with a glass of Chardonnay.



Although everyone has grown up and has gone their separate ways, it's always a good time to reunite - especially in the kitchen around good food.



Paul exemplifies Spring time by posing in front of a bed of flowers in Alsace.

Sangria

Ingredients

Spanish Red Wine

1 bottle (good quality)

Sugar

1/3 cup

Lemon Juice

1/3 cup

Triple Sec

1 oz.

Brandy

2 oz.

Orange

1 thinly sliced

Lemon

1 thinly sliced

Apple

1 thinly sliced



Joe drinks a glass of Sangria during a family get together in Richmond.

When we had a tapas party several years ago, Al found this recipe, and it was so good I ask him to make it whenever we have Spanish food. Frankly, I've never been a fan of Sangria because I don't like sweet drinks, but this recipe is perfect because it is not as sweet as many other Sangrias. We like to drink it occasionally because it reminds us of sitting in a cafe in Granada on a hot summer day, listening to "the cooling waters of the Alhambra."

1

Combine the first five ingredients and chill well.

2

Add fruit slices just before serving.



Al enjoying a glass of Sangria at a tapas bar in Barcelona, Spain

Cook's Tip:

Make sure you use a good quality Spanish wine (Tempranillo is my favorite) in your Sangria . . . it really does make a difference.



Sangria goes perfectly with a bowl of Gazpacho.

Banana Bread

Ingredients

Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick)

Sugar

1 cup

Eggs

2 beaten

Bananas

4, finely smashed

Flour

1-1/2 cup

Baking Soda

1 teaspoon

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Vanilla

1/2 teaspoon

Walnuts (optional)

1/2 cup chopped



Nothing makes the house smell better than banana bread in the oven! It smells so good baking that I always tried to bake a loaf when our house was for sale and prospective buyers were coming by to see it. Banana Bread is easy to make and once you make it from scratch, you'll refuse to ever use a box mix again, as fresh bananas give the bread a much richer flavor. Chopped walnuts or pecans provide texture, and for occasional decadence, add a cup of good quality chocolate chips.



I learned a lot of what I know about cooking from my mom.

1

In a food processor, pulse the bananas until most, but not all, of the chunks are out. (If you don't have a food processor, simply mash the bananas in a bowl using a fork). Using a mixer, cream together the butter and sugar. (If you don't have a mixer, you can use a large spoon to mix the ingredients.) Add the eggs and crushed bananas, and combine well.

2

In a separate bowl, stir together the flour, baking soda and salt. After mixing well, add the flour to the creamed mixture. Add the vanilla.

3

Pour the mixture into a greased and floured loaf pan. Bake at 350°F for 60 minutes.

Cook's Tip:

Properly greasing a pan when baking insures easy removal.



Step 1. Using a pastry brush or paper towel, spread butter evenly over the bottom and sides of pan, being careful not to leave any uncoated, shiny spots. When greasing the sides and corners of the pan, turn the pan as you grease.



Step 2: Add a heaping tablespoon of flour to the pan.



Step 3: To distribute the flour over the pan, hold one edge of the pan and tap the opposite edge with your free hand. The flour will "skate" over the greased surface and stick to it. When the bottom of the pan is coated, tilt the pan, tapping to move the flour over the sides. Tap out any extra flour into your sink or trash can.



Chicken Marsala

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

6 skinless boneless

Olive Oil

1 1/2 tablespoons

Butter

3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted

Onion

1 sliced thin

Mushrooms

3/4 lb. sliced thin

Marsala

1/2 cup

Chicken Broth

1/2 cup

Parsley

2 tablespoons



This is a classic chicken dish coated with mushrooms and Marsala wine. Chicken with a creamy Marsala sauce is a standard of old-school Italian restaurants, where you might find it prepared or finished table side in a chafing dish. The Marsala gives it a rich, earthy flavor, and is perfect with mushrooms as they absorb the flavor and add interesting texture.

This recipe also works well with veal. Serve with rice or pasta.



1

Rinse chicken, pat dry. Flatten chicken to about 1-inch thick, coat in flour and season with salt and pepper. In a large heavy skillet, heat oil and 1 1/2 tablespoons butter over moderately high heat until hot (but not smoking). Brown chicken. Transfer with tongs to a large plate.

2

Add onions and mushrooms to the skillet, stirring occasionally, until liquid mushrooms give off is evaporated.

Add Marsala and cook mixture, stirring, until Marsala is almost evaporated. Add broth and chicken (with any juices



that have accumulated on the plate) and simmer, turning chicken once, until cooked through, about 15 minutes. Transfer chicken to a platter.

3

Simmer mushroom sauce until liquid is reduced to about 1/2 cup. Remove skillet from heat and stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Salt and pepper to taste, stirring until butter is just incorporated. Spoon mushroom sauce around



chicken and sprinkle with parsley.



Cook's Tip:

Fresh parsley makes a flavorful addition to many dishes and is easy to grow. Grow some in a pot and keep inside during the winter. You will enjoy cutting your own anytime you're making a recipe that calls for fresh parsley.



I bring in my parsley when the weather gets cold, and keep it in my kitchen window.

Ingredients

Beets

5-6 medium

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon



Roasted Beets provide a powerful punch to any salad.

Roasted Beets



We love fresh beets, and not just for their nutritional qualities. Oven roasting beets enhance their naturally sweet nature, and once you've eaten fresh roasted ones, you'll never be able to go back and eat canned ones ever again. Serve roasted beets in a salad, as a side dish, or sprinkle with fresh goat cheese and serve as an appetizer.

- 1** Preheat oven to 350°F. Wash and scrub the whole beets to clean off any dirt. Leave the beets whole unless you have some really big ones, and in that case, cut them in half. Trim off the stems and the ends of the beets.
- 2** Toss lightly with some olive oil to coat the beets. Arrange in a baking dish and cover with aluminum foil. Roast in oven about 1 to 1-1/2 hours, or until tender and easily pierced with a fork. Remove from the oven. Let cool. When cool enough to handle, remove the skin. Store in a plastic container in the refrigerator until ready to use. *Note: if you just need 1 or 2 roasted beets, brush with olive oil, cover in foil and bake.*

Ruth's Carrot Soufflé



Who would think carrots would make such a delicious and visually appealing dish, but this creation of Ruth's is both of those things. This colorful side dish is perfect for any dinner party as it goes great with beef, pork or chicken.

1 Cook and purée carrots. In a separate bowl, mix the last 6 ingredients. Add carrots to the mixture and spread into an oblong dish (or into papers or ramekins).

2 Top with brown sugar, walnuts or almonds. Bake for 45 minute at 350°F.

Ingredients

Carrots

2 pounds

Eggs

6

Sugar

1 cup

Flour

6 tablespoons

Baking Powder

2 teaspoons

Vanilla

2 teaspoons

Butter

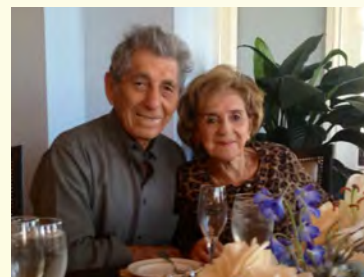
1 stick

Almonds

1 cup thinly sliced

Brown Sugar

6 tablespoons



Fun Fact:

Ruth used to own her own catering business when she lived in the D.C. area. She has quite an extensive repertoire and is a consummate entertainer.

Chocolate Croissant Bread Pudding

Ingredients

Croissants

3 medium, cut in 1/2-inch cubes

Bittersweet Chocolate

5 oz.

Whipping Cream

2 cups

Egg Yolks

4 large

Vanilla Bean

1, split lengthwise

Sugar

1/2 cup



This bread pudding reminds me of warm, fresh chocolate croissants we had during one of our trips to Paris.



For those of us who love New Orleans, bread pudding is a must in our cooking repertoires. This recipe is the perfect marriage of crème brûlée and classic bread pudding. I use toasted croissants instead of the white bread often found in bread pudding because I don't like mine dense and soggy. Toasting the croissants allows the custard mixture to be better absorbed, and the rich vanilla bean flavor is a perfect complement to the pieces of buttery croissant and rich cream.

Top with homemade vanilla ice cream and drizzle with warm fudge sauce for a totally decadent experience. (Both of these recipes are also included in this book.)

As an option, leave out the chocolate, and top with Caramel Sauce or Raspberry Coulis (Recipes for these are also included.)

1

Preheat oven to 350°F. Arrange croissant cubes on a large baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Cool. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F.

2

Divide chocolate among six 3/4 cup custard cups. Top with croissant cubes, dividing equally. Pour 2 cups of cream into a heavy medium saucepan. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; add bean. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Remove from heat. Whisk egg yolks and sugar in a medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in hot milk mixture. Discard vanilla bean. Pour custard over chocolate and croissants, dividing equally.



3

Place ramekins on baking pan. Carefully pour boiling water into the baking pan until it reaches about half way up the side of the ramekins. Add enough water to baking pan to come halfway up sides of cups. Bake bread puddings until set, about 40 minutes. Remove from water; cool slightly. Sprinkle confectioner's sugar on a plate. Turn ramekin upside down and slide bread pudding onto plate. Top with a drizzle of hot fudge or caramel sauce.



Al is always game for trying any dessert as demonstrated in this photo taken in Sorrento, Italy. Obviously, he is also game to have his picture taken in any pose as well.



Sophia hangs out and waits for us to prepare a meal.

Zucchini Pad Thai

Ingredients

Zucchini

2 medium

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Shrimp

1/2 lb., peeled and de-veined

Garlic

3 large cloves, minced

Red Bell Pepper

1/2, seeded and sliced thin

Green Onions

3 sliced

Egg

1 large

Bean Sprouts

2 cups

Roasted Peanuts

1/3 cup

Cilantro

1/4 cup chopped

Limes

2 cut into wedges

Rice Vinegar

2 tablespoons

Ketchup

3 tablespoons



An important part of our cooking repertoire is, of course, the standard dishes that we've cooked over and over, and recipes that have been passed down through the years. It would be boring though if that's all we ever cooked, so it's important to keep trying new dishes. Some are keepers and some we never cook again. This one we think is definitely a keeper.

Because we try to eat healthy as often as we can, we are constantly looking for healthier things to cook. I came across this recipe online, and loved it right from the start. The vibrant colors are so beautiful, and it is a perfect combination of flavors, textures and spiciness. It's also a great gluten-free alternative.

This dish calls for zucchini in lieu of the rice noodles that are traditionally used in Pad Thai. Use a spiralizer to quickly and uniformly create the noodles.

Zucchini Pad Thai is easy to make and delicious to eat, and now is definitely part of our standard arsenal of recipes.

1

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, ketchup, brown sugar, cayenne pepper, and chili garlic sauce, then set aside. Meanwhile, use a spiralizer tool to cut the zucchini into noodles.

2

Heat a wok on high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil (reserve the other half for later). Then add zucchini noodles and cook for 2-3 minutes or until the zucchini noodles are tender. Don't overcook the noodles. *The zucchini noodles should be slightly crunchy with a tender bite.*

Let the noodles rest for about 3 minutes to allow as much moisture as possible to release. Remove the noodles from the wok and drain the excess water.

3

Carefully wipe the wok to remove the excess water, and then re-heat on medium high heat. Add the remaining olive oil and garlic. Cook the garlic until soft and translucent, about 30 seconds. Add the shrimp and cook until shrimp is tender and cooked through, about 3 minutes.

Add the bell peppers and green onions. Cook for about 1-2 minutes or until tender. Add the egg and stir in with the vegetables until the egg is cooked.

4

Add the zucchini noodles back into the wok, then add the sauce. Cook for about 1 more minute, or until the noodles are heated through. Then stir in the bean sprouts.

Serve warm with roasted peanuts, cilantro, and lime wedges.

Brown Sugar

1 teaspoon packed

Cayenne Pepper

1/2 teaspoon

Chili Garlic Sauce

1 teaspoon



Replacing the noodles with zucchini makes this dish a healthier version of Pad Thai.



Using a Spiralizer is another way to make cooking fun.

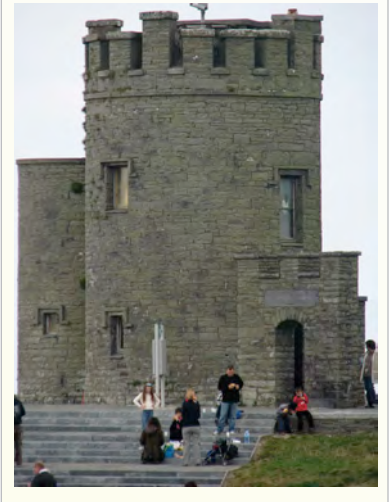


St. Patrick's Day



St. Patrick's Day began as a religious feast day for Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, but is now celebrated all over the world on March 17th. Parades, dancing, special foods and everything green - including green beer - are all part of the revelry.

On St. Patrick's Day, we are always reminded of our 2007 trip to Dublin.



Ingredients

Water

6 cups

Kosher Salt

1/2 cup

Light Brown Sugar

1/3 cup packed

Pickling Spice

1/4 cup

Brisket

1 5-lb.

Salt

1 teaspoon

Yellow Onion

1 medium

Carrots

3 large, peeled and cut crosswise into thirds

Garlic Cloves

6 medium smashed

Green Cabbage

1 medium head, cut through the core into 6 wedges



Joe and Matt like to start St. Patty's Day (or any meal) with a cold beer.

Corned Beef & Cabbage



If you want to make your own corned beef for St. Patrick's Day, plan ahead—you will need to let the beef brine for at least 3 days before you cook it. You can brine the beef for up to 1 week if you want the pickled flavor to be more prominent. The color will be more gray than store-bought corned beef, which is often full of nitrates and curing salt, helping to keep it pink. Corned beef and cabbage is not a traditional Irish meal; rather it's a reinterpretation of traditional pork and potatoes. "So how did pork and potatoes become corned beef and cabbage? Irish immigrants to America lived alongside other 'undesirable' European ethnic groups that often faced discrimination in their new home, including Jews and Italians. Members of the Irish working class in New York City frequented Jewish delis and lunch carts, and it was there that they first tasted corned beef. Cured and cooked much like Irish bacon, it was seen as a tasty and cheaper alternative to pork. While potatoes were certainly available in the United States, cabbage offered a more cost-effective alternative to cash-strapped Irish families. Cooked in the same pot, the spiced, salty beef flavored the plain cabbage, creating a simple, hearty dish that couldn't be easier to prepare."

1

Combine the water, salt, sugar, and pickling spice in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring until salt and sugar have dissolved. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.

Poke several holes on all sides of the brisket with a knife or metal skewer and place in a 2-1/2-gallon resealable plastic bag. Pour the brine over the meat, making sure the meat is completely submerged, press out excess air, seal the bag, and place in a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Refrigerate for 3 days or up to 1 week.

2

Remove the beef from brine and brush off any spices that have stuck to the meat. Place in a Dutch oven or large, heavy-bottomed pot with a tight fitting lid. Add the onion, carrots, garlic, and enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat and then reduce to a simmer. Skim any foam that floats to the top, cover, and simmer until meat is fork tender, about 2 to 3 hours.

Once the beef is fork tender, add the cabbage to the pot, cover, and cook until cabbage is easily pierced with a knife, about 10 to 15 minutes.

3

Remove the beef to a cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes. Trim fat as desired and thinly slice against the grain. Serve with vegetables, horseradish, a sampling of different types of mustard and thousand island dressing.

Leftovers are great for Reuben Sandwiches.



A tapestry from Trinity College in Dublin (one of the oldest universities in the world).

Below, Al drinks a Guinness at 10:00 a.m. at Temple Bar as soon as we arrived in Dublin.



Al poses in front of Bunratty Castle during our 2007 trip to Dublin. We were pleasantly surprised at how good all the food was.



Ingredients

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Stew Beef

1 1/4 lbs., cut into 1-inch pieces

Garlic

6 large cloves, minced

Beef Stock (or Canned Beef Broth)

6 cups

Guinness Beer

1 cup

Red Wine

1 cup

Tomato Paste

2 tablespoons

Sugar

1 tablespoon

Thyme

1 tablespoon dried

Worcestershire Sauce

1 tablespoon

Bay Leaves

2

Butter

2 tablespoons

Russet Potatoes

Peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

continued . . .

Guinness Irish Beef Stew



The addition of Guinness beer and red wine set this beef stew recipe apart from most others. I originally made this one St. Patrick's Day years ago and we liked it so much that we now make it often.



Al poses in front of the Guinness factory in Dublin.

1

Heat olive oil in heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add beef and sauté until brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add beef broth, Guinness, red wine, tomato paste, sugar, thyme, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaves. Stir to combine. Bring mixture to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, then cover and simmer, 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

2

While the meat and stock is simmering, melt butter in another large pot over medium heat. Add potatoes, onion and carrots. Sauté vegetables until golden, about 20 minutes.

3

Add vegetables to beef stew. Simmer uncovered until vegetables and beef are very tender, about 40 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Tilt pan and spoon off fat. Transfer stew to serving bowl, sprinkle with parsley and serve.



Serve this stew with a nice cold mug of Guinness.

Ingredients

. . . continued

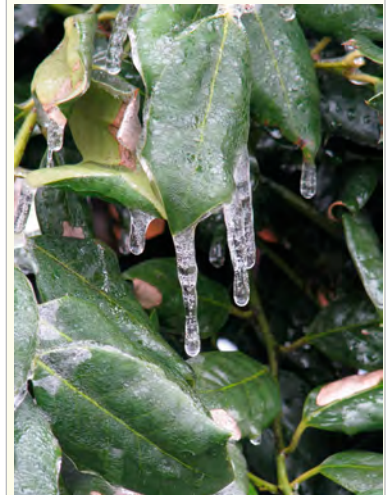
Onion

1 large chopped

Carrots

Peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (2 cups)

Salt & Pepper



While the weather is still cold, nothing is better than a bowl of hearty stew.



After a rousing game of street football (and maybe busting out a headlight or two), a bowl of beef stew and a beer hits the spot.



Passover



This is a photo I took of an oil painting by Ruth, hanging in her and George's dining room. I think it embodies the spirit of a family gathered for an important holiday commemoration.

Passover was the tenth and worst of the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians by God to facilitate the release of the Israelites from 400 years of slavery. On the first two nights of Passover, Jews are commanded to have a special family meal filled with ritual to remind them of the significance of the holiday. This Seder is no ordinary meal. There are a specific set of tasks that must be completed, which are written in a book called the Haggadah.

Matzah, Bitter Herbs, Charoses (a mixture of apples, nuts, and cinnamon) and wine (4 cups) are all symbolic foods that are a part of the seder. Although there is no specific requirement for the main course, Ashkenazic Jews traditionally begin the meal with gefilte fish and matzah ball soup.



Gefilte Fish

Ingredients

White Fish (de-boned)

6 lbs. ground fillet

Yellow Pike (de-boned)

6 lbs. ground fillet

Carp (de-boned)

4 lbs.

Fish bones, skin, etc

from de-boned fish

Onions

14 large

Carrots

8

Eggs

12

Matzo Meal

3 cups

Sugar

2 1/2 cups

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Gefilte Fish (“stuffed fish” in Yiddish) is an eastern European traditional dish and is often served on Shabbat and Passover. Gefilte fish originated among German Jewry in the Middle Ages as a way to stretch food and to have a meal on the Sabbath, when no cooking is allowed. A mixture of ground deboned fish - usually carp, whitefish or pike - is formed into patties, or balls.

Ruth’s Gefilte Fish has been famous in her circle for many years. Al remembers that she was one of the few people who would make it from scratch. She would make it in huge quantities and people would come to her house to buy it.

Gefilte fish is usually served with purple horseradish. Purple horseradish is a combination of prepared horseradish and beets. Drain the beets, mash, and mix with the prepared horseradish.

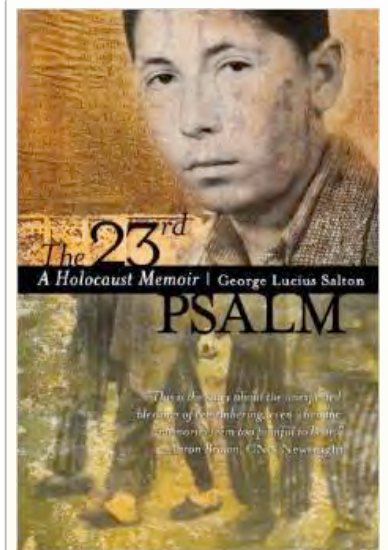
1 First, make the stock. Put the 4 lbs. of carp, bones and skin in a large pot. Add 6 sliced onions, 8 sliced carrots, 2 teaspoons of salt, 2 teaspoons of pepper and 1 cup of sugar. Bring to a boil. Skim off foam from top. Let simmer.

2 For the fish, grind 8 onions in a food processor. Blend in the ground white fish and yellow pike. Put in a large bowl. Add the eggs, matzo meal, 1-1/2 cups sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix and let stand 15 minutes.

3 Using your hands, form fish balls and drop into the simmering stock. Cook over low heat for 1 hour. Chill and serve with purple horseradish.



Sarah, Erica, Ben, Aaron and Josh between courses at Passover Seder at our house in Virginia. The Haggadah is open on the table.



It is important that we never forget what happened in the Holocaust. George beautifully conveyed his story of pain, loss and the ultimate resilience of the human spirit in his book, *The 23rd Psalm*.



Reading the Haggadah at the Seder table is a fulfillment of the commandment to each Jew to “tell your son” the story of the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt as described in the book of Exodus in the Torah.

Brisket with Portobello Mushrooms and Dried Cranberries

Ingredients

Dry Red Wine

1 cup

Beef Broth

1 cup

Frozen Cranberry Juice Cocktail concentrate

1/2 cup thawed

Flour

1/4 cup

Onion

1 large sliced

Garlic Cloves

4 minced

Rosemary

1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh

Beef Brisket

1 4-lb. flat-cut trimmed

Portobello Mushrooms

12 oz. medium thinly sliced

Dried Cranberries

1 cup

Salt & Pepper

To taste



There are many good recipes for brisket and we think this one is exceptional. I like to make it for Chanukah dinner and serve it with latkes, or make it anytime and serve with creamy au gratin potatoes. Leftovers, if there are any, freeze really well.

1

Preheat oven to 300°F. Whisk together wine, broth, cranberry concentrate and flour to blend in medium bowl. Pour into 15 x 10 x 2 inch roasting pan. Mix in onion, garlic and rosemary. Sprinkle brisket, fat side up, in roasting pan. Spoon some of the wine mixture over the brisket. Cover pan tightly with heavy-duty foil.

2

Bake brisket until very tender, about 3 1/2 hours, basting with pan juices every hour. Transfer brisket to plate; cool 1 hour at room temperature. Thinly slice brisket across grain. Arrange slices in pan with sauce, overlapping slices slightly. (Brisket can be made through this point up to 2 days ahead. Cover and refrigerate.)

3

Preheat oven to 350°F. Arrange mushrooms and cranberries in sauce around brisket and cover pan with foil. Bake until mushrooms are tender and brisket is heated through, about 30-40 minutes. Transfer to a platter and serve.



Many meals have been cooked in this kitchen . . .



. . . and a lot of good times have been shared here as well.



Everyone hangs out in the kitchen and ends up getting some sort of task to do.



Ben in front of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem during his Birthright trip to Israel.

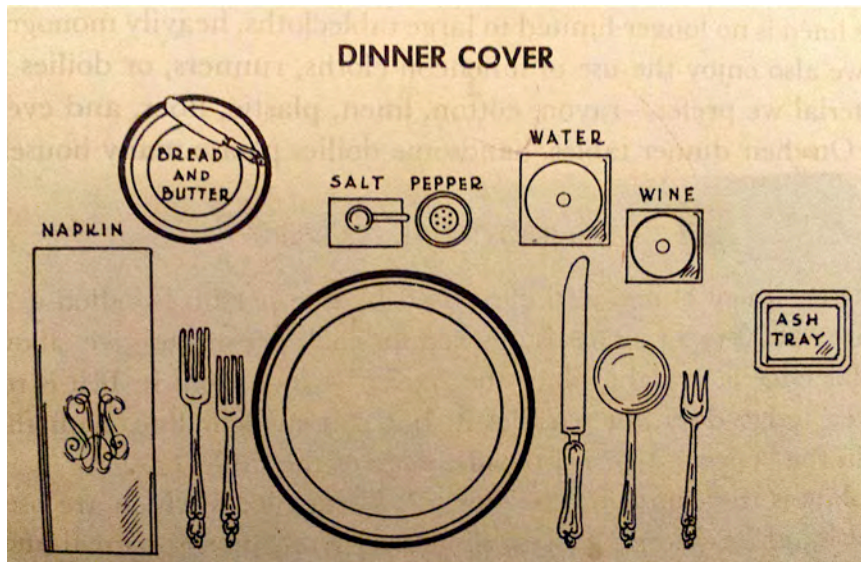


When I was growing up, we ate very informally, but I was always fascinated with setting the table. I loved adding cloth napkins, candles, and pretty dishes. Frankly, I still love setting the table. There's something special about our family sitting down to dinner each evening, and having conversations about the day. Having a nicely set table makes all food seem a little better too.



I learned to set the table using a cookbook (upper right) that came with an old set of encyclopedias we had (copyright 1958). It's fun to go back now and read some of the chapter titles, "New Methods of Cookery," "The Woman Who Works," "Foreign Foods," and my favorite, "Wine for Serving and In Cookery." I love setting the table using tablecloths, placemats or napkins that I've bought at the market while on vacation in France or Italy, and I love to pair colorful plates from my travels with food.

Setting the Table



The caption under this pictures reads, "A table correctly set is one of the marks of a good hostess. Correct setting will also make for greater ease and enjoyment on the part of the guests." I still set the table using this same example as a guide - minus the ashtray of course!

Setting the table is often a task that leaves family members wondering about the correct placement of silverware, plates, napkins and glassware. You know . . . does the fork go on the right or the left? Ok, here are the rules.

- The fork goes on the left of the plate. If you are also serving a salad, the salad fork should be placed to the left of the dinner fork. Just remember you eat salad first, so the salad fork is the first one you reach.
- The knife and spoon go on the right of the plate. The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp edge toward the plate. The spoon goes to the right of the knife.
- A water glass goes above the knife.
- Napkins can be placed under the forks or on the plate for a more informal setting.
- Avoid tall centerpieces on the table as they make it difficult for your guests to see each other and carry on conversations.





Summer



With the heat and sunshine of summer come the largest variety of fresh ingredients. Celebrate this season with lots of salads, corn on the cob, grilled shish kabob and tomatoes, tomatoes, tomatoes! Now is the time to make bruschetta and Caprese, blackberry and peach crumble, and fresh baked berry pies.

Grilled meats are, of course, a staple of the season, and you may want to try smoking ribs, chicken or brisket for a change of pace. Lighten your wine selection by drinking chilled rosé from Provence or a light Pinot Noir from Alsace.

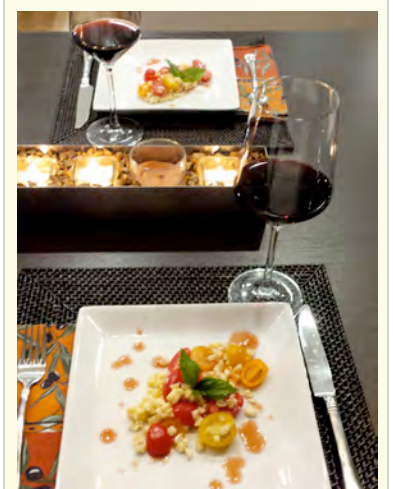


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Cooking Terms

The more you cook, the more familiar you will become with these terms. I've tried to take the most useful ones and define them here.

Al Dente - An Italian term meaning “to the tooth” used to describe pasta that is cooked, but still firm.

Braise - To cook slowly in a small amount of liquid in a covered pan on the stovetop or in the oven. Generally used for less tender cuts of meat.

Caramelize - To heat sugar in a skillet or saucepan over low heat until melted and golden brown. (Sometimes refers to cooking onions in butter until soft, caramel-colored, and rich in flavor).

“Coats Spoon” - To leave a thin, even, smooth film on the back of a metal spoon. This is a doneness test for stirred custards.

Deglaze - To add water, broth or wine to a pan in which food, usually meat, has been cooked to remove the browned bits to make a gravy or sauce.

Drizzle - To slowly spoon or pour a thin stream of an icing, melted butter, or other liquid over food.

Emulsify - To combine through a whisking action, two liquids that traditionally separate, such as oil and vinegar, into a uniform mixture.

Marinate - To tenderize and/or flavor foods, usually meat or raw vegetables, by placing in a liquid mixture of oil, vinegar, wine, lime or lemon juice, herbs and spices.

Parboil - To boil foods, usually vegetables, until partially cooked. Most often used when vegetables are finished using another cooking method (such as grilling potatoes or onions on a shish-kabob).

Purée - To mash solid foods into a smooth mixture using a food processor, food mill, blender, or sieve.

Sauté - To cook or lightly brown foods in butter or oil, until tender.

Simmer - To cook liquids just under the boiling point.



Bruschetta

Ingredients

Tomatoes

1 pint Cherry or Grape

Sugar

1 pinch

Shallot

1 medium

Parmesan Cheese

1 pound

Baguette Bread

1 white, wheat or multigrain

Roasted Garlic

3-4 cloves mashed

Olive Oil

2-3 tablespoons

Balsamic Vinegar

1 tablespoon (optional)

Fresh Basil

1 bunch



Fresh basil and tomatoes in season make this simple appetizer a real crowd pleaser. Serve it pre-assembled, or for a change serve it separately and let everyone build their own.

Bruschetta is one of my favorite dishes, and nothing goes better with a glass of red wine.



1 Cut cherry or grape tomatoes in half vertically. Remove seeds and put into a colander with a plate underneath. Dice shallots and add to tomatoes. Lightly salt.

2 Meanwhile slice the baguette diagonally into 1-inch thick slices. Make a paste from the roasted garlic and olive oil. Brush on bread slices. Place bread in oven and broil until slightly golden. Do not broil too long or the bread will get hard.

3 Cut the basil into small pieces and add it to the tomato mixture. After the tomato mixture has drained, put it into a bowl; drizzle with a little good quality olive oil and (optionally) just a little balsamic vinegar. A squirt of Balsamic Glaze on the top is a nice change as well. Salt and pepper to taste.

4 Thinly slice the parmesan cheese to serve on top or on the side.



Best with the freshest ingredients!



Cook's Tip:

Put the tomatoes and shallots in a colander with a plate underneath and let it sit for about 30 minutes. This will allow the fluid to drain so that your bruschetta will not be watery.



Classic Maryland Crab Cakes

Ingredients

Jumbo Lump Crab

1 pound

Egg

1 large

Mayonnaise

1/4 cup

Dijon Mustard

1 teaspoon

Old Bay Seasoning

1-1/2 teaspoon

Fresh Lemon Juice

1 teaspoon

Worcestershire Sauce

1/2 teaspoon

Fresh Bread Crumbs

1-1/4 cup

Fresh Parsley

1 tablespoon chopped

Butter

2 tablespoons

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon



You just can't live this close to the Chesapeake Bay without indulging in crab cakes from time to time. I like this recipe because it uses lots of crab meat, and very little filler - only enough egg and bread crumbs to hold them together.

The hardest thing about making these crab cakes is to let them brown sufficiently on the first side before flipping over. You can't flip them over too many times without them falling apart.

Use fresh crab meat, or pasteurized if buying off season. These crab cakes make a perfect summer evening dinner served with fresh corn-on-the-cob and creamy coleslaw. Enjoy them plain, or experiment with different sauces to go with them, like remoulade or tartar sauce.

1

Drain the crabmeat; pick through it; and remove any remaining shells. Place crab in a medium mixing bowl.

2

In a small bowl, whisk the egg, mayonnaise, mustard, Old Bay seasoning, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, and a pinch of salt. Pour over the crab and mix gently until well combined. Do not over mix.

3

Cut the crust off a few slices of white bread (I use



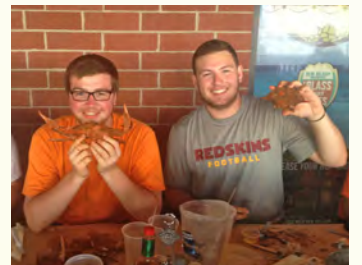
Pepperidge Farm), cut into quarters, and put in the food processor. Pulse until you have fine breadcrumbs. (Do not over process, or you will end up with a ball of bread.) Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the crab mixture, and gently mix. (Do not over mix or it will turn the mixture into mush.) Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 3 hours. This is key as the refrigeration prior to frying helps to hold the crab cakes together.

4

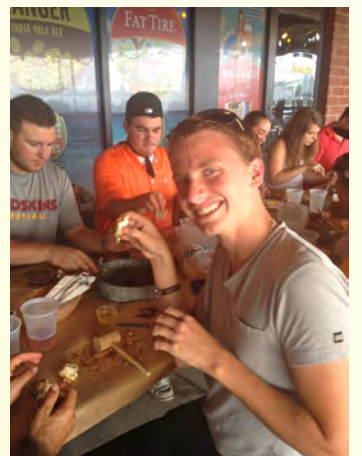
Shape the crab mixture into 6-8 cakes about 1-inch thick. In a 12-inch skillet, heat the butter and olive oil over medium heat. When the butter starts to get frothy, add the cakes and cook until dark golden brown on the underside, about 5 minutes. Flip the cakes; reduce the heat to medium low; and continue cooking until the other side is well browned. Garnish with lemon wedges and fresh parsley, and serve with tartar sauce, remoulade or both.



Make mini crab cakes and serve as part of a buffet or party platter.



Making crab cakes remind us of eating fresh crabs in Baltimore after an Orioles game. Sebastian (who was here visiting from Germany) really enjoyed the crab eating. Joris (here from France) wasn't as fond of the process, but was a good sport nonetheless.



Curry Dip

Ingredients

Mayonnaise

1 cup

Curry Powder

2 teaspoons

Sugar

1 teaspoon

Cider Vinegar

1 teaspoon



Curry Dip is great with chicken, beef or shrimp. It's perfect as a fondue dip, and can also be used as a spread or sandwich condiment. For something so simple, this dip packs a lot of flavor.



Sometimes it's fun to get dressed up for a nice dinner. Here, Mike wears a suit while opening a bottle of wine before dinner.

1 Mix all ingredients together.

2 Chill until serving.

Tangy Tartar Sauce



Tartar sauce recipes are often just a combination of mayonnaise, pickle relish and lemon juice. I decided to try this one because it contains a lot more ingredients that create much more flavor than those typical recipes. I must admit that when I was making this for the first time, it was kind of gagging me (because I'm not a fan of just blobs of mayo). After it chills and all of the flavors combine together, it is actually a really nice complement to fish dishes, especially crab cakes.

1 Whisk all the ingredients in a medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

2 Chill at least 1 hour and up to 2 days.

Ingredients

Mayonnaise

1 cup

Dill (or sweet) pickle

1/4 cup finely chopped

Green Onion

3 tablespoons chopped

Capers

1 tablespoon drained

Fresh Parsley

1 tablespoon chopped

Fresh Lemon Juice

2 teaspoons

Dijon Mustard

1 teaspoon

Tarragon

1/2 teaspoon dried

Worcestershire Sauce

1/2 teaspoon

Hot Pepper Sauce

1/4 teaspoon

Origin of Recipe

Bon Appétit - January 1999



The most fun part of eating fondue is dipping the meat and vegetables into different sauces.

Ingredients

Onion (Spanish or sweet)

1/2 cup chopped

Green Onions

1/2 cup chopped

Celery

1/4 cup chopped

Garlic

2 tablespoons chopped

Fresh Parsley

3 tablespoons chopped

Cilantro

1 tablespoon chopped

Paprika

1 tablespoon

Creole Seasoning

2 teaspoons

Horseradish

2 tablespoons

(continued . . .)

John's Rémoulade



I love cooking with my family and friends, and this recipe is the result of one of those wonderful weekends filled with eating, drinking and cooking. John is a big fan of Creole food, and prepared this Rémoulade for our fondue evening.

Traditionally, remoulade is served with chilled shrimp, but it also makes a great dip for fondue.

1 Pulse all ingredients in food processor until well blended.

2 Refrigerate for at least 2 hours (preferably overnight) so the flavors really blend together well.



Food is part of every travel experience, and certain foods remind us of trips we've taken together and meals we've shared. Rémoulade is definitely one of those foods . . . one cannot help but think of New Orleans when eating it. Above, Josh poses in front of the welcome sign at the airport, and below, Al, Matt, Josh and I stop to pose with one of the many bands playing on the street in New Orleans.



Ingredients

(. . . continued)

Creole Mustard

3 tablespoons

Yellow Mustard

3 tablespoons

Ketchup

3 tablespoons

Pickle Juice

1 teaspoon

Chipotle Hot Sauce

1 teaspoon

Fresh Lemon Juice

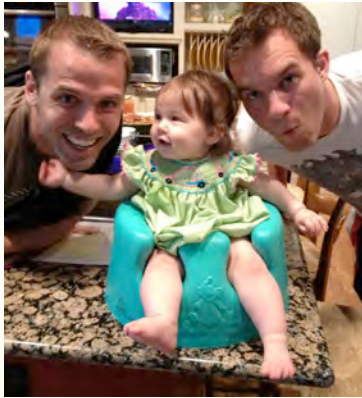
From 1 lemon

Mayonnaise

1-1/4 cup



John is tasting the Rémoulade to make sure it's just right (or is he trying to make himself throw up)?



Uncles Joe and Matt entertain Sophia while dinner is cooking.

Ingredients

For the Sauce . . .

Ketchup

1 1/2 cups

Brown Sugar

1/2 cup packed

Water

1/2 cup

Onions

1/4 cup finely chopped

Apple Cider Vinegar

3 tablespoons

Worcestershire Sauce

3 tablespoons

Chipotles in Adobo Sauce

2 finely chopped

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon

Ground Black Pepper

3/4 teaspoon

Easy Slow Cooker BBQ Beef Brisket



This is another one of those recipes that is deceptively easy to prepare, and makes you really happy that you decided to invest in a good slow cooker. It's also one of those dishes that is equally suited for a picnic on a hot summer day or a hearty meal in the dead of winter.

Some meats are tough by nature, and brisket is one of them. The biggest challenge with this brisket is trying to slice it at the end because it is literally so tender that it pulls apart with a fork.

Add a heap of sliced brisket to a lightly toasted bun, top with a little sauce, serve with baked beans and creamy coleslaw, and enjoy!

1



Place all the ingredients for the barbeque sauce in a 3-quart slow cooker and stir to combine.

2

Place all the brisket ingredients in a medium bowl and stir to combine. Place the brisket on a cutting board and cut it in half widthwise. Leave the fat on for



cooking - it will be removed later. (The fat adds a lot to the flavor of the meat.) Evenly coat it with the spice rub, including all the sides, and place the 2 brisket pieces in the slow cooker. Cover and cook on low until fork-tender, about 10 hours. Transfer the brisket to a clean cutting board.

3

Pour the barbeque sauce from the slow cooker into a medium heatproof bowl and set aside. Remove the excess fat from the brisket and discard it. Slice the meat against the grain into 1/4-inch thick pieces and return it to the slow cooker (the meat will be so tender you could shred it with 2 forks like pulled pork if you prefer).

4

Use a spoon to skim the fat from the surface of the barbeque sauce. Return the sauce to the slow cooker and combine it with the meat. Taste and add additional salt, pepper or hot sauce as needed.



Ingredients

For the Brisket . . .

Paprika

1/4 cup

Chili Powder

1 tablespoon

Ground Cumin

1 tablespoon

Brown Sugar

1 tablespoon packed

Salt

1 tablespoon

Cayenne Pepper

1 teaspoon

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon

Black Pepper

1 teaspoon freshly ground

Beef Brisket

1 5-lb.



Deviled Eggs with Sun-dried Tomato Pesto

Ingredients

Eggs

6 extra-large

Mayonnaise

3 tablespoons

Mustard

1/2 teaspoon

Salt

1/8 teaspoon

Sugar

1/4 teaspoon

Sun-dried Tomato Pesto

2 tablespoons

Adding the sun-dried tomato pesto gives these eggs an unexpected and interesting twist.



- 1** Place eggs in a single layer in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and cover them with cold water. Make sure the tops of the eggs are covered by at least an inch of water. Bring the water to a full boil, uncovered, then remove the pot from the heat and cover it. Let the pot stand untouched for 15 minutes.
- 2** Remove the boiled eggs from the water and transfer them to a bowl of cold water for 15 minutes. Peel the eggs. Cut in half (either vertically or horizontally).
- 3** Slip out yolks into a bowl and mash with a fork. Mix yolks, pesto, seasonings and mayo. Fill a pastry bag with the egg yolk mixture and pipe into the whites.

Classic Deviled Eggs



- 1** Place eggs in a single layer in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and cover them with cold water. Make sure the tops of the eggs are covered by at least an inch of water. Bring the water to a full boil, uncovered, then remove the pot from the heat and cover it. Let the pot stand untouched for 15 minutes.
- 2** Remove the boiled eggs from the water and transfer them to a bowl of cold water for 15 minutes. Peel the eggs. Cut in half (either vertically or horizontally).
- 3** Slip out yolks into a bowl and mash with a fork. Mix yolks, seasonings and mayo. Fill a pastry bag with the egg yolk mixture and pipe into the whites. Sprinkle with paprika.

Ingredients

Eggs

6 extra-large

Mayonnaise

3 tablespoons

Mustard

1/2 teaspoon

Salt

1/8 teaspoon

Sugar

1/2 tsp sugar (or 1/2 tsp sweet pickle juice)

Cook's Tip:

Take the opportunity to make something as boring as deviled eggs fun and festive by adding American flags for a July 4th picnic.



Ingredients

Garlic

1 clove

Dry White Wine

1 cup

Kirschwasser (optional)

1 tablespoon

Comté Cheese

1 lb. coarsely grated

Emmentaler Cheese

1/2 lb. coarsely grated

Nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon

Garlic Powder

1/8 teaspoon

Black Pepper

1/4 teaspoon

Cornstarch

2 teaspoons

Crusty French Bread

1 loaf, cut into 1-inch cubes

Granny Smith Apples

3 cored and cut into 1-inch cubes

Cook's Tip:

What to do with any leftover . . . reheated fondue serves as a wonderful sauce for chicken or vegetables.

Comté (Cheese) Fondue



When I was in my twenties, before we were all really busy with kids, I was in a “dinner club” with some of my close friends (Tony, Cathy, Greg and Natalie). It was so much fun to cook and eat all kinds of new dishes that we may not have cooked otherwise at that point in our lives. Both Cathy and Natalie are really good cooks in their own right and not only were these get-togethers a lot of fun, I also benefitted by adding a few of these dishes to my ongoing repertoire. To make this recipe more my own, I substituted Comté for the Suisse called for in the original recipe.

Fondue Suisse is another dish that my friend, Nat turned me on to. Since Nat had lived in Europe several years growing up, she infused her cooking with an international flare, which seemed very exotic to me at that time in my life.

Fondue can be served as an appetizer or party food, or it can served as dinner. We like this best served with chunks of Granny Smith Apples and crusty French bread.

1

Grate the cheese. In a small bowl, toss cheese with cornstarch.

2

Rub the inside of a fondue pot with a clove of garlic. Place the pot on the stove and begin by pouring the wine and Kirsch into the pot. Heat over medium flame until the wine is warm, but not boiling.

3

Add lemon juice, nutmeg and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to very low, then whisk cheese, one quarter at a time, into mixture. Cook and stir until mixture comes to a boil and thickens, about 5 minutes.

4

Transfer to fondue dish and serve with chunks of crusty bread and apples.



Cook's Tip:

If you like fondue, invest in a good fondue pot (I would recommend Le Creuset) and color coded fondue forks.



Al samples cheese fondue while on one of our travel adventures. As it turns out this is a regional specialty in Annecy, France.





The aroma of the bouillon and herbs makes the house smell great while you're getting dinner ready.

Ingredients

Vegetable Bouillon

2 squares

Water

5 cups

Shallots

1 tablespoon finely chopped

Onions

1 tablespoon chopped

Garlic

1 - 2 cloves finely minced

Fresh Parsley

1 tablespoon, chopped

Cilantro

2 sprigs

Meats for Dipping

2 filets, 1 chicken breast,
3/4-lb large shrimp

Fresh Vegetables

Baby red potatoes,
mushrooms

Dipping Sauces

Curry, Remoulade, Green
Goddess, Barbeque,
Horseradish

Fondue



Making fondue is an ideal dinner dish for friends or family as it involves people sitting around the table sharing a pot of food. It's also one of those meals where even the most novice of cooks can be involved, as it really only requires washing, chopping and sauce making.

Fondue is one of those meals we reserve for a weekend or special occasion dinner as the meal itself takes time - each person cooks their own meat and vegetables a few at a time.

Although classic fondue calls for cooking in oil, I prefer using vegetable bouillon. It's lighter, and has a lot less fat and calories.

As I emphasize in many of these recipes, use good quality cuts of meat, fresh shrimp or fish and fresh vegetables for the best results.

1

In a medium saucepan, add the water and vegetable bouillon. Bring to a boil.

2

Reduce heat. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 10-15 minutes.

3

Transfer to fondue pot. Serve with chunks of meat and fresh vegetables.



The real fun in eating fondue is trying all kinds of different sauces. Don't be afraid to experiment. Make a few "old standards" and then mix it up with some new ones.



Al and John look like they're having too much fun to be cooking.



John and I sample the wine before cooking with it . . . (someone has to do it!)

Chocolate Fondue

Ingredients

Chocolate

10 oz.

Light Cream

1/2 cup

Kirsch, Cointreau or other Cognac

2 tablespoons

Dunkables

Fresh Fruit, Marshmallows,
Pound Cake, Dried Fruit



Chocolate Fondue is always a fun dessert, especially for a group of people. It is also very easy to customize for your own tastes . . . milk chocolate, dark chocolate, Toblerone with honey and almonds, or

whatever combination appeals to you.

Serve with fresh strawberries, banana slices, pineapple chunks, dried fruit, marshmallows and cubed pound cake.

Many other fruits and pastries can be used as well.



Al and I brought this Kirschwasser back from Germany. We use it in both Cheese and Chocolate fondue.

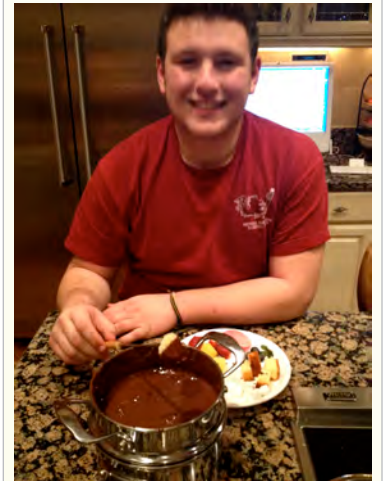




Josh, Matt and Ben eating Chocolate Fondue in 2002. It's so crazy to see how much they've grown and changed over the years.

- 1 Break chocolate into pieces about one inch square and combine with other ingredients in a double boiler or fondue pot.
- 2 Place over low heat and stir until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth.
- 3 Keep fondue warm over low flame.

Many of our family birthday celebrations were spent at The Melting Pot. Charlie and Barb got engaged there as well, so it's only natural that fondue would be a family favorite!



Josh and Matt eating Chocolate Fondue in 2011. "Brady is Matt in dog form" was a classic line from one of our family fondue get-togethers!



Boursin Stuffed Tomatoes

Ingredients

Plum Tomatoes

1/2 lb.

Boursin Cheese with Herbs

6 oz.



Cook's Tip

Dry the inside of the tomatoes thoroughly with a paper towel. This keeps the tomatoes from getting soggy when baked.



Serve as a side dish. Above, these tomatoes add holiday color to stuffed beef tenderloin.



These tasty stuffed tomatoes are a quick and colorful side dish to accompany any meal. I use them as a garnish to meat dishes, but you could also serve them as an appetizer. Stuffed tomatoes are both incredibly simple to make and delicious to eat.

- 1 Wash and dry the tomatoes. Cut off the top and, using a sharp knife cut around the edge of the tomato. Use a small spoon or melon baller to remove the insides. Discard.
- 2 Use a pastry bag (or a spoon will work if you don't have one) to fill the tomatoes with Boursin cheese. Place in a baking dish and bake at 350° until tops are slightly browned and filling is warm. Serve immediately.

Fresh Tomato & Corn Salad



Sometimes the best dishes are also some of the simplest. The key to this dish is absolutely the freshness of the ingredients. An ideal time to serve this salad is in the height of the summer season when tomatoes and corn are at their peak. Be sure to use a good quality olive oil to dress the salad.

- 1** Wash and dry the tomatoes. Cut some in halves and some in quarters.
- 2** Husk and clean the corn. Steam for 2-3 minutes until just tender. Cool and cut the corn from the cob.
- 3** Toss the corn and tomatoes gently in a medium bowl. Mix olive oil and red wine vinegar together. Serve chilled.

Ingredients

Cherry Tomatoes

Red and Yellow, 8 each

White Corn

2 ears

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Red Wine Vinegar

4 tablespoons

Salt & Pepper

To taste

Cook's Tip:

I like to arrange some of the salad on a plate and drizzle with the oil and vinegar, and top with a sprig of fresh basil. You could also cut up the basil, and mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and serve family style.



Since most of us don't have our own gardens, it's great to buy fresh produce at the Farmer's Market, like this one in Istanbul.

Ingredients

Tomatoes

2-3

Buffalo Mozzarella

8 oz.

Basil

2 -3 leaves per serving

Olive Oil

To taste

Balsamic Vinegar

To taste

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Insalata caprese (literally the salad from Capri) was created in the 1950s at the Trattoria da Vincenzo for regulars out for a light lunch. On the right is the harbor of Capri as seen from our balcony on our 2015 trip to Italy.

Caprese Salad



1

Wash tomatoes and basil. Let dry.

2

Slice mozzarella and tomatoes and arrange on plate. Add shredded or leaf basil.

3

Drizzle with good quality olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Salt and pepper to taste.





This salad is quick and easy and is especially good when tomatoes are in season. I like to mix up the tomatoes by using different colors and types. Purple, yellow and orange varieties add nice color to this already beautiful dish. Shred the basil (upper left), or add it as pictured above, to serve as both an herb and a garnish.

Sometimes I serve Caprese with the oil and vinegar already on it, but usually I let everyone add their own. In lieu of straight Balsamic Vinegar, use Balsamic Reduction for a little surprise to the palate . . . or throw in a few roasted beets like I did in my version shown here

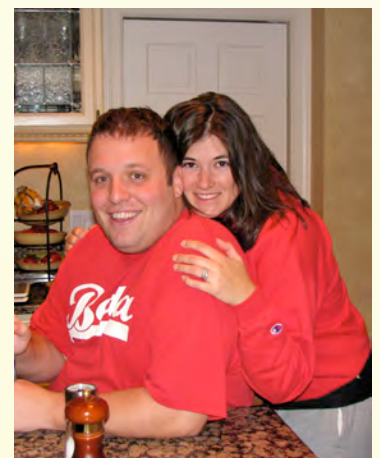
Making an effort to find really fresh ingredients (including the cheese) will pay off - the fresher the ingredients, the better this salad will be!



Caprese goes great with crusty French bread, like these baguettes Matt bought in Lourmarin, France.



Josh is almost too cool for kitchen duty . . . but not quite!



Charlie and Barb are all smiles while hanging out in the kitchen.



Have fun with cooking . . . especially with the presentation. Here's an example of taking something as simple as a caprese and giving it your own style.



We made every attempt to perfect our caprese eating in Sicily (2014) by ordering as many versions of it as possible.

Roasted Red Peppers



Ingredients

Bell Peppers

4 Red, Yellow or Orange

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Cook's Tip:

Roast peppers on the weekend and place in a plastic container, store in the refrigerator and you'll have them available during the week to use in pastas or to have as an appetizer on crusty french bread.

1



Arrange peppers on a foil lined cookie sheet. You can leave them whole at this point, or you can stem, remove seeds and cut into halves. Roast in a 475°F oven until they are wrinkled and charred.

2

Remove peppers from tray and place in a paper bag. Allow to cool. Remove from bag, and run under cold water to remove the skin and seeds. Place in a container and cover with olive oil. Mix well.



Ingredients

Butter

2 tablespoons

Yellow Onion

1 medium diced

Russet Potatoes

2 peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

Milk

5 cups

Heavy Cream

1 cup

Corn

4 ears, kernels removed

Bacon

3 slices, cooked and chopped

Cayenne Pepper

1/2 teaspoon



Ben does the unenviable job of cutting the kernels from the corn. You can use either yellow or white corn, but the white will make the soup sweeter.

Corn Chowder



Although I really love vegetables I have never been real crazy about corn. Al - on the other hand - loves it, so I have been trying to incorporate more corn into my cooking. The great thing about this dish is that it can be a starter for a hearty winter meal, or it can serve as the main dish.



Josh, Matt and Ben are ready to start off the meal with some Corn Chowder.

1

In a Dutch oven, warm the butter over low heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the potatoes and cook for 2 minutes.

2

Add the milk and cream; increase the heat to medium-high; and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Add the corn and bacon and cook for 5 minutes.

3

Using a large slotted spoon, transfer 2 cups of the soup mixture to a bowl. Put the remaining soup in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Stir in the reserved soup mixture and the cayenne pepper. Salt and pepper to taste. Before serving, garnish with some fresh diced scallions, shredded cheddar cheese and/or crumbled bacon.



Joe cooks and plays with Sophia at the same time.



Cook's Tip:

To make an easy main dish, serve Corn Chowder with a skewer of Grilled Spicy Thai Shrimp across the top (left). The sweet creaminess of this soup is a perfect complement to the spiciness of the shrimp.

Ingredients

Peanut Butter

3/4 cup Natural unsweetened creamy peanut butter

Coconut Milk

13.5-oz. can of full-fat, unsweetened coconut milk

Thai Red Curry Paste

2-oz. (~1/4 cup)

Salt

1 teaspoon

Sugar

3/4 cup

Apple Cider Vinegar

2 tablespoons

Water

1/2 cup



Cook's Tip:

Do NOT use regular peanut butter or anything with added emulsifiers. It must be the type of natural peanut butter that comes with peanut oil on top and no sugar added.

Thai Peanut Sauce



- 1 Put everything into a medium heavy-bottomed pot and bring to a very gentle boil over medium heat, whisking constantly.
- 2 Let the mixture simmer for 3-5 minutes over low heat; be careful not to let the mixture scorch on the bottom of the pot.
- 3 Take the pot off the heat, let the sauce cool down to room temperature (or slightly warmer), and serve the sauce with chicken satay. This sauce also can also be used to make a stir-fry with peanut sauce or as a dip for fondue.

Chicken Satay



- 1** Combine all the marinade ingredients together in a large bowl or storage container. Add chicken breasts to marinade and marinate for several hours or overnight.
- 2** Soak skewers in water for about 30 minutes prior to using to prevent them from burning while cooking.
- 3** Reserve marinade. Lightly pound out the chicken breasts, until they are about 1-inch thick. Cut lengthwise into strips. Add one strip to each skewer. Grill, turning a few times and basting with reserved marinade, until cooked through, but not dry (about 15-20 minutes). Serve with Thai Peanut Sauce.

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

4

Soy Sauce

5 tablespoons

Lemon Juice

3 tablespoons freshly squeezed

Brown Sugar

2 tablespoons

Garlic

4 cloves minced

Ground Coriander

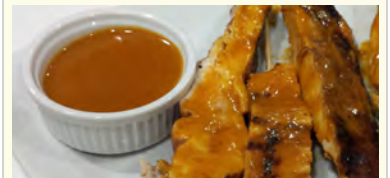
1 teaspoon

Ground Cumin

1 teaspoon

Fresh Ginger

2 teaspoons grated



Serve with Thai Peanut Dipping Sauce.



It's always fun to get together with different people and try cooking (and eating) dishes we've never made before.

Cannoli Filling

Ingredients

Whole Milk Ricotta

2 cups

Powdered Sugar

3/4 cup

Vanilla

1/2 teaspoon

Heavy Cream

1/2 cup

Lemon Zest

1 tablespoon



Our family has shared a lot of adventures centered around special meals. Here we are in 2007 in San Gimignano, Italy.

Did you know?

Cannoli is the plural form of this delicious dessert. The singular is cannolo, although I have never heard anyone refer to it this way (at least on this side of the pond).

Cannoli originated in Sicily, and mean “little tube.”



For those of us lucky enough to have gone to Italy, particularly Sicily, we know just how amazing a good cannoli can be. To have these at home, I usually buy good quality shells and make my own filling. The sweet, creamy cheese and the crunchy shell are an irresistible combination, and each bite takes us back to a vacation place, where the sun is shining and the colors are vibrant.

1

Drain the ricotta cheese and place it in a medium bowl. Using a whisk, stir until most of the clumps have become smooth. Sift in the powdered sugar and continue to make smooth. In a mixer, beat the heavy cream until it becomes stiff and forms peaks. Using a spatula, gently fold the cream into your mixture, then the vanilla and lemon zest.

2

Set the mixture in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes prior to filling the shells.

3

Fill the cannoli using a pastry bag. Fill one end of the cannoli shell until the filling comes to the edge. Repeat with the other end of the shell. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and shaved chocolate, or drizzle with hot fudge sauce.



Cannoli make a great ending to any meal.

Cook's Tip:

Do not fill your cannoli shells until right before serving, or you will lose the crunchiness of the shells.

Add mini chocolate chips or chopped pistachios to the ends of the cannoli,



The cannoli above and below were from our 2012 and 2014 trips to Sicily respectively. Crisp shells, creamy smooth inside, delicious taste.



Fruit Dip

Ingredients

Cream Cheese

1 8-oz. pkg.

Marshmallow Cream

1 7-oz. jar

Strawberries

2 quarts, washed and stemmed

Pineapple

1 cored, peeled and cut into chunks



This is a quick, easy and fun alternative to standard dips. It's colorful; it's fresh; it's delicious, and it's a perfect dish to take to a brunch.

1

Let cream cheese soften. Add the marshmallow cream. Blend well, then refrigerate one hour.

2

Serve with fresh strawberries and pineapple.



Add a drink umbrella to make this dip very festive.



Charlie and Barb have spent lots of time in our kitchen over the years, cooking, eating, drinking and just hanging out.



We have shared a lot of meals with Tony & Cathy over the years, both home cooked and out.



Ratatouille with Lamb

Ingredients

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Purple Onions

2 medium peeled and cut into chunks

Garlic

4 cloves minced

Cherry Tomato Medley

Red, Yellow, Orange & Purple, 20 halved

Zucchini (courgettes)

6 medium cut into chunks

Eggplants (aubergines)

2 small, cut into chunks

Bell Peppers

Green, Red & Yellow - 1 each, seeded and cut into chunks

Vegetable Broth

1/2 cup

Fresh Thyme

1 teaspoon minced

Fresh Oregano

1 teaspoon minced

Salt & Pepper

To taste

Lamb Chops

6-8 rubbed with garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper



Nothing says “South of France” like Ratatouille, and frankly I’m surprised I haven’t made this dish more often over the years. This hearty dish from Provence is simply a mix of seasonal vegetables, garlic and olive oil, and is great with lamb, sausage or pasta. It is a perfect dish to make when you return home from a farmers’ market with lots of beautiful, fresh vegetables, like eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes and peppers. We especially like it with lamb chops.

Food should appeal to all the senses, and cooking with a variety of colors and textures makes delicious smelling and tasting food seem even better.



1

In a large frying pan over medium heat, warm the oil. Add onions and garlic and sauté 2-3 minutes. Add the other vegetables and cook until just tender. Transfer to slow cooker.



2



In the same pan, brown the lamb on both sides. Transfer to slow cooker.

3

Add the broth, thyme, oregano, salt and pepper to the items in the slow cooker. Cover and cook on the low setting for 8 hours. Serve over pasta or egg noodles.



The colorful fresh vegetables used in Ratatouille remind us of the sun drenched beauty of Provence.



Cook's Tip:

After the ratatouille has cooled to room temperature, put it in plastic airtight containers. You can store it in the refrigerator for 2 days or freeze it up to 2 months.

Salmon with Figs, Saba & Watercress

Ingredients

Saba (Balsamic Vinegar)

2 tablespoons

Olive Oil

1/2 cup extra-virgin, plus
more for coating the fish

Sea Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Black Pepper

1 pinch, freshly ground

Watercress

2 bunches, rinsed and dried

Salmon

4 6-oz. salmon fillets, bones
removed

Figs

8 fresh ripe



When Al and I stayed at “Sous les Figuiers” in St.-Remy-de-Provence, our breakfast of croissants and fruit, featuring fresh figs, was served to us on our terrace (above) each morning. Thus began our love affair with figs!



This dish is defined by the freshness of the ingredients. I had never eaten fresh figs until Al and I went to Provence several years ago, and have frankly been wild about them ever since. This is also a great dish to make if you are trying to watch your calorie intake as it has very little fat and calories and lots of good stuff. If I can't find watercress, I just use a spring mix of greens instead. As long as there is some “bite” to the greens (as with arugula) it combines well with the other flavors.



John and Al are whipping up a dinner with fresh figs in Napa where we celebrated Drew and John's wedding with them. (Drew is refilling the wine glasses and entertaining the chefs.)

1 In a small bowl, whisk together the saba (or balsamic vinegar) and olive oil; season with about 1/2 teaspoon salt and a pinch of pepper.

2 Place the watercress in a mixing bowl, add the saba and oil dressing and toss to lightly coat. Divide the salad among individual plates, creating a flattened stack; set aside. Preheat a large grill pan over medium-high heat.

3 Rub the salmon fillets on both sides with a little olive oil; season only the flesh (not the skin) with salt and pepper to taste. Cook the fillets, skin side down, for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the edges of the fish begin to turn opaque. Carefully turn the fish over and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. (If the fillets are very thick, turn to cook them for 1 to 2 minutes more on each side as well.)

4 While the salmon is cooking, place the figs, cut sides up, in the same pan and cook for about 2 minutes, moving them around and turning them over until they just begin to wilt.

5 Arrange 4 fig halves on each plate, alternating cut sides up and down, around the watercress. Place a fillet, skin side down, on top of each stack of watercress. Drizzle each plate with some of the saba dressing left in the mixing bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste; serve warm.



Cook's Tip:

Fresh figs can be difficult to find. They are usually in season in September and October and can be found at specialty grocery stores like Wegman's and Harris Teeter.

What is Saba?

Saba has its origins in the Greco, Roman and Egyptian periods and was originally made from Trebbiano and Manbrusco grapes, cooked until the liquid became thick. Saba was used with meats, wild bird and game dishes to name a few. In fact, it was used to sweeten just about anything. At some point though, due to war and other cultural influences Saba became a lost art. Around 1000 AD, the first signs of Balsamic Vinegar were evident, and it was considered a prized possession. In those times it was used as a disinfectant and both an internal and external elixir.

Original Recipe

The Young Man & The Sea
by David Pasternak

Ingredients

Shrimp

12 Jumbo

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Lemon Juice

2 tablespoons

White Wine

2 tablespoons

Salt

1 teaspoon

Garlic

2 tablespoons minced

Butter

3 tablespoons unsalted

Red Pepper Flakes

2 teaspoons

Fresh Parsley

2 tablespoons

Joe & Susie's Spicy Shrimp Scampi



Some people cook because they have to, and others do it because they enjoy the art of creating beautiful and delicious food. In our family everyone likes to cook, and no one more than Joe and Susie. They are always willing to jump in and help with whatever we're cooking, and they have become quite good cooks in their own right.

Joe and Susie like food that is full flavored and zesty, and anyone who knows Joe can attest to the fact that he likes food extra spicy! This dish is delicious and has a bit of a kick, but you can adjust just how spicy it is by the amount of red pepper flakes you put in it. Be aware - the 2 teaspoons called for here will make this dish hot!

Serve it with some crusty bread and a nice glass of white wine and you have a very festive meal indeed!



Susie takes a break from cooking to play with Sophia.

1

Cook pasta according to directions. Drain water using a colander.

2

Heat oil in a hot skillet. Add the shrimp and cook over medium heat for about 3-4 minutes. Add garlic, pepper flakes, lemon juice, wine, and salt. Cover and cook for 3 minutes.

3

Beat in butter. Remove from heat and add fresh parsley. Serve over pasta.



Our villa in Lourmarin was a great place to have a big family meal.



Here Joe and Susie pose for a picture before we head out to dinner. Part of the adventure of every trip is the culinary experience. Eating in different places in the world open you up to cooking in different ways, and these guys enjoy that experience. We can hardly wait until they share what they learned in their cooking class in Italy with us.



Joe and Susie prepare a new dish for the gang (above) and have a well deserved beer in town (below).



Ingredients

(makes 2)

Flour

4 cups

Hazelnuts

2-1/2 cups ground

Sugar

1-1/2 cups

Butter

1-1/4 cups softened

Eggs

2 extra large or 3 smaller

Schnapps

4 tablespoons

Cinnamon

1 tablespoon

Clove

1 knifepoint

Baking Powder

1 teaspoon

Currant or Raspberry Preserves

2 cups

Cook's Tip:

In German recipes you have a volumetric unit called knifepoint - "point of the knife" - which is the equivalent of a pinch. A pinch is approximately 1/8 teaspoon.

Sebastian's Grandmother's Linzertorte

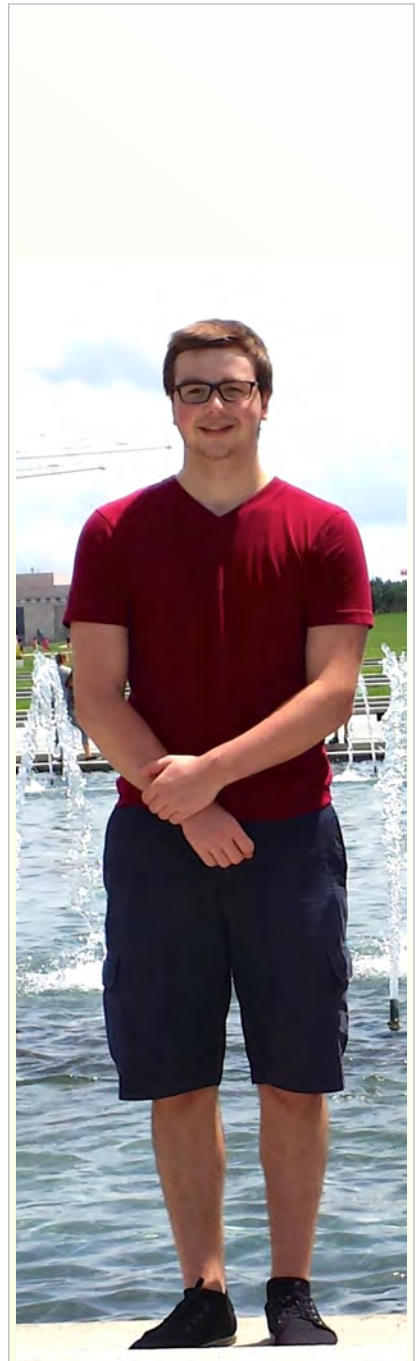


Our German colleague and friend, Margit, asked if her nephew could come to the U.S. and work at the abas-USA office during the 2013 summer to work on his English. We invited Sebastian to stay in our home with another summer intern from France, Joris. Sebastian had learned from Margit that Al is a big fan of linzertorte and decided he would use his grandmother's recipe and bake one for Al as a gesture of gratitude for hosting him for the summer. This became a real labor of love when Sebastian started to get the ingredients together and noticed they were all in grams and our measuring utensils here of course are all in teaspoons, tablespoons and cups! His second challenge was the fact that he didn't really have the right pan. Sebastian was determined, however, and rallied through the adversity to produce 2 beautiful (and delicious) linzertortes for Al.

1 Preheat the oven to 340°F. Cover the inside of the pan(s) with butter.

2 Mix all the ingredients (except the preserves) in a food processor. Roll 1/3 of the dough out and put in the base of the pan and up the side to form a small edge.

3 Put the preserves on top of the dough. Roll 1/6 of the dough out and cut in thin strips. Put in 3 strips and cross with another 3 to get a weave pattern. Brush top with egg yolk and bake for 30 minutes.



Sebastian in front of the reflecting pool in downtown Washington, DC. That summer was an unusually hot one.

Ingredients

Cucumbers

4 cups peeled and diced

Chick Peas

1 14-oz. can rinsed

Red Bell Pepper

2/3 cup diced

Red Onion

1/4 cup slivered

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Oregano

1 teaspoon dried

Feta Cheese

1/2 cup crumbled

Kalamata Olives

8-10 halved

Lemon Juice

2 tablespoons

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Cook's Tip:

The chickpeas in this recipe can be replaced with cannellini beans or black-eyed peas.

Chickpea Salad



This is a perfect salad to serve on a bed of lettuce for lunch or as a side dish to any grilled meat. It's also a great dish for a pot-luck meal as it's easy to make and travels well. We particularly like it as a side dish with Greek inspired Kabobs.

1

Whisk oil, lemon juice, oregano and pepper in a large bowl until combined.

2

Add cucumber, chickpeas, bell pepper, feta, onion and olives. Toss to coat.



Gazpacho



I'd like to say when I think of Gazpacho, I think of being in a beautiful little village in Spain, sitting outside eating it with a nice glass of wine. What I do think of though is making it at midnight the night before a project was due in Matt's seventh grade Spanish class. We went to Kinko's to print a large Spanish flag, then grocery shopped for what we needed, came home and made this. If I remember correctly, Matt got an "A" on the project. Aside from late night school projects, Gazpacho is a lovely way to start a summer meal, as unlike most soups, this one is served chilled. Just to shake things up a bit, you could start Christmas dinner with a bowl of this cold soup as something a little unexpected.

- 1** Blend the first seven ingredients in a blender until smooth. Take half of the mixture out. Add the tomato juice and water. Blend until well mixed. Pour into a large bowl.
- 2** Take half of the mixture out, and add the saved portion back in. Season with Tabasco and black pepper. Mix all ingredients together in a large container and chill in the refrigerator. Serve with small bowls of chopped celery, cucumber, onion, green pepper, avocado, and croutons to be used as a garnish.

Ingredients

Plain Bread Crumbs

3/4 cup

Cumin

1-1/2 teaspoon

Salt

1 teaspoon

Olive Oil

5 tablespoons

Garlic

2-3 cloves minced

Tomato Sauce

1 8-oz. can

Red Wine Vinegar

2 tablespoons

Tomato Juice (V8)

3 cups

Water

3 cups cold

Tabasco

3-4 drops



Gazpacho is a great start to any meal. It's also worth noting that this is another recipe I got from my friend Natalie, back in the early 80s.

Greek-Inspired Chicken Kabobs

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

2 cut into large chunks

Bell Peppers

1 green, red, yellow, orange or a combination thereof

Onions

4 small, peeled

Cherry Tomatoes

8-12 red, purple or yellow or a combination thereof

Tzatziki Yogurt Dip

1 cup



I've been making shish kabobs of some sort for most of my adult life, but in recent years we've experimented more with Greek and Middle-Eastern influenced flavors. For a weeknight dinner, put the meat in the marinade one night and grill it for dinner the next. Both chicken and lamb versions are great served with grilled vegetables, Basmati rice, chickpea salad and grilled pita.



Matt and Josh making Kabobs

- 1** Wash and dry the chicken. Place it in a container with the Tzatziki and mix well, thoroughly coating the chicken. Refrigerate for at least an hour, and preferably overnight so that the chicken can really absorb the flavor of the Tzatziki.
- 2** Skewer the chicken and vegetables. Grill until the chicken is cooked through, being sure to remove it before it gets dry. Serve with warm pita bread, basmati rice and some Tzatziki for dipping.

Greek-Inspired Lamb Kabobs



Grill the lamb the same way as the chicken, but you can leave the lamb a bit more rare. To mix it up a bit, serve the lamb with a Chickpea Salad and extra Tzatziki for dipping.



Joe and Susie look fabulous as they prepare their own version of Shish Kabobs.

Ingredients

Lamb Chops

4 cut into large chunks

Bell Peppers

1 green, red, yellow, orange or a combination thereof

Tzatziki Yogurt Dip

1 cup



Lucky, Bailey and Brady are just hoping Al drops something.

Ingredients

Beef

Good quality, like Filet, cut into chunks

Chicken

Breasts, cut into chunks

Peppers

1 green, 1 red

Mushrooms

8

Pearl Onions

8

Cherry Tomatoes

16

Good Seasons Zesty Italian Dressing Mix

1 package

Olive Oil

1/2 cup

Balsamic Vinegar

1/4 cup

Water

3 tablespoons



Shish Kabob



1

Cut the beef, chicken, red and green peppers into 2-inch chunks. Make the dressing according to the package instructions. Marinate the beef and vegetables in one container and the chicken in another for at least an hour.



2

Skewer the meat and vegetables. If you are alternating the meat and vegetables on a skewer, par cook the onions and peppers so that the cooking times for everything is about the same. You can also arrange the skewers as all beef, all chicken, all peppers, etc.

3

Grill until the chicken is just done and the beef is as you like it and the vegetables are soft but not mushy. Serve with rice or over a salad.

Barbeque Chicken Sandwiches



Al and I made these Barbeque Chicken sandwiches again a few weeks ago, and they were so good, we wondered why we don't have them more often. In fact, Matt just said recently, "That's literally my favorite dish." Again, the flavors in this sandwich all blend together and complement each other perfectly. Serve with a mini bowl of your favorite BBQ sauce and maybe add a side of baked beans. In the summer, this is great with an ear of fresh white corn on the cob.

- 1** Wash and dry the chicken breasts. (I always remove any remaining fat that's on them.) Pound the breasts out until they are about 1/2-inch thick. Brush both sides with barbeque sauce.
- 2** Grill the chicken until done, but still juicy, about 5 minutes per side. (The time will depend upon how hot your grill is.) Add a slice of cheese to each breast and cook until just melted. Lightly toast the onion rolls. Serve chicken breasts on an onion roll topped with barbeque sauce and Creamy Coleslaw.



Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

4 skinless, boned

Barbeque Sauce

To taste

Sharp Cheddar Cheese

4 slices

Creamy Coleslaw

2 cups

Onion Rolls

4

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Ingredients

Salmon Fillets

2 -4

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Soy Sauce

3 tablespoons

Scallions

2 chopped

Garlic

1 clove minced

Fresh Ginger

1 teaspoon grated

Mixed Salad Greens

3 cups

Pine Nuts

1/2 cup toasted

Goat Cheese

4 oz.

Onion

1/4 medium sliced

Cherry Tomatoes

6-8

Cook's Tip:

For a more Asian flavor, replace the olive oil with sesame oil and replace the pine nuts with toasted sesame seeds.

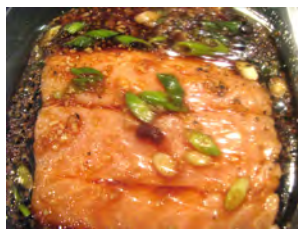
Blackened Salmon & Goat Cheese Salad



This recipe makes a delicious dinner salad, or you can use the marinade and serve the salmon as an entree.

1

Mix oil, soy sauce, scallions, garlic, and ginger to make a marinade. Pour over salmon and marinate for 1 hour in the refrigerator - no longer than an hour or the salt in the soy will begin to cook the meat.



2

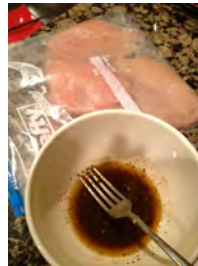
Grill or broil salmon for about 4 minutes per side (it's perfect when the salmon flakes when pierced with a fork). Arrange mixed greens in a bowl. Add cherry tomatoes, onions, roasted pine nuts and goat cheese. Serve with your choice of dressing.


Blackened Chicken Breasts



This chicken is great in a salad with avocados, mangos, pine nuts and blue cheese, or can be used for chicken salad as well. For a light, healthy meal, serve it with some fresh steamed or grilled vegetables.

- 1** Pound chicken breasts out so that they are about 1/2-inch thick. Mix all ingredients together to make a marinade.



- 2**  Pour into a plastic ziploc bag, add chicken and marinade. Refrigerate for a few hours. Grill chicken until just done, but not dry, about 5-8 minutes per side.

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

4 lightly pounded

Black Pepper

1/4 cup

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Cayenne Pepper

2 heaping tablespoons

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon

Paprika

1 teaspoon

Cumin

1 teaspoon

Paprika

1 teaspoon

Dried Basil

1 teaspoon

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Grill this chicken and some fresh seasonal vegetables for an easy summer meal.

VARIETY



The key to eating a lot of salad is to really mix it up, starting with the greens. Use arugula, spinach and mixed varieties.

- For main dish salads, add grilled meats such as beef, chicken or fish.
- Use different vegetables depending on what's fresh and in season.
- Use cheeses such as feta, goat, blue, and shaved parmesan.

Salads . . .



Roasted red beets, Bartlett pear slices, goat cheese and toasted pumpkin seeds on a bed of mixed greens



Fresh tomatoes and cucumbers paired with grilled beef tenderloin and garnished with crumbed blue cheese and dried cranberries

. . . More Salads



Grilled salmon on a bed of arugula with goat cheese, cherry tomatoes, and kalamata olives, with some honey mustard drizzle



Baby greens, purple onion rings, fresh fig wedges, walnuts and homemade croutons

EASY

We sometimes plan a dinner salad and other times we concoct one from whatever ingredients we have on hand. A few tips:

- When you grill meat or steam vegetables, make some extra so the leftovers can be used the next night in a salad.
- Keep various nuts and dried berries “in stock” in your pantry.



FRESH



Let the season drive your salads. Go to the farmers' market and buy fresh fruits/vegetables.

- Local strawberries in late May are much sweeter.
- Figs in late September make an interesting and delicious option.
- You can't beat fresh tomatoes in the late summer.
- Sweet corn - lightly steamed and cut off the cob - is great in a southwestern salad.

More Salads . . .



Grilled chicken with mango, avocado, cherry tomatoes, feta cheese, toasted pine nuts and pizza points



"Nicoise" style tuna salad, cherry tomatoes, boiled new red potatoes, steamed French green beans, purple onion slices, hard boiled egg and Kalamata olives

. . . More Salads



Field greens topped with smoked brisket with fresh strawberries, feta cheese and honey mustard dressing



Classic Italian style salad with fresh shaved parmesan cheese as the key ingredient.

HEALTHY

A few tips for keeping your salads healthy . . .

- Serve the dressing in a small side dish. It looks festive and it's easy to limit how much you use as the dressing is the unhealthiest part of the salad.
- Nuts are an excellent source of protein, but don't add too many because they do contain a lot of fat as well.



Ingredients

Pecans

1 cup

Butter

1/4 stick

Brown Sugar

1/4 cup

Vanilla Extract or Maple Syrup (optional)

1/4 teaspoon



Caramelized Pecans dress up a salad and add interesting texture.



Matt and Susie hang out in Barb and Charlie's kitchen at a family get-together.

Caramelized Pecans



Caramelized Pecans are a great addition to a salad or can be made as stand alone party fare. If you're making these for a crowd, you will want to double or triple the recipe.

1

Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. You do not want the butter to turn brown and burn, so pull the pan off the heat to help regulate it.

2

Add the pecans and make sure they are all just coated with butter. (Add more butter or pecans if you need to.) Add the sugar and stir constantly until the brown sugar is caramelized (turns golden brown and thickens). Remove from pan and cool.



Honey Mustard Dressing



Once you start making your own fresh salad dressings, you will probably not want to use store bought ones again. This easy honey mustard dressing goes with a variety of salads and can be used as a dipping sauce for fresh veggies or french fries.

- 1 Whisk together the mayonnaise and dijon mustard. Add white vinegar and whisk more. Slowly pour in the honey and whisk until smooth.
- 2 Drizzle on salad or put in a small dish and serve the dressing “on the side.”



Ingredients

Honey

1/2 cup

Dijon Mustard

1/2 cup

Apple Cider Vinegar

2 teaspoons

Mayonnaise

1 cup



Using a whisk ensures the dressing will be smooth. Use a good quality honey to make your dressing.



Ingredients

Baguette

1/2 chopped into 1-inch cubes

Olive Oil or Butter

1/4 cup

Italian Seasoning

1 teaspoon

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon



Croutons



When Charlie, Joe and Sara were little, they thought it was magical that I made my own croutons. Once you make homemade croutons and taste how much better they are than store bought ones, you'll never settle for less again. You can use leftover buns, baguettes or whatever you have lying around to make these. They only take a few minutes, and are a lovely addition to any salad.

1

Heat olive oil (or butter, or a combination) in skillet until hot, but not smoking.

2

Add bread and stir until lightly coated with oil.

3

Sprinkle liberally with garlic powder and Italian Seasoning and continue to stir until golden brown. Remove and cool before adding to salad.

Guacamole



Guacamole means "avocado sauce" in Spanish and is definitely one of our household favorites, especially Ben's. This recipe is great as it uses all fresh ingredients and can be made in just a few minutes.

- 1 Mix the tomatoes, cilantro, onion, garlic, lime juice, Jalapeño pepper, and salt in a mixing bowl.
- 2 Immediately before serving, peel and coarsely mash the avocados. Stir in the tomato mixture. Season with salt and pepper and serve at once.



Note: If the guacamole is made in advance, add one or two avocado pits to the mixture, and cover the surface of the guacamole with plastic wrap to keep the air from darkening it. Using the freshest ingredients possible, including fresh squeezed lime juice, will enhance the flavor of the guacamole.

Ingredients

Tomato

3 seeded and chopped

Cilantro

1/4 cup chopped fresh

Onion (white)

1 medium minced

Garlic Cloves

2-3 roasted and mashed

Lime Juice

1/4 - 1/2 cup

Avocados

8 very ripe (but unbruised) peeled, seeded and smashed

Jalapeño Pepper

1 seeded and finely minced



Above, Ben peels and cores avocados while making guacamole. Below, Sophia tries to munch on a raw avocado.



Original Recipe

Martha Stewart's
Hors d'Oeuvres

Ingredients

Graham Cracker Pie Shell

1 9-inch

Egg Yolks

3

Sweetened Condensed Milk

1 14-oz. can

Nellie & Joe's Key Lime Juice

1/2 cup

Lime

1 fresh



Kathy, Henry, Ruth, George, Al and I celebrate Ruth's birthday in sunny Florida.



The best place to get good Key Lime Pie out is in Florida. This recipe is so simple though anyone can make it at home.

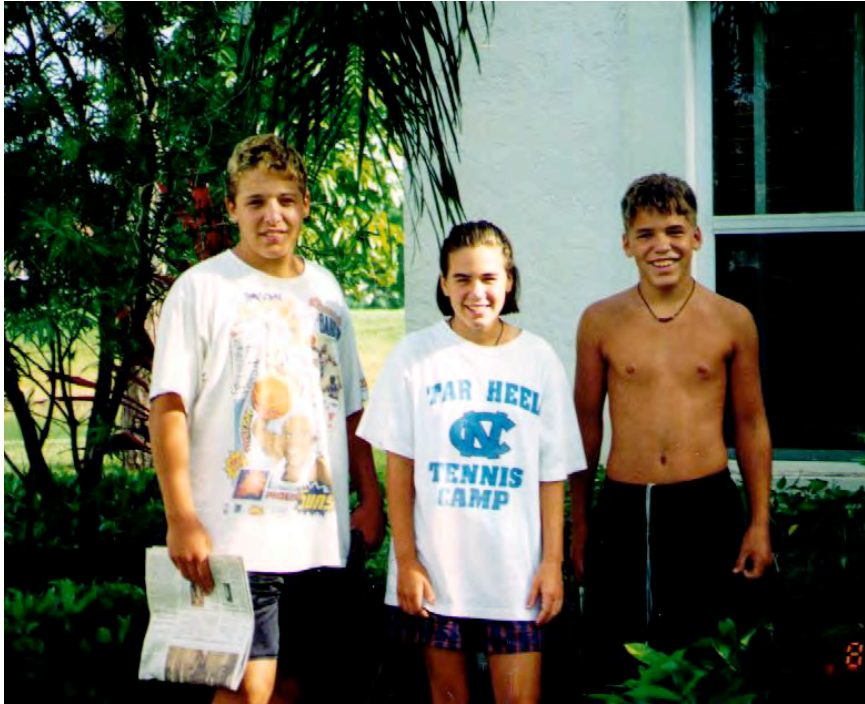
Key Lime Pie



Charlie, Joe and Sara spent several weeks with us during the summer the year we lived in Jupiter, Florida. That summer I experimented with several different Key Lime pie recipes and we would rate each one of them. Although this is by far the simplest of all those pies I made that summer, this is the one that everyone liked the most, and is the one I still make. The sweetness of the condensed milk and the tartness of the lime are a perfect combination . . . and the texture is silky smooth.

There are only a few ingredients; it only takes a few minutes to make and it bakes in 15 minutes. When dressed up a bit with Confectioner's sugar, fresh whipped cream and a slice of lime, it's also a pretty dessert to serve your family or guests.

After trying this, you'll see why Joe would try to get up before anyone else so he could finish off the leftovers!

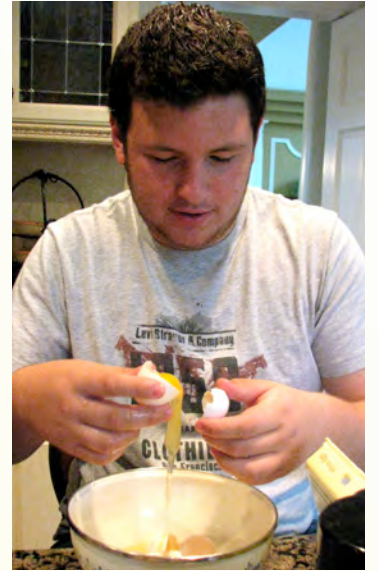


Charlie, Joe and Sara pose outside of our Florida house. Wonder if Charlie had more fun as a blond?

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine milk, egg yolks, and lime juice. Blend until smooth.

2 Pour filling into pie shell and bake for 15 minutes. Allow to stand 10 minutes before refrigerating.

3 Just before serving, sift a little Confectioner's sugar on a plate, add pie wedge, top with freshly whipped cream and garnish with a lime slice.



Josh separates the eggs as only the yolks are used in this recipe.



Use a Food Processor to thoroughly blend all the ingredients.



Original Recipe

Nellie & Joe's Key West
Lime Juice bottle

Tomato & Roasted Beet Salad

Ingredients

Tomatoes

1 large red, 1 large yellow,
6-8 multi-color cherry
tomatoes

Beets

1-2 small roasted

Goat Cheese

4-oz.

Fresh Basil Sprigs

2

Olive Oil, Balsamic Vinegar

To Taste

Salt & Pepper

To Taste



1 Preheat oven to 375°F. Wash the beets thoroughly. Pat dry and wrap in foil. Bake until they just feel soft when poked with a fork, about 45 minutes to an hour. Let cool. Peel skins under running water.

2 Slice large tomatoes and cut cherry tomatoes in half. Cut beets into large chunks.

3 Arrange tomatoes on plate. Add beets and crumbled goat cheese. Finish with a sprig of fresh basil and salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle with good quality olive oil and balsamic vinegar.



Bruschetta Pizza



Bruschetta Pizza makes a colorful and flavorful appetizer or a light dinner on a warm summer evening. The key is to use fresh ingredients.

- 1** Quarter cherry tomatoes and cut basil into small pieces. Mix in bowl with just enough olive oil and balsamic vinegar to lightly coat.
- 2** Brush pita bread lightly with olive oil. Spread roasted garlic over pita and place in 350°F oven until lightly golden. Add shaved parmesan cheese and put back in the oven until cheese is just soft.
- 3** Remove from oven and cover with bruschetta mixture and more parmesan. Salt and pepper to taste.

Ingredients

Cherry Tomatoes

Multi-color cherry tomatoes

Parmesan Cheese

2 - 4 oz. shaved slices

Roasted Garlic

4 cloves

Fresh Basil

4 sprigs

Olive Oil & Balsamic Vinegar

To Taste

Salt & Pepper

To Taste

Pita Bread

2



The best fresh tomatoes we've ever eaten have been in Naples, Italy (pictured above).

Cook's Tip:

If you don't have roasted garlic on hand, sprinkle pita with garlic powder.

When figs are in season, replace the tomatoes and basil with sliced figs and fresh arugula.

Salmon with Arugula, Tomato & Caper Salsa

Ingredients

Tomatoes

1 lb. seeded, chopped

Fresh Basil

3/4 cup chopped

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Shallot

1 chopped

Fresh Lemon Juice

1-1/2 tablespoons

Capers

1 tablespoon drained

Salmon Fillets

4 (about 6-oz. pieces)

Lemon

1 cut into wedges for garnish

Balsamic Glaze

A bit for garnish



This was one of those recipes I saw on the cover of Bon Appétit (April 1992) and decided to give it a try. It's a really good dish to make for people who aren't big fish eaters as it's packed with flavors from the fresh basil, tomatoes and shallots.

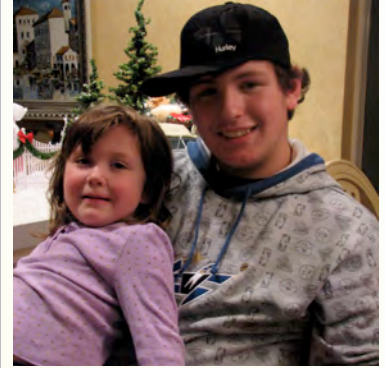
I used to make this dish often, and then stopped making it after a bad fish experience while on vacation in Italy. Recently I made it again, and now it's back in my arsenal of regular dishes.

1 Combine first 6 ingredients in a medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

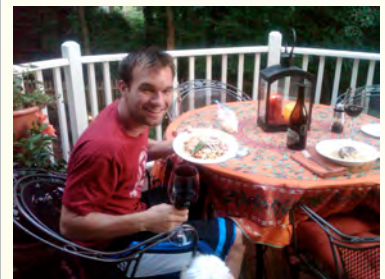
2 Brush both sides of salmon with oil. Season with salt and pepper. Grill until just cooked through, about 4-5 minutes per side. (Alternatively, broil without turning until just cooked through, about 4 minutes.) Transfer salmon to plates and spoon the tomato mixture over it. Garnish with lemon wedges



Serve the salmon fillets with a side of farfalle with sugar snap peas and asparagus, and garnish with lemon wedges and drops of balsamic glaze.



Josh and Hannah at the kitchen table wondering if the food will ever be served.



Matt enjoying a glass of wine on the deck and prepping for life in sunny San Diego.



Surrounding yourself with meaningful stuff in the kitchen makes cooking more enjoyable. I love to use dishes I have purchased when traveling, and the bowls pictured above were a gift from my Grandmother Mertie when I graduated from high school in 1977. I use these bowls often for mixing ingredients, and I think of her fondly every time I do.

Ingredients

Asparagus

1 lb. cut into 1-1/2 in. pieces

Farfalle (Bow-Tie Pasta)

1/2 lb.

Sugar Snap Peas

1/2 lb.

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 cup freshly grated

Additional to sprinkle on top

Red Pepper Flakes

a pinch

Salt & Pepper

To taste



This pasta can be a stand alone main dish or a side to meat, chicken or fish. I like to pair it with Salmon with fresh basil, tomatoes and capers. Above, Mike helps prepare the pasta.

Farfalle with Sugar Snap Peas, Asparagus & Parmesan



- 1 Steam asparagus and sugar snap peas until just tender.
- 2 Cook farfalle according to package instructions for al dente. Drain. Combine vegetables, olive oil, pasta, hot pepper flakes, and parmesan cheese. Top with additional grated parmesan.

Caramelized Onions



Another quick way to add some pizzazz to an ordinary burger is to top it with caramelized onions. I've never been a big fan of raw onions on my burger, but the tangy flavor of these onions blends with the sweetness of the brown sugar in a way sure to please the most discriminating palate. When I can find them, I prefer to use Vidalia onions as they have a very mild flavor. Caramelized onions also make a great pizza topping.

1 Peel and slice onions. In a large skillet over medium high temperature, heat the olive oil and butter. Add the onions and a few tablespoons of water and sauté until tender.

2 Add the brown sugar and cook until the onions become golden brown and the sugar is thick.

Ingredients

Onions

2 medium sweet, thinly sliced

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Butter

1 tablespoon

Brown Sugar

2 tablespoons



Al and Mike at the kitchen table (most likely talking politics or guitars) while I cook.



Top Al's Fancy Burgers with these caramelized onions for a real treat.

Al's Fancy Burgers

Ingredients

Ground Beef

2 pounds

Garlic

2-3 cloves, minced

Fresh Basil

1/4 cup, chopped

Bread

1 baguette

Lettuce

Several outer leaves,
shredded

Tomatoes

4 Roma, sliced

Avocado

1 peeled, seeded and
smashed

Caramelized Onions

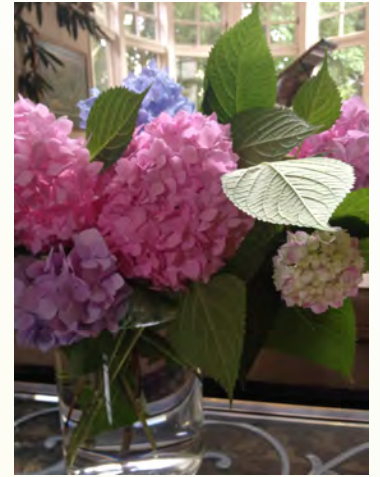
1 cup



I'm not sure why we starting calling these "Al's Fancy Burgers" but I do know they're always a big hit. When I was a kid, my mom would make what we called "Hamburger Surprise." She would take two patties and put stuff in between them like cheese, baked beans, ketchup or mustard. So along those same lines, we decided to turn our burgers up a notch.

You can get immediate impact by cutting up fresh herbs and adding some additional flavor, with avocados and caramelized onions. Use different cheeses and sauces to make your kids think your burgers are just a little fancier.

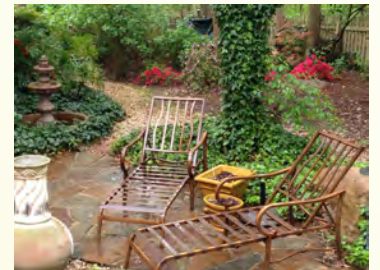




I usually cook the inside stuff while Al grills. It's nice to take a break and sit on the deck overlooking the back yard and enjoy a glass of wine while he makes magic below.

1

Cut a baguette into four pieces, then slice open. Scoop out extra dough to create a crevice. Smash an avocado and spread on inside of baguette.



2



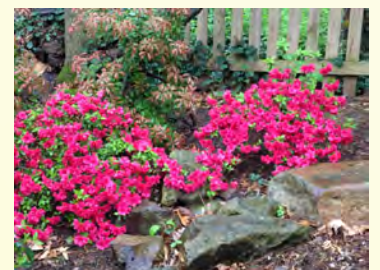
Cover bottom of baguette with lettuce, then sliced Roma tomatoes, and cover with caramelized onions.



3



Mix ground beef, garlic, fresh basil together and form elongated shaped patties. Grill to medium, top with cheddar cheese and remove from heat as soon as cheese melts. Serve on baguette.



Weeknight Pasta

Ingredients

Pasta

1/2 lb.

Sausage (Andouille, Italian or other)

6 oz. sliced into 1-in. pieces

Parmesan Cheese

To taste (grated or sliced)

Sun-dried Tomatoes

1/4 cup finely chopped

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Garlic

2-3 cloves, thinly sliced (can also use roasted garlic)

Red Pepper Flakes

1/4 teaspoon

Parsley or Basil

1/3 cup chopped fresh



We love pasta and so we have it often. When we don't have sauce on hand, or when we feel like eating something lighter, we simply whip together a dish with whatever ingredients we do have. To keep it interesting mix and match different pastas. If you are trying to be more health conscious, use whole grain or multi-grain pasta and use chicken sausage in lieu of regular sausage. Add blackened chicken, sausage or make it meatless. Serve with a small side salad and some garlic bread and your meal is complete.



Even if it's doing homework, all things tend to be better when doing in the kitchen.



Henry and Al cut up ingredients to make a pasta dish.



Josh (shown here in Italy in 2007) gives all our pasta dishes the thumbs up!

1 If using raw sausage or chicken, brown and cook it through first. If using precooked meat (like many turkey or chicken sausages), brown first. Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender, but firm to bite (al dente). Follow the instructions on the pasta box as different types of pasta require different cooking times.

2 Drain pasta and return to the same pan or throw in a skillet. Add the other ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Use the same basics, but change up the ingredients. For example, use roasted red peppers, scallions, or cherry tomatoes. If you don't have fresh herbs, use 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning.

3 Toss over medium-low heat until warmed through. Transfer to pasta bowls or plates. Garnish with fresh parsley or basil. Sprinkle liberally with freshly shredded parmesan cheese.

PASTA



Make a pasta dinner out of whatever leftovers you have in stock. Here are just a few of our favorites:

- Spaghetti with Blackened Chicken, Scallions and Fresh Tomatoes
- Penne with Chicken and Fresh Herbs
- Penne with Sun dried Tomatoes, Roasted Garlic, Pine Nuts and Shaved Parmesan

Ingredients

Pork Ribs

2 racks

Cumin

1 tablespoon

Paprika

1 tablespoon

Garlic Powder

1 tablespoon

Onion Powder

1 tablespoon

Chili Powder

1 tablespoon

Brown Sugar

1/2 cup

Salt

1 tablespoon

Cayenne Pepper

1 teaspoon

Black Pepper

1 tablespoon



Smoked Ribs



This recipe is Al's version of traditional Kansas City BBQ ribs. His "rub" is a little different in that it incorporates the use of cumin as well as the other more traditional spices.

If you don't use all the rub at once, it can be saved in an airtight container for up to 6 months.

Don't be dismayed if you don't own a smoker . . . you can still make these ribs by soaking wood chips in water, then putting the chips on the grill, under (or around) the meat.

Pair these ribs with baked beans, creamy coleslaw and some fresh corn on the cob for a perfect July 4th celebration.



Al and Josh brushing the ribs with BBQ Sauce.

- 1** Combine all of the spices together. Generously coat both sides of the ribs. Al likes to add some olive oil to the spices when he's ready to use them so that they stick to the meat better. Add just enough olive oil to make a thick paste. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or preferably overnight.
- 2** Start the smoker on high, putting in the wood chips until they begin to smolder. Al uses mesquite or hickory chips. Once the smoke becomes consistent, turn the heat down to low and put the ribs into the smoker. Depending on the weight, it usually takes 3 to 5 hours.
- 3** You can moisten the ribs occasionally with a mixture of apple cider, Worcestershire sauce, cider vinegar and ketchup, or store bought BBQ sauce (See recipe for Kansas City BBQ sauce). To get your ribs really moist, wrap them in foil for the last 30 minutes.

Cook's Tip:

Only add sauces at the very end of the cooking process or after you have removed the ribs from the smoker. Sauces can cause burning or excessive caramelization to foods.



Smoking meat is a nice alternative to grilling, and the back yard smells amazing while it cooks.



Other meats that are good for smoking are beef brisket, chicken, turkey and sausage.

Ingredients

Pork-n-Beans

1 28-oz. can

Ketchup

1 cup

Dry Mustard

1 teaspoon

Onion

1 medium, finely chopped

Bacon

6-8 slices, cooked until crispy, then crumbled

Brown Sugar

1/4 cup, packed



Over the years there have been many family get togethers in this picnic shelter my dad built.



Baked Beans are a perfect pairing with smoked meats and coleslaw.

Glenna's Baked Beans



I learned how to make Baked Beans from my mom. She used to take them to family picnics and there were never any leftovers, as everyone always loved them.

This is a simple dish to prepare - with brown sugar being the distinctive ingredient - and is an ideal accompaniment to ribs, chicken or burgers.

1

Mix all ingredients together in a baking dish.

2

Bake in 350°F oven about 30 minutes, or until beans start to bubble. Serve hot.

Glenna's Coleslaw



My mom makes a very different style of coleslaw than I do, and hers was always a crowd pleaser when she took it to family picnics, or made it for family dinners. Alan is also a big fan, so it seemed only natural to include it here.

1 Shred the cabbage and carrot using a hand grater. Add black pepper to taste.

2 Mix all the other ingredients together, then mix with the shredded cabbage and carrots. Chill until ready to serve.

Ingredients

Cabbage

1/2 medium head finely grated

Carrots

1 large carrot grated

Mayonnaise

1 cup

Yellow Mustard

1 tablespoon

Sugar

1/3 cup

Apple Cider Vinegar

1 tablespoon

Sweetened Condensed Milk

1/4 cup

Black Pepper

To taste



There is always "taste testing" going on in my mom's kitchen.

Ingredients

(for the fruit)

Peaches

6-8

Lemon Zest

2 teaspoons grated

Lemon Juice

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed

Sugar

1/2 cup

Flour

1/4 cup

Blueberries

1 cup fresh



Peach & Blueberry Crumble



This is one of my favorite summer desserts, when peaches are in season. The combination of fresh peaches and blueberries, or peaches and blackberries, blends with the hint of cinnamon perfectly, and a wonderful aroma fills the kitchen when it's baking.

For a real crowd pleaser, serve this dessert warm, with a scoop of homemade vanilla ice cream.

1

Preheat oven to 350°F. Peel the peaches; slice them into thick wedges; and place in a large bowl. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, sugar and flour. Toss well. Gently mix in the blueberries. Allow the mixture to sit for 5 minutes. Spoon the mixture into ramekins or custard cups.

2

For the topping, combine the flour, sugar, brown sugar, salt and cinnamon, with the butter in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Mix on low speed until the butter is the size of peas. Rub the mixture with your fingertips until it's in big crumbles, then sprinkle evenly over the fruit. Place the ramekins on a sheet pan lined with foil or parchment paper and bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until the tops are browned and crisp and the juices are bubbly. Serve warm with a scoop of homemade vanilla ice cream.



Ingredients (for the crumble)

Flour

1 cup

Sugar

1/3 cup

Light Brown Sugar

1/4 cup

Kosher Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon

Unsalted Butter

1/4 lb. (1 stick) diced



Above I'm whipping something up in the kitchen on Gainsborough Drive. (I'm not sure how I could even cook with all that stuff on the counter!)



Matt has an after-school snack in our kitchen in Fort Collins.



Ingredients

Sesame Oil

1/4 cup

Soy Sauce

1/4 cup

Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce

1/4 cup - 1/2 cup

Ginger

Fresh finely grated to taste

Shrimp

1 lb. large cleaned and deveined



You control the heat! Make this appetizer as spicy as you want by adding more Sriracha.

Spicy Thai Grilled Shrimp



I went to a party when we lived in Fort Collins where these shrimp were being served. Although I got the recipe from the hostess, I couldn't find it in my chaotic mess of recipes for many years, but was sure it consisted of just 3 ingredients. So, I just guessed what they were and made my version. A few years ago I found the original recipe card, but decided I liked my version better anyway, especially the addition of the fourth ingredient, the freshly grated ginger! Make some Corn Chowder and serve a skewer of these across the top for a fun and festive lunch or dinner.

1 Mix ingredients together and let shrimp marinade at least one hour. Adjust the amount of Thai Chili Sauce you use depending on how spicy you want these.



2 Skewer shrimp, then grill 2-3 minutes per side until just cooked through.

Strawberry Rhubarb Pie



This pie is now one of Susie's specialty dishes. The recipe originated from *The Black Dog Bakery*, where Susie worked the summer she lived on Martha's Vineyard.

It's not only a beautiful pie, but delicious as well. It's one of those desserts that takes advantage of seasonal fruits - rhubarb and strawberries - and is not overly sweet.

Ingredients

Flour

2 cups

Salt

1 teaspoon

Vegetable Shortening

3/4 cup

Ice Water

4-5 tablespoons

Heavy Cream

1/2 cup

Coarse Sugar

2 tablespoons

Rhubarb

3/4 lb.

Strawberries

3 cups

Water

3/4 cup

Sugar

1 cup

Nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon

Lemon Rind

1/2 teaspoon grated

Cornstarch

1/4 cup



Susie manages to look like a movie star, even while baking.



Joe and Susie take time from cooking to pose for a picture with Sophia.

1

Combine flour and salt in a medium bowl. Use a pastry blender or two table knives to cut the shortening into the flour until the mixture looks like large rice grains. Sprinkle the cold water onto the flour mixture blending with a fork, until the dough is just moist enough to hold together. Shape into a smooth ball; wrap with plastic wrap; and refrigerate until ready to use. (If you prefer to use a food processor, pulse together the flour and salt, then drop the shortening into the flour in small pieces. Pulse 3 or 4 times to achieve a grainy mixture. Add the ice water and pulse 3 or 4 times until a dough ball forms. Chill as above.)

2

Preheat oven to 425°F. Wash all the fruit. Chop the rhubarb into 1-inch pieces and hull and slice the strawberries into halves or quarters, depending on their size. Put the prepared fruit into two separate bowls

3

In a saucepan, combine the rhubarb, 1/2 cup water, sugar, nutmeg and lemon rind. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2 minutes. In a small bowl, mix together the cornstarch and 1/4 cup water until thoroughly combined.

4

Stir the cornstarch mixture into the simmering rhubarb and cook until you have a thick, clear sauce. This only takes a minute or two as the rhubarb should be only partially cooked. Remove from heat and fold in the strawberries until they are completely covered. Cool completely.

5

Once your filling is made, cut the pastry ball into two sections. On a lightly floured surface, roll one out into a large circle about 1/8-inch thick and 12 inches in diameter.

Carefully place the dough circle into an 8-inch pie pan. ***Don't stretch the dough.*** Lift it and let it ease into the pan. Trim the excess around the edge, leaving about a 1/2-inch strip.

6

Fill with cooled strawberry-rhubarb mixture. Roll out the remaining dough into the same size circle as before and cut into 1/2-inch strips. Interweave strips to create lattice crust. Trim to match lower crust, folding and pressing firmly around the edges to seal.

Brush the strips and pie edge with heavy cream and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of coarse sanding sugar.

7

Place pie on a lined baking sheet in the oven. Bake for 10 minutes at 425°F and then reduce the heat to 375°F and continue baking for about 50 minutes or until the crust is golden brown. Cook on rack. Serve slices with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Cook's Tip:

Coarse sugar is also known as "sanding sugar."



Joe & Susie always seem to end up in the kitchen as shown in this picture with Joe's mom, Sara, in her kitchen.



Joe & Susie pose before we all head out to dinner in Martha's Vineyard.



This is a great pie to take to a family picnic.

Ingredients

Canola Oil

3 tablespoons

Boneless Pork Shoulder

4 pounds

Yellow Onion

1 medium chopped

Cider Vinegar

3/4 cup

Ketchup

3/4 cup

Brown Sugar

1/3 cup

Molasses

1/4 cup

Red Pepper Flakes

2 teaspoons

Worcestershire Sauce

1 tablespoon

Dry Mustard

1 teaspoon

Salt and Pepper

To taste



Pulled Pork Barbecue



I first started making Pulled Pork Barbecue when we lived in Colorado, but have changed my recipe several times over the years. Since I've had a slow cooker (from Williams Sonoma) this has become the recipe we like best.

I love throwing the ingredients in the slow cooker at night and waking to such a great smell the next morning. This dish is perfect to make for a potluck dinner or picnic, as it travels well and can be eaten hot or at room temperature, and it's ideal to make when you have a house full of people.

Experiment with different sauces . . . I've include a few of my favorites on the following pages.

1

Cut pork into pieces and brown in a heavy skillet. Transfer to slow cooker.



2

Sauté onion until golden. Add vinegar and deglaze the pan. Then add ketchup, brown sugar, molasses, red pepper flakes,



Worcestershire sauce, mustard, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until the mixture begins to bubble. Pour over pork. Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours or

low for 8-10 hours. The pork should be so tender it falls apart when touched with a fork.

3

Transfer the pork to a platter. Using a pair of forks, shred each piece of pork, removing and discarding any pieces of fat. Serve the pork on sandwich rolls with Creamy Coleslaw and your choice of barbecue sauce.



Cook's Hint:

Get other people involved when you're cooking, (aka getting someone else to do the dirty work) like chopping up the onions (Dan above) or trimming the fat from the pork (Joe below).



Yum! These sandwiches are so good.



Original Recipe

Williams Sonoma

Ingredients

Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick)

Garlic

2 large cloves finely chopped

Onion

1 medium finely chopped

Green Pepper

1 small finely chopped

V-8 Juice

4 cups

Lemons

Juice of 3

Dark Molasses

1/3 cup

Dry Mustard

1 teaspoon

Cayenne Pepper

1 teaspoon

Celery Seeds

1 teaspoon



Joe demonstrates how to paint corn-on-the-cob with this sauce for grilling.

Fire Engine Red Barbecue Sauce



I've been making this barbecue sauce since we lived in Evergreen, Colorado, and it is still my favorite. It's rich in flavor, not too sweet, and it's even spicy enough for Joe! Serve with pulled pork or ribs, or spice up some grilled corn on the cob by brushing on this delicious sauce.

- 1** Melt the butter in the bottom of a medium-size heavy saucepan over low heat; add the garlic and onion; and sauté for 5 minutes.
- 2** Raise the heat; stir in the remaining ingredients; and bring the mixture to a boil. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 2 hours, or until sauce is thick.

Kansas City Style Barbecue Sauce



This barbecue sauce gives you that traditional combination of sweet with a touch of heat. Adjust just how much heat by adding more or less cayenne pepper. If you're using this sauce to baste the meat, don't put it on until the meat is almost done.

1 Heat oil in a saucepan. Add garlic and sauté until brown.

2 Add remaining ingredients and reduce heat. Simmer for 15 minutes until thickened.

Ingredients

Ketchup

1 cup

Water

1/4 cup

Apple Cider Vinegar

1/4 cup

Brown Sugar

1/4 cup firmly packed

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Paprika

2 tablespoons

Chili Powder

1 tablespoon

Garlic Cloves

2 minced

Cayenne Pepper

1 teaspoon



These guys have always been willing to try anything we cook. Having open minded eaters makes cooking much more enjoyable.

Ingredients

Cabbage

8 cups shredded

Carrot

1 cup shredded

Scallions

1/2 cup

Mayonnaise

1/2 cup

Cider Vinegar

1 tablespoon

Sugar

2 teaspoons

Celery Seed

1 teaspoon

Black Pepper

To taste



Cook's Hint:

To make this even easier start with a 14-oz bag of Dole Classic Coleslaw mix and then all you have to do is add the scallions and make the sauce.

Origin of Recipe

Better Homes & Gardens New Cook Book (revised 1981), originally published in 1930

Creamy Coleslaw with Celery Seed Dressing



Coleslaw is not only a great side dish - it can give a sandwich a real deli flare as well. This creamy recipe goes with any kind of barbecue, ribs, pulled pork, brisket or chicken, as its sweet and tangy taste is a natural complement to the smokiness of the meat.

- 1 In a large bowl combine the cabbage, carrots and scallions.
- 2 To prepare the dressing, whisk together the mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, celery seed and pepper.
- 3 Pour the dressing over the cabbage mixture; toss lightly; cover and chill.



Cannellini Beans with Red Peppers & Sage



This is one of our favorite new side dishes in recent years. It's easy to make and it goes perfectly with grilled red meat. Additionally, beans are really good for you, so they make a perfect side when you're looking for something in lieu of potatoes or pasta. Grow sage in a pot on your deck or balcony to add to dishes for an instant splash of Tuscan flavor.



- 1** In a large non-stick skillet, heat oil over moderate heat until hot but not smoking and cook bell pepper with sage, stirring, until softened. Stir in garlic and cook, stirring one minute.
- 2** Add remaining ingredients, with salt and pepper to taste and heat, stirring, until just heated through.

Ingredients

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Red Bell Pepper

1 chopped

Sage

1 1/2 tablespoons minced

Garlic

1 clove minced

Cannellini Beans

1 19-oz. can rinsed and drained

Green Onion

2-3 thinly sliced

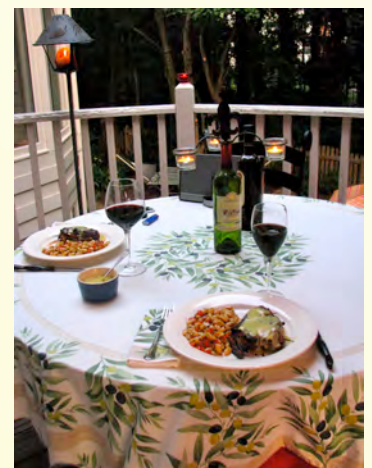
Celery

1 celery rib, cut into 1/4-inch thick

Red Wine Vinegar

3/4 teaspoon

Cannellini Beans make a great side dish for grilled beef. Eat outside, add an Italian red wine, and it will feel like being in Tuscany.



Ingredients

Asparagus

15 - 20 spears

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Parmesan Cheese

1/4 cup shaved

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Cooking gives you the opportunity to replicate beautiful experiences you have had while vacationing . . . above dinner al fresco in Praiano, Italy overlooking the Mediterranean.

"The smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us...."

- Marcel Proust



Grilled asparagus is a perfect side dish for lamb and Cannellini Beans. The herbs from the lamb and beans, combined with the parmesan of the asparagus, are a veritable feast to the palate!

Grilled Asparagus with Parmesan



We're always looking for ways to make old standards a little more interesting. We both love asparagus, and I usually steam it, but putting it on the grill and topping it with some fresh shaved parmesan cheese makes this ordinary vegetable anything but ordinary.

- 1** Wash the asparagus; cut about an inch off the bottoms. Arrange on a baking sheet covered with aluminum foil.
- 2** Drizzle olive oil over asparagus. Top with shaved parmesan. Season with salt and pepper.
- 3** Grill the asparagus spears for 5-10 minutes, until nicely charred and just fork tender, turning them every few minutes so that they brown relatively evenly. Remove from grill and serve.



Ingredients

Pie Crust

1 9-inch unbaked

Fresh Strawberries

3 - 4 cups

Sugar

1 cup

Cornstarch

3 tablespoons

Lemon Juice

1 tablespoon

. . . for the crust

Butter

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted

Flour

2-1/2 cup

Salt

1 teaspoon

Sugar

1 teaspoon

Cook's Tip:

If you don't want to make the crust, just use a prepared pie crust, available in every supermarket.



When the pie properly “sets,” it doesn't run when sliced.

Cathy's Strawberry Pie



We all have a favorite that becomes our signature dish, and this is certainly one of Cathy's. She has been making this luscious dessert for as long as I've known her, and it always turns out perfectly.

There are many more complex recipes out there, but that doesn't make them better. You'll be surprised at the bright red color of this strawberry pie without food coloring, corn syrup, gelatin, or other nasty things that detract from the beautiful fresh berries.

The trick to this pie is cooking the strawberries until they reach the right consistency. I will readily admit that I've had to make it several times to finally get it right. This pie is best eaten fresh, without too much time sitting in the refrigerator.



*Cathy and I chatting at the kitchen table in the Manassas house.
Notice we're both sporting mullets!*

1



Cut the butter into small cubes and freeze for 15 min. In a food processor, pulse flour, salt and sugar several times to combine. Add butter.

2

Pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons ice water. Pulse until dough is crumbly, but holds together when squeezed. **Do not overprocess.** Turn dough onto a floured surface, and using your hands, form into a 3/4-inch thick disc.



3

Remove dough from refrigerator and let sit 10-15 minutes. Place dough on a large piece of floured waxed paper. Roll dough into a 14-inch round. Using the paper, fold dough in half and unfold over 9-inch pie plate. Trim overhang to 1-inch, and fold under itself. Crimp edge. Poke small holes in bottom of crust with tines of a fork. Freeze for 1/2 hour - this keeps the crust from slipping down the sides when baking. Bake at 350° F for 20-30 minutes until crust is golden brown.

For the filling:

Mix sugar, cornstarch, half of the strawberries (crushed), and lemon juice in a saucepan. Stirring constantly, cook until thickened.



Fill cooled pie shell with remaining strawberries (halved), and cover with the cooked mixture. Chill until set.



Top with fresh whipped cream.



A toast to a long lasting friendship!



Fall



When fall arrives, everything moves back indoors. Orange is the color of the season and dishes like pumpkin soup, apple cake with caramel icing and candied sweet potatoes become real favorites.

Decorating your table for Halloween and Thanksgiving makes the whole season festive. Embrace cooking at this time of year by serving soups in a hollowed out pumpkin, garnishing salads with toasted pumpkin seeds, cooking with cider, and making desserts with fresh apples.



Fall is Here!



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Our Favorite Movies about Food & Wine

If you like to cook, drink wine or eat, you'll probably enjoy these movies. These may not be the critics' choices, but they're ours. Fall is here, so pour a glass of wine, watch one of these, and go cook something.

Sideways

More than just a buddy picture or a road-trip movie, *Sideways* is about something every foodie flirts with at some point: obsession. This movie also produced that famous line, "I am *not* drinking any f-ing Merlot!"

The Hundred-Foot Journey

The Kadam family leaves India for France where they open a restaurant directly across the road from Madame Mallory's Michelin-starred eatery. Good South of France scenery and beautiful looking Indian food.

Julie & Julia

Based on two true stories, *Julie & Julia* intertwines the lives of two women who, though separated by time and space, are both at loose ends...until they discover that with the right combination of passion, fearlessness and butter, anything is possible. As soon as the movie ended, I wanted to go to the kitchen and make Boeuf Bourguignon.

Woman on Top

When Isabella decides to break free from her rocky marriage and move to San Francisco, she discovers the perfect recipe for coming out on top - her own hit TV cooking show. This movie is filled with Bossa Nova music (I bought the soundtrack!) and sensual foods.

Chef

A chef who loses his restaurant job starts up a food truck in an effort to reclaim his creative promise, while piecing back together his estranged family. I haven't felt the same way about the crunch of a grilled cheese sandwich since I saw this movie.



Viennese Goulash

Ingredients

Marjoram

2 teaspoons

Caraway Seeds

1 teaspoon

Lemon Rind

1 teaspoon finely chopped

Garlic

1 clove

Butter

3/4 cup

Tomato Paste

1 teaspoon

Onions

2 lbs. sliced

Hungarian Paprika

1 tablespoon

Beef

2 lbs., cut into large uniform chunks

Water

1 cup



When I asked AI to tell me about some of his childhood favorite dishes, the first one he mentioned was his mom's goulash. He remembers it as "a big, steamy bowl of delicious stew on a cold winter day. Walking in the door, I was greeted by the sweet aroma of paprika. I could hardly wait for my dad to get home from work so that we could eat."

When AI and I were in Budapest we had goulash a few times and really enjoyed it, so I asked Ruth to make her version for me the next time she visited us. She did and we loved it.

This recipe is for Viennese goulash (Wienersaft Gulysas). Both Viennese and Hungarian goulash have a savory paprika flavor, but Hungarian goulash is more like a soup, whereas the Viennese version is more like a stew; it has more onions but no tomatoes or other vegetables are used.

Make a big pot of this, freeze the leftovers and you'll have a quick and easy dinner to warm your winter evenings.

1 Crush together marjoram, caraway seeds, lemon rind, and garlic. In a large kettle combine butter, tomato paste and then add the crushed seasonings.

2 Add onions to the kettle and sauté them, stirring constantly until they are golden. Add paprika and cook the onion mixture, stirring constantly, for another minute. Add beef chunks and water. Salt and pepper to taste. Cover the kettle tightly and simmer the beef until it is tender, 1 to 1-1/2 hours.

3 Just before the goulash is done, add 1/2 cup water and let the sauce boil. Serve over noodles, potatoes or spaetzle.



Ruth, Henry, Alan and Anna outside their house in Rome, New York.



Cook's Tip:

Use a good quality Hungarian Paprika. I bought a few bags when I was in Budapest, but you can buy it from any world market or specialty store.

For the meat, use beef chuck, rump, round or sirloin.

Origin of Recipe

Ruth Salton

Ham & Egg Breakfast Casserole

Ingredients

Ham

1 lb. cubed

Eggs

7

Milk

1.5 cups

Dijon Mustard

1 tablespoon

Cheddar Cheese

2 cups shredded

White Bread

6 slices, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

OR

Hash Browns

2-3 cups (enough to cover bottom of the pan)

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Every breakfast buffet should have some sort of egg casserole - Christmas, Easter, or any given Sunday. This is one I have often made on for Christmas morning because it can be assembled the night before, and all you have to do is throw it in the oven the next morning. This is also a nice recipe in that it is very basic and appeals to most palettes.

It's easy to dress this recipe up by replacing the ham with bacon or chorizo sausage, and adding chives, onions and hot peppers.

Serve hot with a bottle of hot sauce for Joe!

1 Grease a 9" x 13" baking pan (I use Pam Cooking spray), and spread the hashbrowns in it to cover the bottom.

2 Spread the cooked meat over the potatoes. Next, cover with the cheese. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, dijon mustard and milk. Pour evenly over the entire casserole. Cover with foil and place in the fridge overnight.

3 The next morning, bake uncovered at 350° F for about an hour. Remove the foil and cook another 15 minutes (or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.



This version calls for ham, but works well with bacon or sausage.



It's always a treat to have Mel and Hannah in the house.



This breakfast casserole is great for a big group, like the one we had in Provence.



Christmas morning is always a great time to serve a breakfast casserole.

Ingredients

Lobster Tail

1 pound (about 2 medium)

Chicken Stock (reduced sodium)

4-1/2 cups

Butter

4 tablespoons (room temperature)

Onion

1 cup finely chopped

Arborio Rice

1-1/2 cups

Brandy

1/2 cup

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 cup grated

Fresh Chives

1/4 cup chopped

Salt and Pepper

To taste

Joe & Susie's Brown Butter Risotto with Lobster



Joe and Susie love to cook all kinds of different foods and are not afraid to tackle any kind of dish. Making risotto can be tricky . . . you have to cook it long enough so that it's not crunchy, but you do not want it to turn to mush either.

This version of risotto originated from Giada De Laurentiis from The Food Network, and is now part of Joe and Susie's cooking repertoire. Although risotto can be a main dish, it works great as a side as well. Joe and Susie like to serve this risotto with grilled steak.

1

Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the lobster tails and boil for 8 to 10 minutes until the shells curl and the lobster meat turns white. Drain, transfer to a cutting board, and cool for 15 minutes. Using kitchen shears or a sharp knife, cut through the top shell lengthwise. Remove the meat and cut into 1/2-inch pieces. Set aside.

In a medium saucepan, bring the chicken stock to a boil. Keep hot over low heat.

2

In a large saucepan, melt 3 tablespoons of butter over medium heat. Cook until the butter begins to foam and then turns brown, about 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Add the onion and cook, about 3 minutes. Add the rice and stir to coat with the butter. Add the brandy and simmer until the liquid has almost evaporated, about 3

minutes. Add 1/2 cup of stock and stir until almost completely absorbed, about 2 minutes. Continue adding the stock, 1/2 cup at a time, stirring constantly



and allowing each addition of stock to absorb before adding the next. Cook until the rice is tender but still firm to the bite, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, the remaining butter and 2 tablespoons chives. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

3



Transfer the risotto to a large serving bowl. Arrange the lobster meat on top of the risotto and garnish with the remaining chives.



Al and I bought these plates for Joe and Susie in Collioure, France as an engagement gift (even though we weren't invited to the engagement party). We're excited that they like using them to display their culinary talents.



The best lobsters can be found on the northeast coast. Here I am enjoying one at dinner with Al, Ben, Joe and Susie on Martha's Vineyard.

Vanilla Bean Crème Brûlée

Ingredients

Heavy Cream

2 cups

Vanilla Bean

1 split and scraped

Sugar

1/2 cup

Egg Yolks

5

Sugar

6 tablespoons for
sprinkling on top



Crème Brûlée has long been a go-to dessert both when entertaining guests or having dessert with the family. Josh, in particular, loves this dish and tries variations of it often when we go out.

This recipe is both delicious and simple to make, and is one of the few recipes I have used over the years where I make it exactly like the original recipe. You can place fresh berries in the bottom of the ramekins before adding the custard or you can make a flavored version if you want to vary it, but in our family we're all big fans of the original.

Original Recipe

Martha Stewart Living
Annual Recipes 2003

1



Preheat oven to 325°F. Bring a pot of water to a boil, and keep hot until ready to use (I use a teapot for this.) Use a small spatula to scrape the insides from the vanilla bean.

2

In a small saucepan, heat cream, vanilla bean and its scrapings over medium heat until bubbles form around the edges and mixture starts to steam, about 6 minutes. Turn off heat.



3



Separate the eggs, discarding the whites (or saving for another purpose).



In a large bowl, whisk together 1/2 cup sugar and the egg yolks until combined.



Whisking constantly, add hot cream mixture.



Strain mixture through a fine sieve into a clean bowl; skim off any surface foam with a spoon.

Cook's Tips:



You can use a regular cookie sheet with a dishtowel on the bottom if you don't have one of these pans, but if you make this dish often, I would highly recommend this pan especially made for Crème Brûlée. It contains a rack designed to hold the ramekins in place in the water bath as the custard cooks.



You will need a kitchen torch for "burning the sugar" on top of the custard. Be sure to move the torch in a circular motion when caramelizing the sugar.

Perfect Crème Brûlée has a delightful hard surface that crackles when tapped with a spoon. Under that hard surface is a delicate and smooth custard with a delicious hint of vanilla bean.

4

Pour custard into ramekins. Carefully pour boiling water into the baking pan until it reaches about half way up the side of the ramekins.



Serve with a chocolate stick, raspberries and a sprig of fresh mint.

Bake until the custard is just set in the center when gently touched with your finger, about 35 minutes. Transfer ramekins to a wire rack and cool. Wrap with plastic rap and place in the refrigerator to chill completely, about 2-3 hours.

5

Sprinkle 1-1/2 tablespoons of sugar over entire surface of each ramekin. Using a kitchen torch, pass the flame in a circular motion 1-2 inches above the surface of each until the sugar bubbles, turns amber and forms a smooth surface.



Barb and Susie are all smiles while scraping the seeds from the vanilla bean pods.



Josh sprinkles the sugar on top, and Barb mans the torch. Cooking is always more fun if everyone participates.

Chocolate Coconut Bars



I started making these delicious cookie bars when I was in high school, and this recipe has definitely endured the test of time.

- 1** Preheat oven to 375° F. Lightly splash a 15-by-10-inch rimmed baking sheet evenly with water, then line with parchment paper.
- 2** In a large bowl, stir together cracker crumbs, sugar, and butter until combined. Evenly press onto bottom and up sides of prepared baking sheet. Bake, rotating halfway through, until firm, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; cool, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle cooled crust evenly with pecans and chocolate. Pour condensed milk over the top, spreading to cover completely (do not let it drip over the edges). Sprinkle top with coconut.
- 3** Bake until coconut is toasted, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely. Trim edges, if desired, and cut into equal size bars.

Ingredients

Graham Crackers

3 cups finely ground

Sugar

1/4 cup

Butter

3/4 cup (1-1/2 sticks) melted

Pecans

1 cup coarsely chopped

Semisweet Chocolate Chips

1 cup

Sweetened Condensed Milk

1 can (14-oz.)

Sweetened Shredded Coconut

1-1/2 cups



Cook's Tip:

Sweetened Condensed Milk is made by heating whole milk and sugar until much of the liquid has evaporated. Do not substitute evaporated milk, which is unsweetened.

Ingredients

Butter

1 tablespoon

Andouille Sausage

6 oz.

Chicken Breasts

12 oz. cut into 1-inch pieces

Red Pepper

1/4 cup chopped

Green Pepper

1/4 cup chopped

Jalapeño Pepper

1 seeded and chopped

Onion

1 medium

Tomatoes

2 large seeded and chopped

Okra

8 large, cut into 1-inch pieces

Rice

1 cup medium grain

Chicken Broth

1 1/2 cups

Water

1 1/2 cups

Boiled Ham

6 oz.

Shrimp

6 oz. medium shrimp, shelled & deveined

(continued . . .)

Creole Jambalaya



I bought the cookbook with this recipe in it at the annual Virginia wine festival back in the 1980s, and made it often when Matt was just a little boy. There were times when it was so spicy the adults would break out in a sweat, but he just kept on eating it.

Ben and Josh have always liked it as well because they love any dish with shrimp in it. Al and I like it because it reminds us of our trips to New Orleans with Drew and John or with Matt and Josh or with Joe and Susie. This dish makes a delicious dinner, especially when the weather turns cold.



Jazz musicians playing on the street are a part of the charm of New Orleans. We all love Doreen Ketchens.

1

Melt the butter in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add the sausage and lightly brown the pieces on both sides. Remove the sausage and add the chicken pieces, lightly brown them, then remove.

2

Add the peppers, onions and garlic, and sauté until the vegetables are no longer crisp, about 3-5 minutes.

3

Add the tomato, okra, rice, chicken broth, water and seasonings. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and cook over low heat for 18-20 minutes, or until rice is barely done.

4

Return the chicken and sausage to the pan along with the ham, shrimp and parsley. Continue cooking for 5-7 minutes, or until the chicken and shrimp are done and the ingredients are heated through.



You see all kinds of crazy stuff in New Orleans! Above, that's Drew looking über festive. At right, Brady dons his mask from New Orleans, and below Joe and Susie demonstrate they're always ready for a party!



Ingredients

(. . . continued)

Thyme

1/4 teaspoon dried

Bay Leaf

1

Ground Cloves

1/8 teaspoon

Red Pepper Flakes

1 pinch (or more if desired)

Green Pepper

1/4 cup chopped

Paprika

1 teaspoon

Parsley

1/3 cup chopped fresh



Cook's Tips:

If you can't find fresh okra, use frozen or canned.



Southwestern Chili Dip

Ingredients

Cheddar Cheese

2 cups shredded

Mayonnaise

1 cup

Black Olives

1 4-1/2 oz. can, chopped and drained

Green Chili Peppers

1 4 oz. can drained

Hot Pepper Sauce

Few dashes

Garlic Powder

1/4 teaspoon

Tomato

1 medium chopped

Green Onions

1/4 cup sliced

Pita or Corn Chips



This dip is perfect for a picnic or party, and is always a real crowd pleaser. It would also be a great to serve for any sporting event, and . . . goes perfectly with a cold Margarita!

Not only is this dip super quick and easy to make, it can also be made up to 4 hours early, then baked when your guests arrive. It just doesn't get any easier than this!

1

Combine cheese, mayonnaise, half of the olives, the chili peppers, garlic powder and hot pepper sauce in a large bowl. Stir till well combines. Spread the mixture into a 9-inch round baking dish.

2

Bake, uncovered, at 350° F for 20 minutes or until heated through.

3

Sprinkle with tomato, remaining olives and onion. Serve warm with chips.



Char and Paul always willing to try whatever I am cooking



Ben and Matt visit from California, and catch up over a family meal.

Over and over again, we prove that the kitchen is the heart of the home and that most big family events tend to center around a great meal of family favorites!



Mike, Beth, Matt, my mom and I at my mom and dad's table



My Aunt Carolyn with my Grandma Mertie in her kitchen

Ingredients

Mixed Greens

4 cups

Chicken Breasts

2 blackened, grilled and sliced

Avocado

1 peeled and sliced

Mango

1 peeled and sliced

Toasted Pine Nuts

1/4 cup

Blue Cheese

1 oz.

Dressing

Honey Mustard



Hannah and her "Grams"

Salad with Blackened Chicken, Mango, Avocado, Blue Cheese & Toasted Pine Nuts



Sometimes Al and I would pick up a salad like this one from Bonefish Grille to have for dinner and decided that we could make it just as well at home. It's healthy and is a delicious combination of flavors. This salad is good with a Honey Mustard or a Vinaigrette-style dressing.

- 1 Put greens in bowls. Arrange chicken, avocado, mango, pine nuts and blue cheese on top.
- 2 Add small bowl of honey mustard dressing to side and serve.

Pork Tenderloin in Dijon Cream Sauce



This is an extremely easy dish that makes a great weeknight dinner. I made this many times when the kids were growing up, pairing it with rice pilaf or potatoes and a green vegetable.

1 Cut pork crosswise and flatten with palm of hand into medallions. Pan broil pork, 3-4 minutes each side. Sprinkle with garlic salt, pepper, cover with foil, and set aside.

2 In the same pan that you used to brown the pork, stir together the mustard and half and half. Cook until hot. Add pork back to the pan to warm and coat with the cream sauce.

Ingredients

Pork Tenderloin

1 pound

Dijon Mustard

4 teaspoons

Half-n-Half

1/2 cup

Fresh Dill

1 teaspoon

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Sophia likes to help GG in the kitchen.



Here we are having dinner in Tuscany in 2007.

Baked Apples

Ingredients

Apples

4 peeled, cored and sliced

Brown Sugar

1/2 cup

Cinnamon

1 teaspoon

Nutmeg

1/8 teaspoon

Butter

2 tablespoons

Walnuts or Raisins (optional)

2 tablespoons



When I was growing up, my mom made baked apples often with dinner. I guess this makes perfect sense when you consider that Winchester was the apple capital of the region.

Glenna always made these apples as a side dish, but they could also be served with ice cream as a dessert.



Glenna expertly prepares Baked Apples for a family celebration.

1 Place apples in a greased 1-qt. baking dish. In a small bowl, combine the sugar, cider, cinnamon, and nutmeg; pour over apples. Dot with butter. If adding them, sprinkle with nuts.

2 Bake, uncovered, at 350° F for 45-60 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve as a side dish or warm with ice cream.



It's impossible for me to think of anything to do with apples and not think of my home town - Winchester, Virginia. Where we're from and where we live ends up having a big influence on the way we cook.



Cook's Tip:

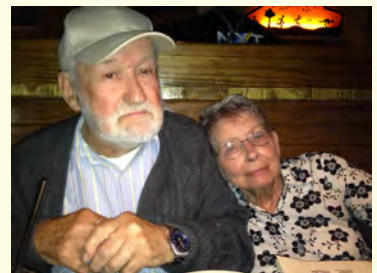
Fill the dish full of apples as they shrink considerably when baking.



Glenna peeling potatoes at my grandparents' house.



Hannah snuggles with Brady while her "grams" is in the kitchen cooking. Hannah happens to be a big fan of her grandmother's cooking.



The #1 fan of Glenna's cooking has always been my dad.

Ingredients

Olive Oil

1/8 cup

Tomato Paste

1/3 cup

Garlic

10 cloves roasted

Crushed Tomatoes

5 28-oz. cans

Tomato Sauce

2 28-oz. cans

Water

28-oz.

Italian Seasoning

1/2 cup

Bay Leaves

2

Sugar

2 tablespoons

Red Pepper Flakes

3 teaspoons

(continued . . .)



When available, I use fresh herbs - basil, thyme, sage, and Italian parsley - in lieu of the dried Italian Seasoning.

Spaghetti Sauce



Nothing is more inviting than making a big pot of “sauce.” My favorite time to make sauce is on a Sunday afternoon - maybe that’s because my favorite time to eat a bowl of spaghetti and meatballs is on a Sunday evening.

One of the great things about making a pot of sauce is that you are cooking several meals at one time as this freezes well and can be defrosted and ready for a weeknight dinner. Of all the recipes in this book, this one was the hardest to quantify because you really need to taste it as you go and adjust accordingly.

I like to serve this sauce over “fat spaghetti” but it works well with any type of pasta. I often make extra so that the leftovers can be used for baked spaghetti. Serve with some garlic toast and you’ve got a crowd pleasing meal.

1

In a large pan over low heat, cook the roasted garlic, tomato paste and olive oil. This gives the tomato paste a chance to cook before adding the other ingredients.



2



Add the tomatoes and tomato sauce. Fill one of the empty cans with water and add as well. Stir until everything is mixed together. Add the Italian Seasoning, fresh herbs, or a combination of the two. Stir. Add the bay leaves, sugar, wine, and red pepper flakes. Salt and pepper to taste.

3

Remove the casings from the sausage. In a large skillet over medium high heat, cook the sausage until it is no longer pink inside and is brown outside. Remove from heat, and let cool for a bit. Put into the food processor and grind into small pieces. Add to the sauce.



4



In that same skillet, add just a drizzle of olive oil and when the pan is hot, add the peppers and onions. Cook until tender. Add the marsala and cook until it is mostly absorbed by the peppers and onions. Cool slightly. Put the peppers and onions - with any juice from the pan - into the food processor and puree



until smooth, then add to the sauce. *(Note: I started doing this when Charlie, Joe and Sara were just kids and didn't like peppers and onions.)*

Ingredients

(. . . continued)

Peppers

1 red, 2 green, peeled, seeded and quartered

Onions

2 medium peeled and sliced

Marsala

1 cup

Parmesan Cheese

1 cup grated

Red Wine

1/2 cup

Hot Italian Sausage

1 lb.

Cook's Tip:

Keep your fresh garlic cloves in a garlic keeper like this beautiful one Barb bought me several years ago (made in Spain).





It's never too soon to start eating pasta if you're Italian. When Matt was a baby, I would grind spaghetti (in a baby food grinder) for him to eat with us.



When Sophia was still a baby, she loved my (her GG's) sauce. Now that she's three, she's sworn off pasta, but I bet when she's a little older she'll decide she likes it after all.



Al serves as the stirrer and official taster.

5



If you like mushrooms in your sauce, saute them in the same skillet with a bit more marsala until tender. Add to the sauce.

6

Make the meatballs (recipe on following page) and add to the sauce. Grate the parmesan cheese, add to the sauce, and stir until well mixed. Taste the sauce and add more Italian seasoning if desired.

Let the sauce cook for several hours so that the flavors have plenty of time to combine together. In fact, this is really better the next day than it is right after you make it. Freeze the sauce in airtight containers after it has cooled to room temperature.



Vinera Modi



Restaurant - Sicilian Food - Steakhouse



Today the chef recommends:

Linguine with Ricciola, fresh tomato & zucchini cream € 17.00

Tonno alla "cipuddata" (tuna fish & onion caramel) € 20.00

Acciophe pratinare (Anchoves graten) € 11.00

Ravioloni Ricotta & Pappagorana with zucchini cream € 13.00

DESSERT: Tiramisu
Panna cotta & strawberry cream
Cassata Siciliano € 6.00

Ingredients

Ground Beef

3 lbs.

Eggs

3

Basil

1 cup chopped fresh

Parmesan Cheese

1 cup shredded

Italian Bread Crumbs

1 cup

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Getting someone else to roll the meatballs is key.

Meatballs



It's hard to find anyone who doesn't love meat balls, especially when paired with a tomato sauce and fresh pasta. Meatballs are easy to make and add a classic touch to a big bowl of spaghetti.

The fresh basil used in this recipe is the ingredient that sets it apart from the rest. Make small ones for party fare, or make them to serve with Spaghetti Sauce.

1

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. With your hands, mix thoroughly.



2



Roll into 1 1/2-inch balls. Try to keep the meat balls uniform in size. (Get someone else to do this step for you!)

3

Heat olive oil in large skillet. Add meat balls to oil, turning occasionally until they are brown and cooked throughout.



Remove meat balls from pan with a slotted spoon and place on a paper towel to absorb oil. Drop into pot of sauce, being sure to eat one or two first to make sure they're good!



Mmmmm fresh herbs!

Cook's Tip:

Since you'll have your hands in the raw meat, remove your rings first. Store them in a Ring Keeper like this one Barb gave me one year for Christmas.



Lasagna

Ingredients

Lasagne Noodles

9

Sauce

5 cups

Ricotta Cheese

1 15-oz. container

Fresh Mozzarella

8-oz. thinly sliced

Parmesan Cheese

1-1/4 cups

Fresh Basil

1/4 cup chopped

Egg

1 large

Parsley (dried)

1 tablespoon

Salt & Pepper

1/2 teaspoon



Lasagna is the culmination of a lot of Italian ingredients - meat sauce, cheeses and fresh herbs - and it's baked in the oven allowing all the flavors to meld together. I usually make lasagna during the cold weather months as it's a hearty and filling meal.

I think the key to a memorable lasagna is a great meat sauce, containing both spicy sausage and ground beef. This dish in particular demands good quality ingredients. So don't just use a package of pre-grated part skim low-fat mozzarella. Look for a ball of the fresh stuff and slice it thin for on the top. Fresh basil takes it from ordinary to extraordinary!

When you make a pot of sauce, make a big one and freeze some for later. I'm not a fan of freezing stuff in general, but tomato sauce freezes just fine - and having sauce in the freezer makes preparing this dish fast and easy.



Lasagna gets better after it sits for a day.

1 Cook lasagne noodles according to package instructions. Drain and rinse with cold water. Take care not to overcook the noodles - they should be al dente.

2 In a medium bowl, mix together the ricotta, 1 cup of the parmesan, a slightly beaten egg and the parsley. Spray a 13x 9 baking dish with vegetable spray (like Pam).

3 Pour one cup of sauce in the bottom of the baking dish and spread evenly. Lay 3 noodles on the bottom, allowing the sides to overlap slightly. Place heaping spoonfuls of the cheese mixture randomly on the noodles, then spread



evenly. (You will be building 3 levels so use about 1/3 of the mixture on each level.) Sprinkle some additional parmesan

cheese on top, add salt and pepper to taste, then top with 1/3 of the chopped fresh basil. Build the next level with the noodles first, then sauce, then cheese mixture, then basil. Repeat, except for the basil. On the very top place the thin slices of mozzarella cheese, then the remaining basil, and add salt and pepper to taste.

4 Cover with foil and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Bake uncovered for an additional 10 minutes, until cheese on top starts to bubble. Broil a few minutes at the end to lightly brown the top. Let “rest” for 10 minutes before serving. To serve, place a puddle of warm sauce on a plate, place a chink of lasagna on top, and garnish with freshly shaved parmesan and a sprig of basil.



Al decants a 2012 Italian wine to serve with the lasagna. Pay attention to the wine you select to serve with your food because the proper pairing can significantly enhance your eating experience.



Eating anything Italian always reminds us of being in Italy.



Moreen (with Joris above) made her version of lasagna for us. Yum!

Ingredients

Spaghetti

1 lb. cooked and mixed with sauce

Sausage or Meatballs (optional)

To taste

Provolone Cheese

Enough to cover top of spaghetti, about 6 slices

Parmesan Cheese

To Taste

Italian Seasoning

1 teaspoon



Cook's Tip:

This dish can also be great for buffets and is an easy dish to take for a pot luck dinner.



Baked Spaghetti



Ever have leftover spaghetti and wondered what to do with it? After I made this the first time, I would intentionally make extra spaghetti every time we had it because we liked the leftovers baked like this so much. It's really good if you let it sit in the fridge a day or so after you initially make it as the flavors really get absorbed into the pasta. After eating this you'll wonder why you have never made it before!

1

Put leftover spaghetti into a baking dish. Add additional sauce and meatballs, sausage, etc as desired.

2

Arrange sliced provolone cheese over the top. Season with Italian seasoning, and black pepper.



Bake in 350°F oven for 30-40 minutes or until cheese is melted and slightly golden. Spaghetti should be hot throughout.

Roasted Garlic



1 Preheat oven to 375°F. Remove any loose outer papery skin from the bulbs. Cut the top off the garlic to expose the actual cloves.

2 Place several garlic bulbs in a baking dish and brush liberally with olive oil.



3 Bake for about an hour, or until the garlic begins to separate from its skin. After garlic cools, squeeze out of the skin.



Dinner in Lourmarin, France in 2011.

Ingredients

Garlic

5-6 garlic bulbs

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Fresh Herbs (optional)

Thyme and Oregano



We first had fresh roasted garlic at Nic's Tomato Pie in Jupiter, Florida. The year we lived in Florida it was a family favorite. The roasted garlic tastes great smashed up with a little olive oil spread on some crusty Italian bread with a bowl of spicy pasta. I always roast some extra and keep it in a plastic container in the refrigerator for later use as it's great to use when cooking almost anytime garlic is called for.



Every time I roast garlic, I think of this picture I took of Sara in Rome with the giant garlic clove poster in the background!

Garlic Bread

Ingredients

Bread

1 Baguette

Olive Oil

1/2 cup

Roasted Garlic (or Garlic Powder)

To taste

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 cup freshly shredded

Oregano

1 tablespoon



This has always been a crowd favorite, and is very simple to make. It is a perfect companion to any pasta dish and is a great “filler” when you are feeding teenage boys! To make this even better, instead of using garlic powder, use fresh roasted garlic.

Garlic Toast will be a perfect accompaniment to the pasta Al is whipping up below.



We love to eat food that invokes beautiful memories like Barb frolicking in the sunflowers in Tuscany.

1 Turn oven setting to Broil. Slice a baguette of bread into 1-inch diagonal slices. Shred (or grate) parmesan cheese.

2 Brush bread with olive oil. Sprinkle liberally with Garlic Powder (or used mashed roasted garlic). Cover with Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle with oregano.

3 Broil until lightly golden and crunchy.



Using dishes, glassware and linens bought on vacation makes setting the table fun and festive. I bought the dishes pictured here on our family trip to Tuscany. The glasses came from a trip to France, and are a signature item of the Alsace region.



Cook's Tips:

Tip 1:

The best brush ever is the type with plastic bristles. Unlike traditional pastry brushes this one never leaves individual bristles behind and it cleans easily in the dishwasher

Tip 2:

Anytime I have rolls, sub bread or baguettes left over I stick them in the freezer to use at a later date for garlic bread or croutons.



Al and John cooking in the villa we rented in Napa after Drew and John's wedding.

Curry Ginger Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients

Onion

1 large, finely chopped

Unsalted Butter

2 tablespoons

Garlic Cloves

2 large, minced

Fresh Ginger

1 tablespoon, minced

Ground Cumin

2 teaspoons

Ground Coriander

1 teaspoon

Ground Cardamom

1/8 teaspoon

Curry

1 teaspoon

Red Pepper Flakes

3/4 teaspoon

Pumpkin

2 15-oz. cans solid pack

Water

4 cups

Chicken Broth

12-oz.

Coconut Milk

1 14-oz. can unsweetened

Maple Syrup

1/2 cup

Heavy Cream

1 cup



Nothing announces the arrival of fall like Pumpkin Soup! This version rolls about on the pallet and leaves you with a spicy finish. You can roast and dry the pumpkin yourself, or opt for using organic solid pack pumpkin as it will reduce your preparation time significantly, and has no artificial preservatives. If you have any apples on hand, dice one up and throw it in the soup as well!



Charlie and Barb enjoying some Pumpkin Soup on a fall evening.

- 1 Cook onions in butter in a heavy pot over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and ginger and cook, stirring 1 minute.
- 2 Add cumin, coriander, and cardamom and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Stir in red pepper, curry, pumpkin, water, broth, and coconut milk and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 30 minutes. Purée soup in batches in a blender until smooth, transferring to a large bowl, and return soup to pot.
- 3 Add maple syrup and simmer on low heat for 1 hour. Add the cream and keep soup warm over low heat until ready to serve. Garnish with a dollop of Boursin cheese, crushed pistachios and a drizzle of balsamic reduction.



This soup can be a stand alone meal or a lovely first course to a nice dinner for guests.



Packed Pumpkin makes the prep easy!



The addition of crushed pistachios, Boursin cheese and balsamic reduction, add flare, and great taste too!



Chicken in Thai Peanut Sauce

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

1-1/2 cut into thin strips

Red Bell Pepper

1 cut into thin strips

Broccoli

12-15 florets

Spring Onions

5 sliced into 2-inch diagonal pieces

Thai Peanut Sauce

1 cup

Peanuts

1/2 cup

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Red Pepper Flakes

1/4 teaspoon

Fresh Ginger

1 teaspoon grated

Garlic

2 cloves finely chopped



Making stir fry is simple, and this dish is made even simpler by using Thai Peanut Sauce as its base (this assumes of course you've made some of this ahead of time). Chop up a few vegetables, add some peanut sauce and you've got a colorful and delicious meal.

What makes this dish so good is that it's spicy, yet it's also a bit sweet, and the peanuts give it a bit of crunch.

1

Heat the oil in a wok over high heat. Add the garlic and cook until translucent, about 1-2 minutes. Toss in the chicken and cook until opaque, about 5 minutes, and pepper to taste.

2

Add the red peppers, cook for a few minutes, then the broccoli, spring onions, and fresh ginger. Cook until just tender, but still slightly crunchy.

3

Pour the peanut sauce over the ingredients and mix well. Cook for another 2-3 minutes until sauce is warm, stir in peanuts and cook 1 more minute.



Use your imagination and set an interesting table that enhances the food you're serving.



Cook's Tip:

When making a stir fry, give the ingredients a chance to dry thoroughly before you cook them. This will keep the sauce from getting watered down.

Ingredients

Potatoes

3 medium potatoes cut into 1-inch chunks

Onions

1 medium, finely chopped

Celery

1 stalk, diced

Butter

2 tablespoons

Flour

2 tablespoons

Chicken Stock

2 1/2 cups

Heavy Whipping Cream

1/2 cup

Bacon

2-4 slices, cooked, crumbled

Cheddar Cheese

1/2 cup, shredded



Josh is always ready to help in the kitchen . . . or maybe attack an intruder.

Creamy Potato Soup



Potato soup is another of those dishes that immediately remind me of my childhood as it's another dish my mom made. This hearty soup can be a starter to a big dinner, can be paired with a sandwich for a casual meal, or can simply be the meal on a cold winter night.

- 1** Sauté the onions and celery in 1 tablespoon butter until soft. Meanwhile, in a 3-quart saucepan, bring water with potatoes to a boil, reduce heat, cook until potatoes are tender. Drain.
- 2** Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Add the flour. Cook until smooth and bubbly. Remove from heat. Stir in chicken stock and return to heat, stirring constantly until mixture boils. Boil one minute.
- 3** Return potatoes, celery and onions to pot. You can put the celery and onions in the blender and purée if you prefer. Heat until everything is hot, then stir in cream. Serve hot with crumbled bacon and cheddar cheese on top.

BLTA



A sandwich doesn't have to be ordinary. Take something as simple as a traditional BLT and add some additional flavor, as well as good fat, with avocado. Use some crusty large bread, and create one big sandwich (to share with two people). Add fancy toothpicks and cut into halves.

1 Cook the bacon over medium heat until crispy.

2 Lightly toast the bread. Smash up an avocado and spread on one side of the toast. Cover the other side with lettuce, sliced tomatoes and cover with bacon slices.

Ingredients

Crusty Farm Bread

2 slices

Avocado

1 peeled and smashed

Lettuce

Several outer leaves

Tomato

1 thinly sliced

Bacon

8 sliced honey maple

Black Pepper

To taste

Josh gives me a hug in the kitchen of "the yellow house."



Ingredients

Shrimp

1/2 lb.

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Garlic

2 cloves, minced

Broccoli

1/4 lb. fresh

Snow Peas

1/4 lb. fresh

Sugar

2 teaspoons

Red Bell Pepper

1/2 large cutted into strips

Soy Sauce

2 teaspoons

Crushed Red Pepper

1/2 - 1 teaspoon

Ginger

1 teaspoon fresh grated

Sesame Oil

1 teaspoon

Rice Wine Vinegar

1 teaspoon

Stir Fry Shrimp with Broccoli, Snow Peas & Peppers



This dish uses the exact same base as the Spicy Stir Fry Pork recipe found in the Spring section of this cookbook. I added this one to emphasize how easy it is to take a basic recipe, make a few changes, and add some real variety to your cooking. Here I've swapped shrimp for pork and broccoli and snow peas for the beans. Sometimes I throw some roasted peanuts in as well. Serve with Jasmine rice.

- 1 Heat oil in wok over high heat. Stir-fry garlic in a hot skillet or wok 3-5 minutes. Add shrimp, broccoli, and snow peas, and stir-fry an additional 3-5 minutes until vegetables are just tender and shrimp become opaque and pink.
- 2 Push shrimp and vegetables to one side of pan. Add remaining ingredients, stirring constantly to mix. Combine all ingredients. Serve immediately with hot, cooked rice or shredded lettuce.



Mike eating sardines

Creamy Cauliflower



Mashed or puréed cauliflower has become popular as a replacement for mashed potatoes. This recipe uses cream cheese to provide creaminess and a pinch of nutmeg provides a bit of richness. This dish is light, fluffy, flavorful, and is a perfect side dish to rich entrees. It's not just a mashed potato replacement though - it really is delicious in its own right.

- 1** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cut cauliflower into florets then add to boiling water and cook 8 to 10 minutes or until a fork can easily be pierced through the cauliflower.
- 2** Drain cauliflower then throw back into the hot pot (off the heat) and cover with lid. Let stand 2 to 3 minutes. Mash cauliflower.
- 3** Add the cream cheese, a pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper to the cauliflower. Then, use a potato masher to smash the cauliflower. Finish with a pinch of nutmeg. (If you have whole nutmeg, just grate a little over the cauliflower using a microplane).

Ingredients

Cauliflower

1 medium or 4 cups of cauliflower florets

Cream Cheese

1-1/2 oz.

Salt & Freshly Ground Pepper

To taste

Ground Nutmeg

A pinch

Green Onion

1 tablespoon sliced



Cauliflower is a great alternative to potatoes.

Ingredients

(for Cake)

Flour

2 1/3 cups

Sugar

2 cups

Baking Soda

2 teaspoons

Cinnamon

1 teaspoon

Cloves

1/4 teaspoon ground

Nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon

Butter

1/2 cup softened

Walnuts

1/2 cup chopped

Eggs

2

Apples

4 cups peeled and chopped

Caramel Frosting

See recipe next page.



Fresh Apple Cake with Caramel Icing



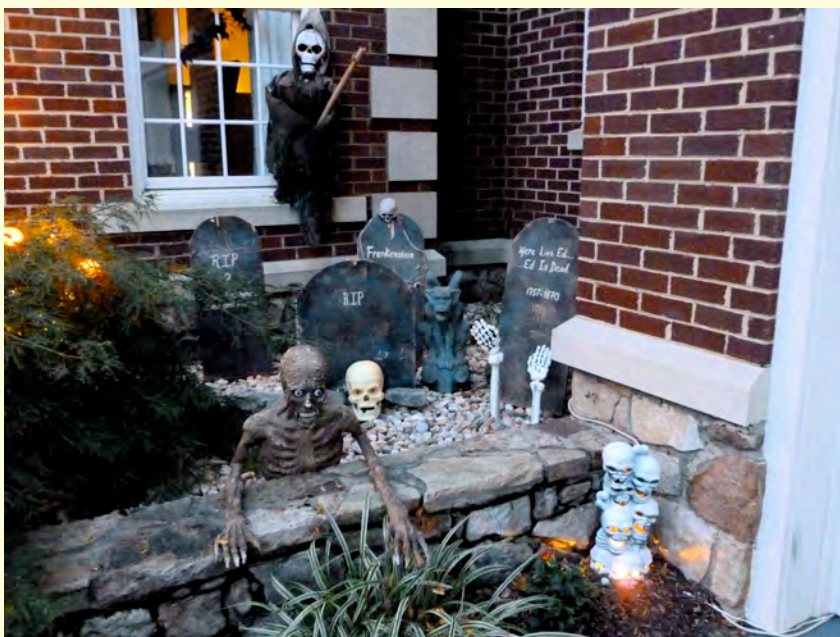
This cake is good any time of the year, but it seems like I always end up making it in the fall during apple harvest season. It's so light and fresh, and the caramel icing really enhances the flavor of the apples and spices in the cake. My friend, and next-door-neighbor, Tory gave me this recipe several years ago, and I've made this cake countless times, always with glowing reviews.

It's so easy to make this simple sheet cake and dress it up by serving it on a festive plate, or garnishing it with a decorative seasonal pick (like Happy Thanksgiving or Happy Halloween), and as the pièce de résistance, drizzle some homemade caramel sauce on the top!

1 Heat oven to 325.°F Combine flour, sugar, soda, and spices in a large mixing bowl. Mix until well blended, about 3-4 minutes.

2 Add apples, butter, nuts and eggs. Beat at medium speed until well blended. Pour into a greased and floured 9 x 13 inch pan. Bake for 45 minutes, or until cake springs back when touched. Cool completely on wire rack.

3 To make the frosting, melt butter in a small saucepan. Add brown sugar. Stir over medium heat until sugar melts. Add milk and bring to a boil. Pour into mixing bowl and cool 10 minutes. Add Confectioner's sugar and vanilla. Beat to spreading consistency. Spread on fresh apple cake.



Ingredients

(for Frosting)

Brown Sugar

1/2 cup firmly packed

Butter

1/3 cup softened

Vanilla

1/4 teaspoon

Milk

3 tablespoons

Confectioner's Sugar

1 1/2 cups

Cook's Tip:

You can use any kind of apple, and I've used several different ones when I've made this. I must say though, that I prefer Honeycrisps or another variety similar to it.

Ingredients

Sugar

1 cup

Corn Syrup

1 tablespoon

Butter

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick)

Water

1/4 cup

Heavy Cream

1/2 cup, heated until warm

Vanilla Extract

1 teaspoon

Sea Salt

1/2 teaspoon finely ground



Keep the caramel sauce in the refrigerator for easy use on ice cream, cakes, or to top pumpkin lattes.

Caramel Sauce



Caramel is finicky - it can go from perfection to burnt and inedible in a nanosecond. In fact, my first attempt at making this ended up down the drain. When you get it right though, it is extraordinary, and you'll never buy it in a bottle again!

Caramel is really just melted sugar. The sugar is dissolved in water (this is referred to as the "wet method") and then boiled at high heat until the water evaporates. As the water escapes, chemistry comes into play, and the mixture transforms in both texture and color.

Suggested Uses:

- ice cream topping
- drizzle over cakes and cookies for a dramatic presentation
- add to coffee to make a caramel latte
- fruit dip
- jar it up and give at Christmas with cookies
- topping for popcorn
- eat it with a spoon
- caramel apples
- bread pudding

1

In a heavy saucepan, stir together the sugar, syrup and water until the sugar is completely moistened.



2

Heat, stirring constantly, until the sugar dissolves and the syrup is bubbly. Stop stirring and allow it to boil undisturbed until it turns an amber color. Immediately



remove from the heat and stir in the cream. Be careful here as it will bubble furiously!

3

Use a heat resistant spatula to stir the mixture until smooth. If there are any lumps in your caramel, just return it to the heat and stir until they dissolve. Stir in the butter and salt.



Allow to cool for just a few minutes, then stir in the vanilla.



I like to make Pumpkin Lattes in these festive snowmen cups Joe and Susie gave me several years ago. Then to make them really festive, I drizzle some caramel sauce on the top.



Cook's Tip:

If your caramel sauce is too thick, just reheat it in a double boiler and stir in some additional cream and butter. Don't panic if the sugar and cream separate at first, the smooth consistency will return as you stir it.



Football Fare



MVPs . . .

Joe Vecchio

Hayden Frank

Josh Salton

Every family has their own special traditions, and ours just happens to be a competitive game of football, followed by a great meal where everyone chips in and helps. We also have spent many Sundays gathered around the TV watching football games and eating “football fare.” This section highlights some of our favorite football recipes.

Hummus

Ingredients

Chickpeas

1 15-oz. can

Fresh Lemon Juice

2 tablespoons

Tahini (Sesame Paste)

1/2 cup

Yellow Onion

1/4 cup chopped

Garlic

5-6 cloves roasted

Olive Oil

2 teaspoons

Cumin

2 teaspoons ground

Cayenne Pepper

1/8 teaspoon

Salt

1/2 teaspoon



1

Drain the chickpeas, reserving 1/4-1/2 cup of the liquid.

2

Combine the chickpeas, lemon juice, tahini, onion, garlic, oil, cumin, pepper and salt in a blender or food processor. Puree until smooth. If mixture is too thick, add some of the reserved liquid.

3

Refrigerate for 3-4 hours before serving. In fact, if you have the time, it's even better to refrigerate it overnight so that the flavors are well blended. Before serving, dollop the Hoagie Spread on top.



Serve with Homemade Pita Chips.

Artichoke Cheese Dip



Here's another quick, easy and delicious dip that's great for crowds. A friend of the family gave me the dish pictured as a high school graduation gift, and it seems like I always use it when I make this particular dip.

1 Drain and cut up artichoke hearts. Mix all ingredients. Sprinkle with paprika.

2 Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes. Serve with pita chips, crackers or chunks of crusty bread.



Ingredients

Mayonnaise

1 cup

Parmesan Cheese

1 cup shredded

Mozzarella Cheese

2 cups shredded

Artichoke Hearts

2 8-oz. cans drained and chopped

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon

Paprika

1 teaspoon

This dip is perfect for just lying around relaxing and watching football (above).

You just never know what you might get into hanging out in the kitchen (left).

Ingredients

Russet Potatoes

6 -8 scrubbed

Olive Oil

Enough for brushing on each potato, about 1/4 cup

Cheddar Cheese

1 cup shredded

Bacon

1 pound, cooked and crumbled

Green Onions

1/4 cup

Barbeque Sauce & Sour Cream



Josh is about to tackle Mel as the ball approaches.



Ben and Josh take a break from playing football to pose for a picture.

Potato Skins



1

Preheat oven to 400°. Prick potatoes all over with a fork and rub with oil; season generously with salt and pepper.

2

Place potatoes on a rack set in a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until very soft when squeezed and skin is crisp, 60-75 minutes. Let cool.

Heat broiler to high. Halve potatoes and scoop out flesh (save for another use), leaving a ¼ inch border attached to skins. Brush both sides of potatoes with oil and season insides with salt and pepper; return to rack. Broil, turning once, until skins are crisp and flesh is golden, about 5-7 minutes per side.

3

Divide cheese and bacon among potatoes and broil until cheese is melted, about 2 minutes. Serve topped with sour cream, chives, and black pepper.



Zesty Crab Cheese Dip



Dress up the party a bit with this cheesy crab dip. The cayenne pepper gives it a little zing, and if you like things spicy add more.

This dip is also a perfect starter for a seafood themed dinner.

- 1** Melt cream cheese and Kraft cheese together in a double boiler. Whisk in half-and-half.
- 2** Stir in remaining ingredients until smooth. Serve hot with bread or crackers.

Ingredients

Jumbo Lump Crab Meat

1 8-ounce container

Old English Kraft Cheese Spread

1 jar

Cream Cheese

8 ounces, softened

Worcestershire Sauce

1 teaspoon

Cayenne Pepper

1/4 teaspoon

Half-and-Half

1/4 cup



Joe presents Hayden with the MVP award for Turkey Bowl 2007.



Matt, Mel and Hannah play football in the front yard.

Traditional Party Mix

Ingredients

Butter

1/4 (1/2 stick)

Seasoned Salt

1 1/4 teaspoons

Worcestershire Sauce

4 1/2 teaspoons

Corn Chex Brand Cereal

2 2/3 cups

Rice Chex Brand Cereal

2 2/3 cups

Wheat Chex Brand Cereal

2 2/3 cups

Salted Mix Nuts

1 cup

Pretzel Sticks

1 cup



This mix is perfect to have out at parties for people to munch on, and making it fresh is so much better than buying it in a box. You can make it in advance and store in an airtight container until it's time for the party.

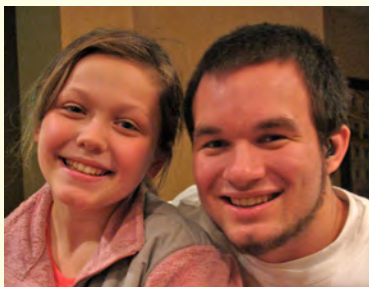
This has always been one of my brother's favorite munchie foods.

1

Preheat oven to 250. In an open roasting pan melt margarine in oven. Stir in seasoned salt and Worcestershire sauce.

2

Gradually add cereals, nuts and pretzels, stirring until all pieces are evenly coated. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Spread on absorbent paper to cool. Store in airtight container.



Matt and Mel are ready for watching the Redskins and munching on some party fare.

Mini Reubens



These tasty miniature reuben sandwiches are perfect football party fare, and they take only moments to prepare. The key to making these is using good quality pastrami and plenty of it!

This is yet another recipe I got from my friend, Natalie Swirdovich many years ago before either of us even had any kids. She would always make these when we got together to watch Redskins games (and yes . . . they even won a lot back then). Maybe if we all make these for our football parties, the Redskins will win another Super Bowl.

- 1** Drain the sauerkraut in a colendar. Meanwhile, lightly toast the bagels. This will keep them from getting soggy. In a medium bowl, mix together the sauerkraut and dressing.
- 2** Arrange the bagel halves on a cookie sheet. Add a heaping tablespoon of the sauerkraut mixture on top of each one. Add several pastrami slices, then top with the cheese and cracked black pepper. Broil under medium heat until warm and cheese is melted and starts to bubble. Serve hot.

Ingredients

Mini Bagels

6 halved

Sauerkraut

1 can

Thousand Island Dressing

1/2 cup

Pastrami

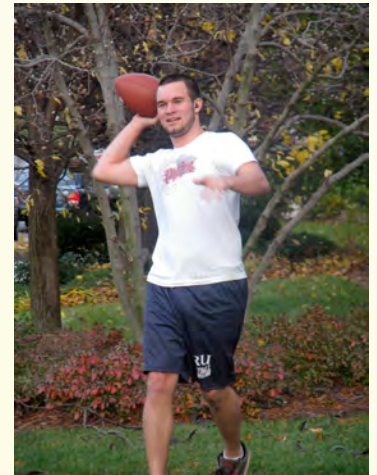
1 lb.

Swiss Cheese

1/2 lb.

Black Pepper

To taste



After a rousing game of football and a big meal, nothing's better than just hanging around being a couch potato.



Ingredients

Chorizo

2 links, casings removed

Smoked Gouda

1/2 pound shredded

Red Onions

1/4 cup finely chopped

Egg

1

Cream Cheese

1/2 cup

Hot Sauce

1 tablespoon (recommended
Frank's Red Hot)

Jalapeño Peppers

12 large

Salt and Pepper

To taste

Smoked Gouda-Chorizo Jalapeño Poppers



This is another recipe compliments of Joe and Susie, and no one will be surprised that if a recipe has jalapeño in the name and hot sauce as an ingredient, that Joe had something to do with it.

These poppers are dressy enough to serve as a first course for a nice dinner, yet they are perfect to include with football fare. They're easy to make . . . just don't rub your eyes while you're seeding the peppers!



Joe & Susie enjoy trying all kinds of food - from gourmet food in Paris to döners at the Döner Bistro. That's one reason they're such good cooks.

1

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Cut peppers in half lengthwise. Wash, remove seeds and dry. Brown the chorizo in a skillet over medium-high heat, about 8-10 minutes. Drain and place in a large mixing bowl.



Add the cheese, red onion, egg, cream cheese, sour cream, hot sauce, and salt and pepper.



2

Press into jalapeño halves and assemble on a parchment lined baking sheet.



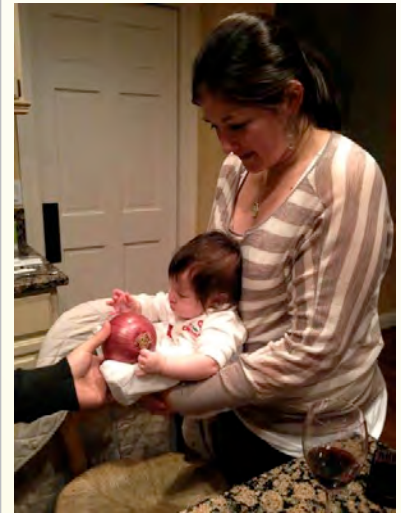
3

Bake until golden and bubbly, about 20 minutes. Serve hot.



Cook's Tip:

Use parchment paper on top of your baking sheet to keep peppers from sticking.



Sophia demonstrates an early interest in cooking as she plays with a purple onion while we're in the kitchen cooking.



Let's hope Ben keeps his knee away from any headlights while out throwing the football in the street.

Ingredients

Crescent Dinner Rolls

2 8-oz. cans

Smoked Link Sausages or Beef Hot Dogs

48

Condiments

Assortment of Mustards and sauces



Ben and Nic are all smiles now that the party dogs are served (above) and Barb and Lucky - sporting his Eagles jersey - are ready to watch the game (below).



Mini Party Dogs



This appetizer is so easy to make it almost seems silly to include a recipe for it. Although it is the ultimate in quick and easy, it's always a crowd pleaser, and serving these party dogs provides the opportunity to showcase your assortments of mustards. I like to include a dijon, a sweet German mustard, a spicy chipotle and ketchup or barbecue sauce. Mix and match different sweet and spicy flavors, all which complement the smokiness of these dogs.

1 Heat oven to 375°F. Unroll both cans of the dough; separate into 16 triangles. Cut each triangle lengthwise into 3 narrow triangles. Place dog on shortest side of each triangle. Roll up each, starting at shortest side of triangle and rolling to opposite point; place point side down on 2 cookie sheets (sprayed with cooking spray such as Pam).

2 Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown, switching position of cookie sheets halfway through baking. You may also want to turn the dogs over at the halfway point so that they brown evenly. Serve warm with an array of condiments.



Nachos



Nothing says football party like nachos. These are really simple to make, and are always a real crowd pleaser.

1 Arrange nacho chips on a cookie sheet. Cover the chips with chili, cheese, tomatoes, scallions and jalapeño peppers.

2 Bake in a 375° oven until the cheese melts and the ingredients are hot. Serve with sour cream and homemade guacamole.



Joe is suited up and ready for game time.



Al's knee may be in a brace, but that doesn't stop him from giving his all to block Josh's pass.

Ingredients

Nacho Chips

1 bag

Chili

2-3 cups

Cherry Tomatoes

10 quartered

Scallions

1 bunch chopped

Cheddar Cheese

1 8-oz. bag shredded

Jalapeño Pepper

1 finely diced

Sour Cream

1 8-oz. container

Guacamole

To Taste

Party Mini Pizzas

Ingredients

English Muffins

1 pkg. of 6

Tomato Sauce

1 cup

Hot Italian Sausage

1/2 lb.

Pepperoni

1/2 lb.

Mozzarella Cheese

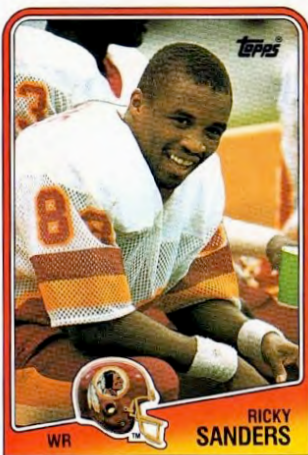
1 8-oz. pkg. shredded

Garlic Powder

1 teaspoon

Italian Seasoning

1 teaspoon



It's only fitting that we should have football parties in our house where former Redskin Ricky Sanders used to live.

No playoff game would be complete without some sort of football party food, and these party pizzas have been around in our house for a long time. In fact, I remember having these at a football party where the Redskins won the Super Bowl so you know they've been around for a while.

I like to use leftover spaghetti sauce, but if you don't have any, simply use a jarred sauce instead. I usually make some pepperoni and some sausage ones, but you can mix and match them however you'd like.

1 Lightly toast English Muffins. (You just want to toast them enough so that they do not get soggy when you add the sauce.) Meanwhile, brown the sausage in a skillet and drain.

2 Spread about 2 tablespoons of sauce on the top of the muffins. Sprinkle lightly with garlic powder. Add sausage and/or pepperoni and top with grated parmesan (about 1 tablespoon per pizza). Add mozzarella cheese and dust lightly and evenly with Italian Seasoning.

3 Bake in a 350°F oven until cheese is lightly browned and begins to bubble. Serve immediately,

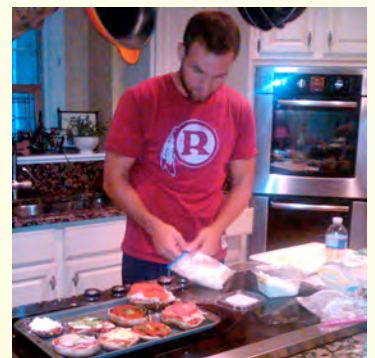
Not only does Susie cook, but she's quite the football player as well (I hate guarding her!).



Cook's Tip:

The number of variations you can make of these party pizzas is only limited by your imagination. Add ham and pineapple for a Hawaiian theme or use onions, peppers and olives for a vegetarian version or substitute goat cheese for the mozzarella.

Below Matt demonstrates his healthy party pizza version - all fresh ingredients using portobello mushrooms in lieu of English muffins.



Cheese & Chorizo Dip

Ingredients

Velveets Cheese

1 2-lb. box

Chorizo Sausage

1 lb. browned

Scallions

3 chopped

Jalapeño Peppers

1/8 cup diced (or more if you like it hot)

Beer

1 bottle or can (not a Lite beer)

Black Pepper

To taste



Nothing says football playoff time like this delicious dip. Although it is a far cry from healthy eating, it's perfect for a cold Sunday afternoon sequestered in front of the TV watching football. It's spicy and creamy, and it's hard to stop eating it once you start.



Joe and Susie look like they're ready to snuggle up and watch some football. (Hope it's not Giants vs. Bills!)

1

Brown the sausage and remove with a slotted spoon. Meanwhile, put water into the outer section of a double boiler and bring to boil. Cut Velveeta into chunks and put in inner pan.

2

Add scallions, browned sausage, beer and Jalapeño peppers. Stir often as cheese melts. Sprinkle paprika on top and serve hot with corn chips.



Cook's Tip:

Melting cheese is like melting chocolate - you never want to place the pan directly on the stove. Use a double boiler (a pan that fits inside a pan) like this one shown above.



Mel might live in New Jersey, but she's been a lifelong Redskins fan like her dad. Here she poses with RGIII at training camp.



Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving in our family has often been synonymous with Turkey Bowl . . . and Turkey Bowl means football and eating. Since we are a



blended family, getting together for Thanksgiving often meant doing it a few weeks before the actual holiday. For many years, the highlight of our weekend was a football game where the oldest half of the family played the youngest half. Interestingly enough, the older half always won, even though we might not have had the most talent. Maybe one day the younger team will win one of the coveted WINNERS trophies.

After a rousing football game, we would all hang out in the kitchen and cook a big meal together - turkey, ham, stuffing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, pie, and a beer or two. I was thankful then, and I'm thankful now for all these opportunities we've had to spend time together.





Cook's Tip:

Use a good quality roasting pan with a rack for the turkey and be sure to coat it well with cooking spray for easier cleaning.



If you have a heavy duty mixer like this one, use it for the potatoes, otherwise you can use a hand electric mixer. If you don't have either you can still make great mashed potatoes by using a potato masher as shown below.



Original Recipe

Bon Appétit
November 1991

Family - Food - Fun



I've been making the same turkey recipe every year since I got my November issue of Bon Appétit in 1991. It was a hit with the family since that first time I made it in Evergreen, Colorado. The honey cider glaze gives the turkey a great taste, keeps the meat juicy and creates a savory stock for the gravy. Whether it's Thanksgiving Day, Turkey Bowl or any other time we can all get together, we're always thankful for lots of good food, and most of all for each other and the love we share.



Josh, Matt and Ben have big smiles on their faces as they fill their plates.

Cider Glaze & Herb Butter

1

Start by making the Cider Glaze. Cook all the ingredients in a heavy medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly until the sugar dissolves.

Simmer until reduced to 2 cups, stirring occasionally. *(Can be made 2 days ahead.)*



2



Make the Herb Butter by mixing all the ingredients in a medium bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper. This can also be made a few days ahead and stored in the refrigerator.



Ingredients

(for Cider Glaze)

Apple Cider

8 cups

Sugar

2/3 cup

Honey

1/2 cup

Ingredients

(for Herb Butter)

Butter

1 cup room temperature

Shallots

1/3 cup finely chopped

Thyme

2 tablespoons minced fresh or 2 teaspoons dried

Sage

4 teaspoons minced fresh or 1-1/4 teaspoons dried

We all love to hang out in our Turkey Bowl sweatpants!



Ingredients

Fresh Turkey

15-20 lbs.



Sara, Barb and Nic help get the potatoes ready.



Make a bigger turkey than you need so that there's plenty left over for turkey sandwiches.

Turkey



1

Preheat oven to 425°F. Loosen the skin over turkey breasts and thighs by running fingers between skin and meat. Spread half the herb butter under the loosened skin as shown. Rub butter left on hands on the skin. Spoon stuffing inside main cavity of turkey and sew shut.



2

Roast turkey 25 minutes. Brush generously with cider glaze. Roast 20 minutes more. Reduce heat to 350°F. Brush more cider glaze over turkey. Cover turkey and pan with foil and continue roasting until meat thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh registers 175°F, basting every 25 minutes with glaze and adding stock to pan as juices evaporate. While the turkey is cooking, it's a perfect time to watch Planes, Trains and Automobiles, a Thanksgiving classic in our family.



Stuffing & Trussing a Turkey

It's not necessary to truss (or tie) a turkey before roasting, but taking the time to do so can ensure the bird cooks evenly. After the turkey is roasted and the twine is removed, the turkey will still hold its shape for easier carving.

Getting Ready:

Remove the turkey's outer wrapping. Take the neck and package of giblets out of the inner cavity. Discard these or reserve them to use for gravy.

Combine stuffing ingredients as your recipe directs. Do not stuff turkey until you're ready to place it in the oven.

Step 1:

Spoon the cold stuffing loosely into the neck cavity.

Step 2:

Pull neck skin over stuffing to the back of turkey and secure with a skewer. Tuck wing tips under body to avoid over-browning while roasting.

Step 3:

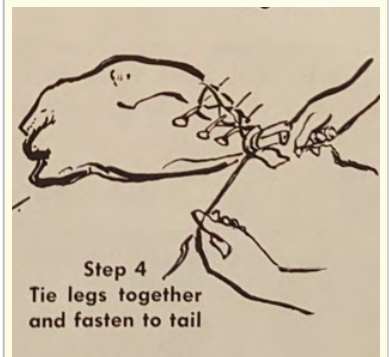
Loosely spoon stuffing into the body cavity. Close opening.

(Optional) Insert skewers across opening. Lace shut.

Step 4:

Tie drumsticks together with kitchen string.

The first time you stuff a turkey can be daunting, but if you follow these steps you just may end up with a turkey to be remembered.



These illustrations are from a cookbook published in 1958. Some basic techniques just never change.

Ingredients

Seasoned Bread Crumbs

2 bags, 1 cubed, 1 crumbs

Butter

1 stick

Celery

1 cup diced

Scallions

1 cup diced

Chicken Stock

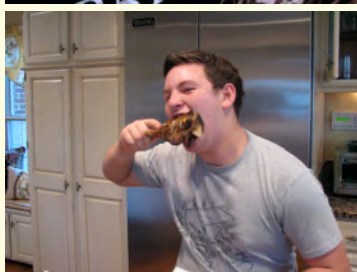
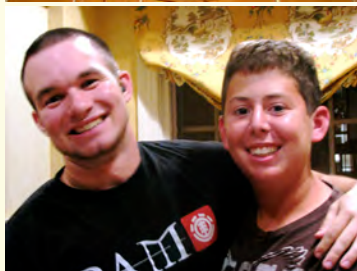
3 cups

Cider Glaze

1 cup

Water

1 cup boiling



Stuffing



- 1 Sauté butter, celery and onion in a large skillet until just soft. (This can be done the night before and stored in the refrigerator in a plastic container after it cools.) Preheat oven to 350°F.
- 2 In a large bowl, mix seasoned bread crumbs, butter, chicken stock and celery and onion mix. Season with salt and pepper. Stir well. Spoon some stuffing into main cavity of turkey. Place remainder of stuffing into a large baking dish. Using a turkey baster, add a few squirts of the Cider Glaze to the top, then cover with foil until about an hour before turkey is ready.
- 3 Bake stuffing for about 45 minutes covered, periodically basting with more Cider Glaze. Remove the foil and bake another 10-15 minutes.

Al's Mashed Sweet Potato Casserole



Al has taken my recipe for candied sweet potatoes and has given it a twist. Actually, this recipe was born when I said to him, “what should we do with these leftover sweet potatoes?” His solution was a real crowd pleaser, and Barb in particular, likes them prepared with way.

- 1** Place sweet potatoes in a baking dish. Add butter and sugar and bake at 350°F until soft.
- 2** Using a hand masher or a food processor, mash the potato mixture, together with the orange juice and cinnamon. Process until smooth. Return mixture to baking dish, cover with marshmallows and broil on low until just brown.

Ingredients

Sweet Potatoes

5 cut into chunks

Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick)

Brown Sugar

1 cup

Orange Juice

A splash

Cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon

Mini Marshmallows

Enough to cover top



Matt will make a “sandwich” out of any food.



Barb and Matt lounge around watching football, waiting for the sweet potatoes to finish cooking.

Ingredients

Potatoes

5 lbs.

Half-n-Half

1 cup warm

Butter

1 stick

Salt & Pepper

Mashed Potatoes



1

Peel the potatoes, cut them into cubes and put into a large pot of cold water with ice cubes. *(The ice keeps the potatoes from turning brown.)*

2

Cook the potatoes until they are soft when poked with a fork. Drain in a colander, then dump into a mixing bowl.

3

Add the butter and half & half and mix until the desired consistency. Salt and pepper to taste. As an option, sprinkle some chives on the top.

Applejack Gravy



1 Transfer turkey to platter. Pour pan juices into saucepan. Ladle off fat and add enough stock to pan juices to measure 2 1/4 cups liquid. Whisk flour and applejack in bowl until smooth. Add to stock mixture in saucepan and whisk to combine.

2 Bring to boil, whisking frequently, about 10 minutes. Strain. Whisk in remaining herb butter and bring to boil.

Ingredients

Stock

2 cups

Flour

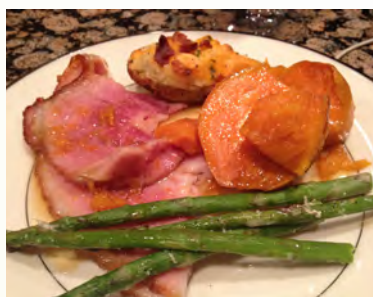
1/4 cup

Applejack or other

Brandy

3 tablespoons





Ingredients

Ham

1 Bone-In

Brown Sugar

1-3/4 cup firmly packed

Bourbon

1/4 cup

Molasses

1/4 cup

Apple Juice

1/2 cup

Dry Mustard

3 tablespoons

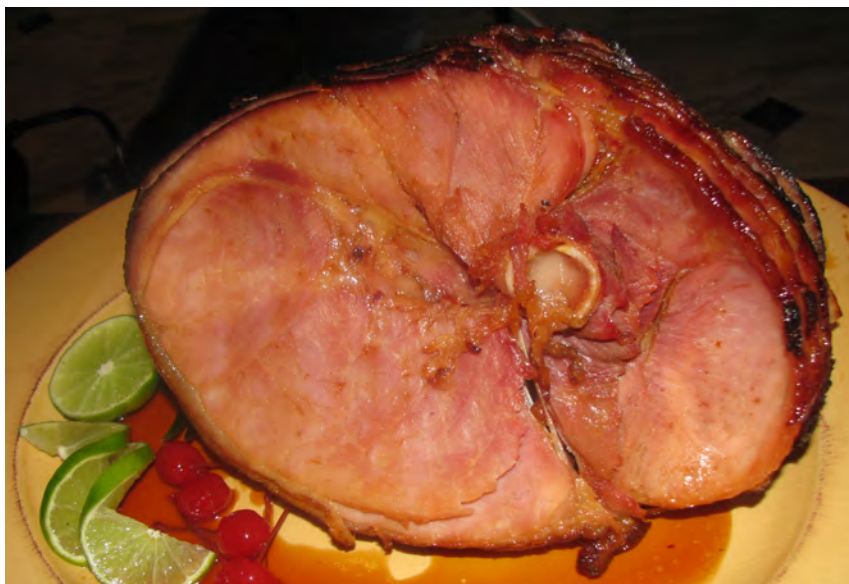
Pecans

1 cup toasted, finely ground



Two years in a row there were no seconds on ham as Bailey had her way with it.

Glazed Ham



Baked Ham has always been a family favorite. It's a great choice for Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, or any Sunday dinner.

My mom makes a great ham and so do we. This one is glazed with a Brown Sugar/Bourbon/Ground Pecan mixture and is perfectly paired with candied sweet potatoes.



Ham is great as the main dish, but is also perfect for an alternative meat on a Thanksgiving buffet. Growing up we usually had ham for Easter dinner.

1 Boil juice and bourbon in small saucepan until reduced to scant 1/3 cup, about 6 minutes. Combine sugar, pecans, molasses, and mustard in bowl. Add bourbon mixture; stir to form thick paste. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Cover; chill. Bring to room temperature before using.)

2 Position rack in bottom third of oven and preheat to 325°F. Line large roasting pan with heavy-duty foil, leaving overhang on all sides. Trim off skin and all but 1/4 inch fat from ham. Place ham, fat side up, in prepared pan. Roast ham until thermometer inserted into thickest part registers 130°F to 135°F, about 10 minutes per pound or 2 hours 40 minutes for a 16-pound ham.

3 Remove ham from oven; increase oven temperature to 425°F. Lightly score fat on ham in diamond pattern. Rub glaze thickly over top and sides of ham. Return ham to oven and roast until glaze is deep brown and bubbling, about 25 minutes. Let ham stand at least 20 minutes.



Al bastes the ham for the final 25-30 minutes it's in the oven.



It's always great to share meals with friends, old and new. Above, Nic and Natacha joined us for Thanksgiving.



Nat, Tony, Greg and Cathy at a dinner party in the 1980s. Note the soup is served in a hollowed out pumpkin.



Henry, Kathy, Matt, Al and Josh in 2010.



Hannah and Mel pose for a picture before the serious eating begins.

Candied Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

Sweet Potatoes

5-6 large peeled

Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick)

Brown Sugar

2 cups firmly packed

Orange Juice (optional)

2 tablespoons



Mike and I pose for a picture between courses. He is not a sweet potato eater, so I try to eat enough for us both.



"Beats me why your sweet potatoes aren't ever as good as mine!"

Since I was a little kid I have loved my mom's candied sweet potatoes and it was one of the dishes that I always had second helpings of. Although I still love them, I don't make them very often, though no Thanksgiving meal would be complete without them. In fact, Josh recently exclaimed that they were his favorite part of the meal.



I've made this dish for years but I must admit that my version, albeit really good, is never quite as good as when my mom makes them, and every time I go to my parents' house for dinner I request that my mom make candied sweet potatoes for me!



Candied Sweet Potatoes are good all year long, but they seem to really fit into Fall cooking because of their vibrant color.

- 1 Heat oven to 375 °F. Peel potatoes, cut into large chunks. and arrange in a glass baking dish.
- 2 Cut the butter into chunks and add to the sweet potatoes. Sprinkle the brown sugar on top and bake for about an hour or until the potatoes are soft and the syrup has thickened.



Use a few pumpkin candles and fall flowers to set a festive table.



Cranberry Salad

Ingredients

Cranberries

1 pkg. fresh berries

Orange

1 large

Apple

1 large

Sugar

1 cup

Pineapple

1 16-oz. can chopped and drained

Jello

2 boxes, 1 cranberry, 1 strawberry



My flowers from Sara's winter wedding to Hayden were a beautiful deep garnet hue that remind me of cranberries which are in season only in the winter.

- 1 Chop cranberries coarsely in a food processor. Dice apple and orange. Mix together and add sugar. Set aside.
- 2 Mix jello with 1 cup boiling water and 2 cups cold water.
- 3 Drain pineapple. In a large bowl, mix together all the ingredients with the jello. Refrigerate overnight.

No Turkey dinner is complete without some sort of cranberry salad. My Aunt Betty makes a great one, and I was fortunate enough to get her recipe several years ago, and have since adopted it as my own.

Every year for as long as I can remember my Aunt Betty would host a holiday celebration at her home in Mt. Jackson, Virginia. It started as a birthday celebration for my grandmother whose birthday was on December 25th. In order for her to have her own special day, all her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren would descend upon Aunt Betty's house for a celebratory feast.



The spread of food at Aunt Betty's . . . my grandfather (Carroll Lamma) is leaning against the pole and checking out the food. My Uncle Bob is in the background; my cousin Heather is in the foreground.

Here I am chatting with my grandmother (Mertie Lamma). Family festivities and food just seem to go together.



Cook's Tip:

Although this is traditionally served at Thanksgiving, it adds great color to any meal and fresh cranberries are in season all through the holidays.



My Aunt Betty has always been a great cook, and I'm lucky to have gotten some of her recipes over the years.

Origin of Recipe

Betty Funkhouser
(Aunt Betty)

Classic Pecan Pie

Ingredients

Pie Crust

1 (15-oz.) package refrigerated pie crusts

Sugar

1 cup

Light Corn Syrup

1 cup

Butter

1/3 cup

Eggs

4 lightly beaten

Vanilla Extract

1 teaspoon

Salt

1/4 teaspoon

Pecan Halves

1 1/2 cups



This is Al's favorite Thanksgiving dessert, so I always make it with him in mind. It's very simple to make, especially if you use a pre-made pie crust.

Serve this pie with some fresh whipped cream for a great ending to a Thanksgiving meal.



It's a good idea to run a 5k in the morning if you're going to finish the day eating Pecan Pie!



- 1 Fit 1 pie crust into a 9-inch pie plate according to package directions. Trim pastry and crimp edges. Cover loosely and freeze 30 minutes.
- 2 Cook sugar, corn syrup and butter in a medium saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves and butter melts. Cool slightly.
- 3 Stir in eggs, vanilla and salt. Pour into crust. Arrange pecan halves in concentric circles on top of the pie. Bake at 325°F for 50 to 55 minutes.



Charlie, Joe, Matt, Sara and I hang out around the kitchen table in our house on Gainsborough Drive.



Cook's Tip:

Use some leftover dough to make leaf shapes, add to top of pie, and after baking add some fresh cranberries. Use cookie cutters to cut out other designs as well.

Freezing the crust before filling keeps the liquid from seeping underneath the crust when baking (this is key).



Josh, Ruth, Alan and George pose with Brady on a beautiful fall day.

Ingredients

For the Crust . . .

Flour

1 cup

Pecans (or Walnuts)

1/4 cup ground

Salt

1/4 teaspoon

Water

2 tablespoons

Butter

1/4 cup cold

Shortening

1 tablespoon

Egg Yolk

1



Here I am making this tart for a family Thanksgiving holiday.

Pumpkin-Cheese Marble Tart



When we think of Thanksgiving dessert, pumpkin pie typically comes to mind; but this delicious tart provides a festive alternative. It's really a combination of pumpkin pie and cheesecake, served in a crushed pecan crust, and is great for the end of any fall dinner. The first time you make a tart, it can be a bit daunting, but once you get the hang of it, it will be much simpler.



Natalie, Tony and I enjoy a piece of Pumpkin-Cheese Marble Tart at a dinner party in 1988 at our house on Gainsborough Drive. There's nothing better than good food shared with good friends.

1

In a mixing bowl combine 1 cup flour, nuts, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cut in margarine and shortening until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Make a well in the center. Beat together egg yolk and 2 tablespoons water. Add to flour mixture. Using a fork, stir just till dough forms a ball. Turn onto floured surface and knead 3 or 4 times.

2

On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to a circle roughly 11 inches in diameter. Fit into a 10-inch tart pan, pressing bottom and sides gently to remove any air bubbles. Turn overlapping dough to inside and press against edges of pan. Prick sides with fork. Line bottom and sides of pan with double thickness of heavy duty foil. Bake in 400° oven 10 minutes. Cool on rack.



Josh is very experienced at removing a tart from the tart bottom.

3

For filling, in a mixer bowl, beat cream cheese and vanilla until fluffy. Add sugar, 1 tablespoon flour, and dash of salt. Beat until smooth. Add egg, beat just until combined. *Do not over mix.* Stir in 2 tablespoons milk. Remove 1/2 cup of the mixture; set aside.

4

Combine the pumpkin, brown sugar and pumpkin pie spice. Stir in reserved cream cheese mixture and the 1/4 cup milk. Alternately spoon pumpkin mixture and remaining cream cheese mixture into the crust. Using a spatula, gently swirl batter to marble. Bake in 375° oven 25 to 30 minutes or until center appears set. Cool. Garnish with pecan halves and fresh whipped cream.

Ingredients

For the Filling . . .

Cream Cheese

1 8-oz. package softened

Vanilla

1/2 teaspoon

Sugar

1/3 cup

Flour

1 tablespoon

Egg

1

Milk

2 tablespoons + 1/4 cup

Pumpkin

1 cup mashed cooked

Brown Sugar

1/3 cup packed

Pumpkin Pie Spice

1 teaspoon



Cook's Tip:

To keep the tart crust from rising, cover the crust with parchment paper, then add pie weights.

Ingredients

Fresh Turkey

2 less than 15-lbs. each

Peanut Oil

1 cup

Cajun Rub

To taste

Cajun Marinade

To taste

Cajun Rub

Cayenne Pepper

2 tablespoons

Sweet Paprika

2 tablespoons

Black Pepper

1 tablespoon freshly ground

Kosher Salt

5 tablespoons

Onion Powder

1 tablespoon

Garlic Powder

2 tablespoons

Dried Oregano

1 tablespoon

Dried Thyme

1 tablespoon

Cajun Fried Turkey



Fried Turkey is a relatively recent phenomenon, and really is as much about the pageantry of it as the cooking method itself. It's really simple to fry a turkey, with the biggest challenge being not burning down the house.

There are certain common sense rules that must be followed:

- First and foremost - you must fry turkey outdoors!
- If you are using a frozen turkey, it must be thawed completely.
- Do not leave the frying turkey unattended.
- Keep the size of your turkey at 15 pounds or less. Otherwise you will have to fry it so long to get the breast done, that the legs and wings will be like jerky.

1

Place the still wrapped turkey in the fryer and fill the pot with water, covering the turkey by one inch. Remove the turkey and mark the fryer with a marker or crayon. This becomes your oil line, so that you do not fill the pot with too much oil, creating an overflow.

2

Clean and dry the turkey inside and out, removing the giblets and neck. You can remove the skin if you'd like, but I think if



you're going to bother frying a turkey, you should leave the skin on. Make a 1-inch cut in the skin at the thigh/leg joint. This allows the oil to drain from your turkey when it's done. Rub the turkey with Cajun seasonings.

3

Inject the marinade into the turkey at various points on the breast, thighs and legs. When you stick the turkey with your marinade injector, don't bring the needle all the way out. Try



to stick it a few times going each direction as the less holes you make in it the better.

4

Place turkey upside down on poultry rack with legs facing up. Pour the oil into the fryer up to the oil line (the one you marked in step 1 above). Attach the thermometer to the top edge, ensuring the stem of the thermometer is in the oil at least one inch. Put the fryer pot on the burner, light, and set at a low flame. Heat oil to 350°. This will take anywhere from 15-30 minutes. When turkey reaches 350° reduce by turning regulator valve.



Matt and Josh keep a watchful eye on the turkey.



Be careful not to stick yourself in the butt injecting the turkeys.



Matt wears the appropriate protective gear, and the cook (Al - below) gets no respect.





Al concocts a melange of spices to give the turkey a Creole flavor. There is no recipe anywhere in sight as this is what he does best!



I have always been amazed how my mom cooks without ever tasting anything. I - on the other hand - am always tasting what I'm cooking and adjusting it along the way.



Al injects Josh with some of the marinade to give him a bit of extra spice. I do not recommend trying this at home!

5 Attach the turkey frying grab hook to to top loop of the rack. Wearing gloves, very slowly and carefully lower the turkey into the fryer pot. It may take 60-90 seconds to completely lower it into the oil. Do NOT drop it in as the oil is going to bubble and pop. Turn the fryer burner up to return to 350°, then reduce the flame in order to keep it at a constant temperature while cooking.

6 While the turkey is frying, lay some newspaper on a large pizza pan so that you have something to sit your turkey rack on once the turkey is done.

7 When the turkey is done, turn the fryer burner off at the tank. Place the grab hook through the top loop of the rack and very carefully remove the rack with the turkey from the pot and place it on the newspaper covered pan. Once the turkey has drained, carefully remove turkey from rack and onto platter or cutting board.

Cajun Marinade

1

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion juice, garlic juice, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper, cayenne pepper and beer. Mix until well blended.



Cooking Fried Turkey is as much fun as the eating . . . just be cautious . . . and get your moves down.

Ingredients

Butter

2 cups

Onion Juice

1/4 cup

Garlic Juice

1/4 cup

Louisiana-style Hot Sauce

1/4 cup

Worcestershire Sauce

1/4 cup

Ground Black Pepper

2 tablespoons

Cayenne Pepper

1 teaspoon

Beer

7-oz.



Trying local foods while traveling to other areas influences the way we cook. Above, Josh, Matt and Ben try grilled mussels in Istanbul.



Winter



When the weather turns cold, the way I cook changes yet again. Fresh fruits and vegetables are harder to get, so I try to take advantage of seasonal specialties such as cranberries, beets and winter squash. This is the season for comfort foods like meat loaf and macaroni-and-cheese, and hearty soups like Creamy Potato and French Onion.

Christmas, New Year's, and Valentine's Day all present opportunities for festive get togethers with family and friends. This provides an opportunity to use colorful table settings and decorative garnishes. So as you're planning holiday meals, select foods that display the colors of the season.

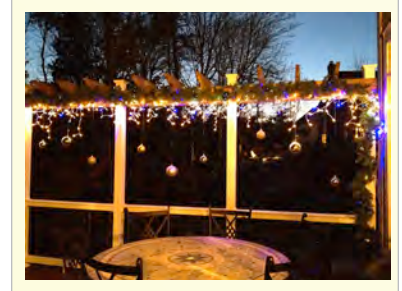
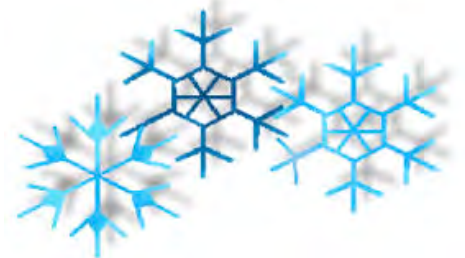
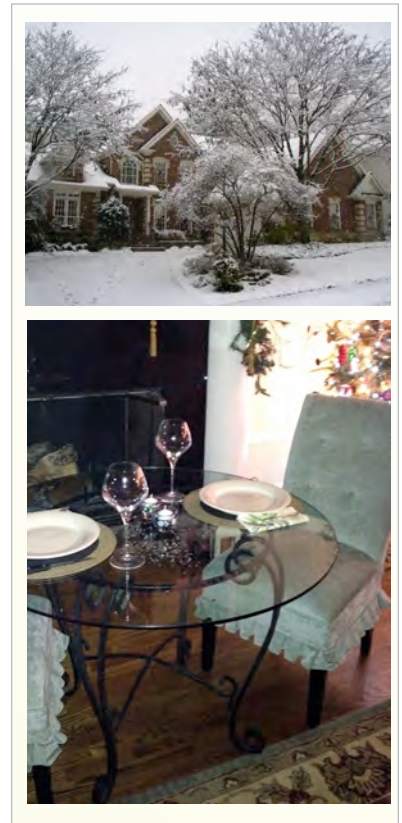


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Choosing the Wine



We all know the basics of food and wine pairings, dry red wines with meats, white wine with fish or poultry, rosé in the summer, and a darker red wine with tomato-based pasta. Everyone who knows me knows that I like to pair everything I eat with bold reds. But true wine pairings are actually based on a complex formula, where the elements of the wine are paired with elements of the foods. Wine flavors come from specific elements: sugar, acid, fruit, tannin and alcohol. Foods also have their own unique flavor components, such as fat, acid, salt, sugar and spice. The most successful food and wine pairings feature complementary components, richness and textures.

Fat Element - Many foods, notably meat and dairy products, have high levels of fat. When matching a wine with fatty foods, the wine has to balance that fat with acid, cut it with tannin, or match its richness with alcohol. This is why we pair a prime cut of steak with a Cabernet - the beef's protein and fat soften up the wine's mouth-drying tannins.

Acid Element - Acid is another key element in both food and wine. In food, it adds nerve, freshness and lift. When looking for a wine to go with an acidic dish, you should make sure that the acidity of the wine is at least equal to that of the food. Salads matching can be difficult, but you can make it work if you moderate the acid in the dressing by cutting back on the lemon juice or vinegar.

Salt Element - Salty foods seem to limit your wine choices. Sparkling wines are a good match with salty, fried foods. The carbonation and yeasty acids emulate beer and clean the salt from your palate, while adding more interesting textures and flavor nuances.

Sweetness Element - Sweet desserts and other sugary foods seem easy—just pull out a sweet wine—but beware. Here's where a rule really needs to be observed. Just be certain that the wine tastes sweeter than the dessert; otherwise the dessert will strip the wine of its sweetness and render it bitter or tart.

Bitterness Element - What about bitter flavors? In some cultures, bitter flavors are prized, but most of the time they are to be avoided. In wine, bitterness usually results from unripe grapes, or a failure to get the stems out. When bitterness in wine meets bitterness in food, it acts as a magnifier.

Red Wine Pairings:

Pork Chops with a Pinot Noir

Duck Breast with
Red Burgundy

Fancy Burgers with a Red
Zinfandel

Spicy Grilled Shrimp
and Malbec

Grilled Salmon with a Russian
River Valley Pinot Noir

Steak with a Sonoma Zinfandel

Chicken Rigatoni with an
Italian Primitivo

Rack of Lamb and Napa
Valley Cabernet Sauvignon



White Wine Pairings:

Chicken Satay with a
Chardonnay

Pork Loin with Cider with
a Pinot Blanc

Corn Chowder with an
Australian Chardonnay

Gazpacho with a White
Bordeaux

Pumpkin Soup with a
White Burgundy

Artichoke Dip and Soave

Ingredients

Yellow Onions

2-1/2 lbs. thinly sliced

Unsalted Butter

3 tablespoons

Sugar

Pinch

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Red Wine

2 cups

Beef Broth

8 cups

Bay Leaf

1

Crusty French Bread

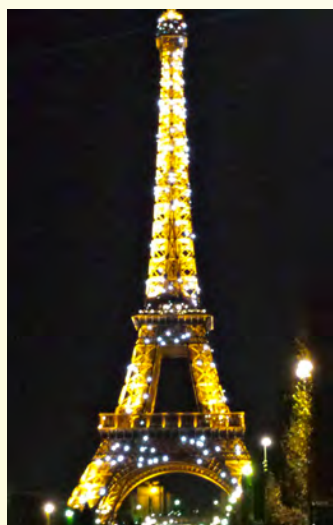
2-in. slices

Comté Cheese

3 cups shredded

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Soupe a L'Oignon

French Onion Soup



I was on a date with my boyfriend in high school the first time I ever ate French Open Soup, and have been a raving fan ever since.

Through the years I have had many variations of this dish, and find that there are a few ingredients that make the difference between a good bowl and a great bowl. First, and foremost, is the onion. I think the sweeter the better, and I prefer using *Mayan Sweets* from Peru. The second key ingredient is the cheese. While any Swiss variety will do in a pinch, I highly recommend using Swiss Gruyère or its French cousin, Comté.

Serve this in a mini crock as a first course, or paired with a salad or light sandwich as a winter evening meal. This soup is robust and flavorful and the recipe can be easily doubled to serve a crowd. Al and I like to drink the red wine that doesn't go into the soup, paired with some of the Comté cheese and crusty French bread to get our palates properly prepared for the soup itself.

1

Thinly slice the onions lengthwise, then set aside. In a large, heavy pot (I use a Le Creuset cast iron one) melt the butter with the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions, cover and cook, stirring occasionally. Add the sugar and season with salt and pepper to taste, and cook until the onions are soft, golden and lightly caramelized. This takes about 25-30 minutes.



That first bite is always so good!

2

Add the wine, increase the heat to high, and cook until the liquid is reduced to about half. It usually takes about 8-10 minutes for the reduction. Add the beef stock and bay leaf, reducing the heat to medium-low. Let the soup simmer, uncovered, until it is dark and fully flavored, about 45 minutes.



Nic says in his best French, "Food - get in my belly!"

3

Just before serving, preheat the broiler. Remove the bay leaf, then ladle the soup into oven proof bowls and arrange on a



baking sheet so that you can get them in and out of the oven easily. Place a piece of bread on top of each bowl, sprinkle with the Comté, and broil until the cheese melts and is bubbly, and the bread is lightly browned around the edges. Remove from the oven and serve hot.



Josh is always happy to be a "taster" when required.

Original Recipe

Williams-Sonoma
Authentic Recipes
Celebrating The Foods
of the World - Paris

Ingredients

Steak

Filet, preferably at least 2 inches thick

Butter

1 tablespoon

Worcestershire Sauce

1 tablespoon

Garlic Powder

To taste

Salt and Pepper

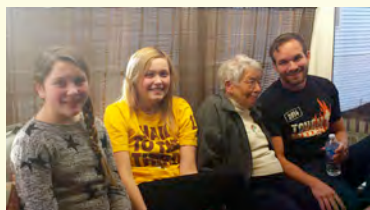
To taste (or rub of your choice)



Matt and Kenny spend the day with me in the kitchen.



Matt and Drew wait patiently for drinks to be served.



Grams in the kitchen with her grandkids Hannah, Mel and Matt

Reverse Seared Beef Tenderloin



Our friend Dan told us about this method of preparing steak and we decided to try it. Of course he was also touting how good putting butter in coffee in lieu of cream is, but I'm not ready for that one just yet.

The biggest benefit of preparing a steak this way is that it is evenly cooked all the way through. Additionally, you don't even have to go outside and grill it . . . you can cook steak this way in your kitchen, which makes it a great alternative when the weather is snowy and cold.

1

Take the meat out of the refrigerator and bring it to room temperature, about 45 minutes. Season the steak - either with rub or sprinkle with garlic powder, pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Season one side, let sit for a few minutes, then flip over and season the other side.

2



Place a roasting rack on top of a baking sheet, put steak on top, and place in an oven preheated to 275°F. (You don't want the steak to be lying directly on the baking sheet.) Bake the meat for 40 minutes, or until a meat thermometer inserted halfway up the thickness of the steak reads 125°-130°F for a medium rare steak.

3

Get your cast iron skillet as hot as possible on the stove or grill. Place the steak in the dry skillet. (You can put some olive oil or butter in the skillet if you wish.) Sear the steak for 1 minute. Flip the steak and sear the other side for 1 minute. Doing this should bring your steak to 135°F internal temperature.

Remove the steak from the pan when it reaches 135°F internal temperature and serve.



Filet is our favorite cut of beef, but this method of preparation works with any cut you choose.



Al looks enthusiastic as he readies himself to cook some steaks.



Sophia is tired of eating mashed sweet potatoes - she wants some of this steak!



Ingredients

Tarragon Vinegar

2 tablespoons

Dry White Wine

2 tablespoons

Shallots

1/4 cup very finely minced

Tarragon Leaf

1 tablespoon finely chopped

Egg Yolks

3 large

Water

1 tablespoon

Unsalted Butter

1-1/2 sticks very soft

Fresh Lemon Juice

few drops



Original Recipe

Martha Stewart

Bearnaise Sauce



- 1** Combine vinegar, wine, shallots, black pepper, and 1-1/2 teaspoons tarragon in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat until reduced to 1 tablespoon, about 5 to 10 minutes.
- 2** Add egg yolks and 1 tablespoon of water to reduced vinegar mixture. Whisk until thick and pale, about 2 minutes. Set pan over moderately low heat and continue to whisk at reasonable speed reaching all over bottom and insides of pan, where eggs tend to overcook. To control heat, frequently move pan off burner for a few seconds, then back on. As they cook, the eggs will become frothy and increase in volume, then thicken.
- 3** When the bottom of the pan is visible in the streaks left by the whisk, and the eggs are thick and smooth, **remove from heat**. By spoonfuls, add soft butter, whisking constantly to incorporate each addition into the sauce. As the emulsion forms, add butter in slightly larger amounts, always whisking until fully absorbed. Continue adding butter until sauce has thickened to consistency desired. Season with salt and pepper, lemon juice, and the remaining 1-1/2 teaspoons tarragon.



Al enjoying a glass of wine before dinner at *La Fontaine de Mars* in Paris, a restaurant Joe and Susie recommended we try. We liked it so much that the next time we went to Paris, we ate there again. Both times, I had the steak just so I could have their Bearnaise sauce.



Left, Susie works on the Bearnaise sauce, taking care that it doesn't separate. In the background, Joe loads the dishwasher.

Ingredients

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Onion

1 medium chopped

Garlic

3 - 5 cloves roasted and
mashed

Ground Beef

1 lb. very lean

Jalapeño Pepper

1 finely chopped

Cumin

2 tablespoons

Chili Powder

6 tablespoons

Cayenne Pepper

1/2 teaspoon

Tomato Sauce

2 15-oz. cans

Kidney Beans

1 15-oz. can dark red

Chili con Carne



Nothing warms up a cold winter evening like a hot bowl of spicy chili. It makes a great weeknight dinner since you can walk in the door and have this on the table in less than an hour. Additionally, all the ingredients are ones you typically have on hand and the ground beef can be pulled from the freezer, defrosted in the microwave and used immediately.

I have found that no two pots of chili taste the same, so have fun and experiment. Use different meats and/or beans, or make it without beans (although the mother in me thinks you should have them as they're a really good source of protein). Serve the chili over noodles or rice. Increase or decrease the amount of hot pepper in the chili depending on your personal taste.

Feel free to double or triple this recipe because leftovers can be easily frozen or used to make nachos.

1

In a large skillet sauté the garlic and onion in the olive oil until tender. Add the ground beef and jalapeño, stirring occasionally until the beef is browned. Drain any liquid.

2

Combine the tomato sauce and remaining spices in a medium size saucepan. Add the ground beef mixture and stir well. Cook over medium heat until chili just starts to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 30 minutes.

3

Remove from heat and add kidney beans (do not drain). Simmer over low heat until beans are warmed through, about 20 minutes.



Cook's Tip:

For a variation, use ground buffalo instead of ground beef. Or use ground turkey and cannellini beans for a white chili.



Nothing goes with a bowl of chili like a frothy glass of cold beer.



Serve this chili as is or serve it over noodles with grated cheese and a wallop of sour cream.



French Toast

Ingredients

Crusty French Bread

1 baguette

Eggs

4 lightly beaten

Milk

1 tablespoon

Confectioner's Sugar

1/4 cup

Maple Syrup

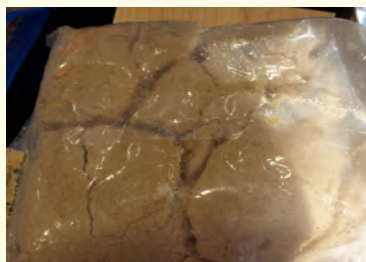
To taste

Butter

1/4 cup (1/2 stick)

Cinnamon

1-2 teaspoons



Cook's Tip:

If you find your brown sugar has gotten hard, put it in the microwave for 1 minute to soften it enough to work with.



French Toast is another one of those dishes that takes me right back to my childhood, and I've enjoyed making it many times for my kids over the years.

There are two ingredients that can make or break French Toast. First, and foremost is the bread as it needs to have some texture to it. I prefer crusty French bread as it doesn't get soggy when soaked in the egg mixture. The second key ingredient is confectioner's sugar which is used to dust the top. Serve this with a few slices of crispy bacon and fresh fruit for a perfect weekend breakfast.

1

Slice a baguette of French bread diagonally, about 2 inches thick. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs and milk



until just mixed. Sprinkle egg mixture liberally with cinnamon. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, warm a good quality maple syrup over low heat until bubbly and warm.

2

Heat a heavy skillet over medium high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of butter and heat until just melted. Dip the bread in the egg mixture, just long enough to coat it on both sides. Add the bread and cook until golden brown. Flip and cook other side.



3



Remove from skillet, arrange on a plate, sprinkle with confectioner's sugar and serve with maple syrup.

French Toast is great with a side of crisp bacon and fresh orange slices.



Cook's Tip:

Use an inexpensive dispenser like the one shown above to make applying confectioner's sugar quick and easy any time you want it.



Fresh fruit is a perfect accompaniment to French Toast. Above, Matt hangs out with Grams while cutting up various fruits for brunch. Notice Glenna is drinking from the "Sophia Cup shown below.



Ingredients

Rigatoni

1 lb.

Chicken Breasts

2-3

Hot Italian Sausage

1 lb.

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Shallots

3-4 finely chopped

Roasted Red Peppers

1 jar cut into strips

Garlic

7 cloves minced

Marsala

1/4 cup

Hot Cherry Peppers

2/3 cups diced

Hot Cherry Peppers Juice

1/4 cup

Oregano

2 teaspoons

Crushed Tomatoes

2 28-oz. cans

Cream

1 cup

Parmesan Cheese

1-1/2 cups shredded

Fresh Basil

1/2 cup diced

Chicken Riggies



Chicken Riggies is a regional specialty of upstate New York, and is a derivative of Chicken Cacciatore. This particular recipe is Joe and Susie's version of Sharyl's recipe. Some versions of this dish call for Kalamata olives and/or mushrooms. Also, you can control how spicy this dish is by simply adjusting the amount of cherry peppers or hot cherry juice. I thought this was just the perfect level of spicy, but Joe ate his with an additional raw cherry pepper. Use half fresh cherry peppers and half from a jar. If you like the sauce to be more pink, simply add another cup of cream.

1

In a large pan heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Add marsala and half of the hot cherry juice. Let liquid reduce a little, about 3 minutes. Add in chicken and sausage and cook thoroughly.

2

In a second large sauce pan, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium high heat. Add half of the shallots. Season with salt and pepper. Cook until softened, about 2-4 minutes. Then add the other half of the hot cherry juice and let it cook down a bit. Add garlic, cherry peppers, roasted red peppers and oregano. Cook 1-2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cream. Lower the heat, and simmer for about 10 minutes or until the sauce thickens.

3

Add the chicken, sausage and drippings and simmer another 10 minutes. Add the grated cheese. Taste, and add more salt and pepper if desired.



4

Cook the rigatoni according to the package instructions. Drain. Spoon a few scoops of pasta onto a plate or bowl. Cover with sauce and sprinkle with chopped basil.



Cook's Tip:

When you are cooking pasta, always set the timer for a minute or two less than the package instructions to ensure you get al dente pasta. You can always cook it more, but not less.



Cooking is more fun if you get all your ingredients cut up and organized before you begin making a dish. Better yet, get someone to be your sous-chef like I was for Joe on this dish.

Ingredients

Free Range Chicken

1 3-pound

Cold Water

12 cups

Kosher Salt

3 tablespoons

Leek

1 cleaned and quartered

Carrot

1 cleaned and quartered

Bay Leaves

2

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Onion

2 cups finely diced

Arborio Rice

2/3 cup

Lemon Juice

1/2 cup fresh squeezed

Eggs

2 large

Black Pepper

1 teaspoon freshly ground

Avgolemono (Chicken Soup with Egg-Lemon Sauce)



This flavorful Mediterranean classic is another recipe from Joe and Susie's extensive list. The name of this classic soup - Avgolemono - comes from its two main ingredients: egg (avgo) and lemon juice (lemoni).

“Avgolemono is an amazingly creamy soup without a drop of cream. Egg-thickened broth is spiked with tart lemon juice, all enrobing a beautiful chicken core. Greeks serve it chilled in the summer. In winter, it's cooked with rice and dished up piping hot. Folks who hit the ouzo too hard have been said to find relief the next day in a steaming bowlful.”

1

In a 6 to 8-quart stockpot, combine the chicken, water, and 2 tablespoons salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; immediately reduce the heat to a very low simmer, and skim the foam from the surface. Add the leek, carrot, and bay leaves and continue to simmer with the chicken until the chicken is thoroughly cooked, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until translucent, about 6 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

2

Remove chicken from the broth, and allow meat to cool. Strain the broth and skim the fat. (Place the broth in the refrigerator to make it easier to skim.)

When the chicken is cool enough to handle, pull the meat from the bones and discard the skin. Dice the meat into large cubes; refrigerate until ready to use.

Return the broth to high heat, add the rice and onion and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the rice is almost cooked through, about 20 minutes. Add the chicken and reduce the broth to a low simmer.

3

In a medium sized bowl, beat the lemon juice, eggs, and pepper. Ladle 2 cups of hot broth into a measuring cup with a pourable spout. While whisking, slowly pour the 2 cups of broth into the egg mixture. Pour the egg mixture back into the pot with the remaining 1 tablespoon of salt. Stir well to blend. Divide among bowls and serve immediately.



Cook's Tip:

If you don't have time to cook a whole chicken for the stock, use a rotisserie chicken and pre-made chicken stock. In this case, omit the water. Cook the leek and carrot in the broth and blend it in with an immersion blender, then strain the broth.



Whether it's grilling outdoors or cooking inside, Joe always demonstrates a "joie-de-vivre."

Honey Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients

Sweet Potatoes

2 medium, peeled, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Carrots

4 medium, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Onions

4-6 small

Potatoes

2 medium, peeled, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Brussel Sprouts

1/4 cup

Celery

2-3 stalks, cut into 2-inch pieces

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Honey

1/4 cup

Thyme

3 - 5 sprigs

Cook's Tip:

If your honey starts to crystallize, microwave it for 30 seconds (with the lid off) to return it to a liquid state.



Honey Roasted Vegetables are a perfect complement to Herb Roasted Chicken. All of these vegetables provide numerous health benefits, while remaining low in calories. Even more important than that is that they're delicious . . . especially with the addition of a little honey.

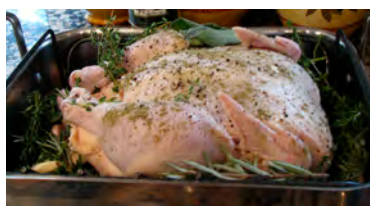
- 1** Preheat oven to 375°F. In a 3-quart baking dish, toss together sweet potatoes, carrots, onions, potatoes, celery, brussel sprouts, honey, and oil; season with salt and pepper.
- 2** Top with thyme sprigs and roast until vegetables are browned at edges and tender when pierced with a knife, about 1 hour.

Fresh Herb-Roasted Chicken



It doesn't get much easier than roasting a chicken. Fresh herbs, shallots and garlic make this recipe an excellent choice for dinner.

- 1 Remove liver, giblets, neck, etc. and discard or use for stock. Wash chicken thoroughly and dry. Rub the inside with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Fill cavity with half of the fresh



herbs, shallots and garlic cloves. Place chicken, breast side up, in a roasting pan, and roast at 400°F for 15 minutes.

- 2 Remove from oven, and surround chicken with the remaining herbs, shallots and garlic. (Reserve a few of the herbs for garnish). Pour white wine over shallots and garlic and return to oven. Roast until done, basting occasionally.

- 3 Place chicken on a serving platter and arrange shallots and garlic around it. Garnish with reserved fresh herbs.

Ingredients

Chicken

1 large roasting chicken

Lemon Juice

Juice of 1 lemon

Fresh Thyme

10 sprigs

Fresh Rosemary

6-8 sprigs

Fresh Sage

6-8 sprigs

Shallots

16 peeled

Garlic Cloves

8-10 peeled

Dry White Wine

1/2 cup

Salt & Pepper

To taste

Cook's Tip:

To test for doneness, pierce thickest part of thigh. Juices should run clear. At 400° F, it should take 1 to 1-1/2 hours to roast.

Ingredients

Unsalted Butter

2 tablespoons

Celery Stalk

1 diced fine

Carrot

1 diced fine

Yellow Onion

1 small diced fine

Black Peppercorns

1 tablespoon

Port Wine

1/2 cup

Red Wine

1/2 cup

Cranberry Juice

1/4 cup

Brown Sugar

1/4 cup

Chicken Stock

1 cup

Fresh Blackberries

1 cup

Raspberry Preserves

2 tablespoons

Chipotles in Adobo Sauce

1/4 cup puréed

Blackberry Chipotle Sauce



When we lived in Evergreen, Colorado we went out to a restaurant called *The Farm*. This place specialized in game dishes, and I had roasted chicken thighs in a blackberry sauce. Although I wasn't very excited about it when I ordered it, it was delicious! Ever since then, I have been trying to replicate that sauce, and this version of a Bobby Flay recipe is pretty close to what I remember. Make a big batch and then freeze extra portions of it as it really does take a while to make.

1 Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Sauté the celery, carrot and onions until the celery and carrot are tender and the onions are translucent, about 7 minutes. Add the peppercorns and continue cooking 2 more minutes. Add the port, red wine, cranberry juice, raspberry preserves, chipotle mixture, brown sugar and stock, stirring constantly and making sure to scrape the bottom of the pan. Cook until the mixture is reduced by half. Add the blackberries and cook a few more minutes.

2 Carefully pour the mixture into a blender and purée. Strain and return to the saucepan.

3 Whisk 1 tablespoon cornstarch in a small bowl with a few tablespoons of the sauce. Add to the saucepan and bring to a boil.



Serve Blackberry Chipotle sauce over Herb Roasted Chicken. It's an easy way to dress up a regular roasted chicken and make it have a bit more pizzaz.



Susie enjoys being in the kitchen helping us cook.



Trying new dishes when eating out is a great way to get ideas for new things to cook. Ben, Matt and I are preparing to sample some local cuisine in San Diego.

Ingredients

Baker's German sweet chocolate

1 4-oz. package

Water

1/2 cup, boiling

Flour

2 cups

Baking Soda

1 teaspoon

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Butter

1 cup

Sugar

2 cups

Egg Yolks

4

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Buttermilk

1 cup

Egg Whites

4

Coconut-Pecan Frosting



German Chocolate Cake



German Chocolate Cake is the kind of food that you either really like or you really do not. I started making this for Joe as his birthday cake, but I'm not sure in retrospect if he really liked it or not (think shrimp cocktail).

Al and his guys like it though, and I've made it a lot of times over the years as a "birthday cake." The cake itself is moist and good, but it's the icing on this one that wins the prize . . . Yum!

If you're strapped for time, use a box cake mix instead of this one from scratch, and ice it with Coconut-Pecan Frosting.



Matt and I put the candles on a cake for a birthday celebration in our kitchen in Fort Collins.

- 1** Melt chocolate in a double boiler. Cool. Mix flour, soda and salt. In a separate bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating thoroughly after each. Blend in vanilla and chocolate. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk, beating after each addition until smooth. Beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold into batter.
- 2** Pour into three 9-inch layer pans, lined on bottoms with waxed paper. Bake at 350° for 30 to 35 minutes. Immediately run spatula around pans between cakes and sides. Cool in pans 15 minutes. Remove from pans, remove paper and finish cooling on racks.
- 3** Combine evaporated milk, sugar, egg yolks, butter and vanilla in a saucepan. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture thickens, about 12 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in coconut and pecans. Cool until of spreading consistency. Spread filling on top and between layers.

Coconut-Pecan Frosting

Ingredients

Evaporated Milk

1 cup

Sugar

1 cup

Egg Yolks

3 slightly beaten

Butter

1/2 butter

Vanilla

1/2 butter

Coconut

1 1/3 cups

Pecans

1 cup



Matt loved dinosaurs when he was little, as evidenced by his birthday cakes.



Ingredients

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Paprika

1 teaspoon

Old Bay Seasoning

1 teaspoon

Sugar

1/2 teaspoon

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Boneless, Skinless

Chicken Breasts

4

Onion

1 cup chopped

Garlic

1 teaspoon minced

Long-Grain Rice

1 1/2 cup cooked

Hot Sauce

1 teaspoon

Black-Eyed Peas

1 15-oz. can (undrained)

Spiced Chicken with Black-Eyed Peas & Rice



1 Heat 2 teaspoons of oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Combine paprika, seasoning, sugar and 1/4 teaspoon salt; sprinkle over chicken. Add chicken to pan; cook 2 minutes on each side to brown. Wrap handle of pan with foil and place in oven. Bake at 350°F until chicken is done. Cover and keep warm.

2 Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté for 3-5 minutes. Stir in rice, 1/4 teaspoon salt, hot sauce and black-eyed peas. Cook until thoroughly heated, about 3-5 minutes. Spoon about 3/4 cup rice mixture into each of 4 bowls and top with one chicken breast. Sprinkle with scallions.

Salad with Roasted Beets, Candied Walnuts & Blue Cheese



- 1** Preheat oven to 400° F. Wrap beets in foil and bake until tender when pierced with a knife (about 1-1/2 hours). Cool slightly and peel. Cut each beet into 8 wedges. Place in a medium bowl and cover. To make vinaigrette, whisk together olive oil, orange juice, honey, and red wine vinegar.
- 2** Combine romaine and mixed greens, and 3/4 cup of the walnuts in a large bowl. Add just enough dressing to lightly coat, then toss. Season with salt and pepper.
- 3** Divide among plates. Top with cheese, beets and nuts. (As an alternative, place salad in a large bowl, top with cheese, beets and remaining walnuts as shown above).

Ingredients

For the salad . . .

Roasted Beets

1-1/2 pounds (medium)

Romaine Lettuce Hearts

4 heads chopped

Mixed Greens

2 6-ounce packages

Walnuts (or Pecans)

1 cup candied

Blue (or Goat) Cheese

6 ounces

For the vinaigrette . . .

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons

Orange Juice

1/4 cup freshly squeezed

Honey

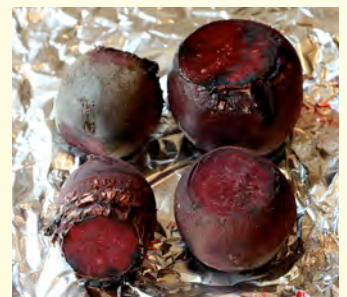
4 teaspoons

Red Wine Vinegar

4 teaspoons

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Ingredients

Hogie Rolls

2

Salami

6 slices

Pepperoni

8 slices

Provolone Cheese

4 slices

Lettuce

Diced

Tomatoes

1 thinly sliced

Mayonnaise

1 tablespoon

Jalapeño Spread

2 teaspoons

Oregano

To taste



Italian Sandwiches



Who said that making a sandwich is not really cooking? You can make plain, ordinary sandwiches or you can add just a bit of pizzazz and a whole lot of flavor by simply broiling it and adding some Jalapeño spread.

If you're not a mayo fan, then skip it and add some oil and vinegar, or Italian dressing. If you like them, add onions as well.

Make a few of these, cut into 2-inch pieces, add a fancy toothpick, and serve as an appetizer. Make one big one out of a baguette, slice it into 2-inch pieces and serve at as party fare. Anyway you serve this sandwich, it's a winner!

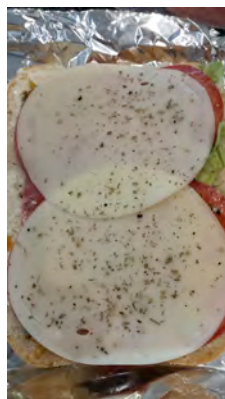
1



First dig the excess dough from the bread, creating a crevice. On one side, spread with mayonnaise to taste and Jalapeño spread. On the other side, fill the crevice with lettuce and cover with tomatoes.

2

Cover both sides of the sandwich with 3 slices of salami, 4 slices of pepperoni and 2 slices of provolone cheese. (This keeps the lettuce and tomato from wilting when baked.) Sprinkle generously with oregano and black pepper.



3



Broil in the oven under medium heat just long enough to slightly melt the cheese and brown the bread.



Make something ordinary fun by adding some festive picks.



These sandwiches make perfect party fare.



Joe bonds with Glenna in the kitchen (while sporting her jacket). Some crazy things have gone down here.



Charlie and Lucky hang out on the couch waiting for the call that dinner's ready.

Meat Loaf

Ingredients

Eggs

2

Milk

3/4 cup

Italian Bread Crumbs

1/2 cup

Chopped Onion

1/4 cup

Parsley

2 tablespoons

Ground Sage

1/2 teaspoon

Ground Beef

1-1/2 lbs. (good quality)

Ketchup

1/2 cup

Brown Sugar

4 tablespoons

Dry Mustard

2 teaspoons



Meat Loaf is quick and simple, and makes a delicious weeknight dish. After all it is the quintessential comfort food. All my kids have always liked this dish, especially when served with Macaroni and Cheese.

There are a few key ingredients that make this particular dish so good. The small amount of sage called for in this recipe differentiates it from most other Meat Loaf recipes and creates a wonderful aroma in the kitchen while it's cooking. But it's the tangy sauce that covers the top that really makes this one a crowd pleaser and part of my regular cold weather repertoire.



Serve this Meat Loaf with Macaroni and Cheese and green peas for a guaranteed hit.

1

Heat oven to 350°F. Whisk together eggs and milk. Stir in breadcrumbs, onion, parsley and sage. Add beef and mix together well using your hands.

2

Coat an 8x4x2 loaf pan with a cooking spray such as Pam. Pat the mixture into the pan. Bake for 1-1/4 hours. Drain any liquid from the pan.

3

Mix together ketchup, brown sugar and mustard, then spread over the top. Return to the oven for 10-15 minutes more. After removing from the oven, let the meat loaf stand for 5 minutes, then transfer to a platter.



Although I never saw my dad cook a meal, he was always willing to help out in the kitchen by slicing and dicing and doing whatever prep work was required. He was also the one who made sure the knives were sharp.

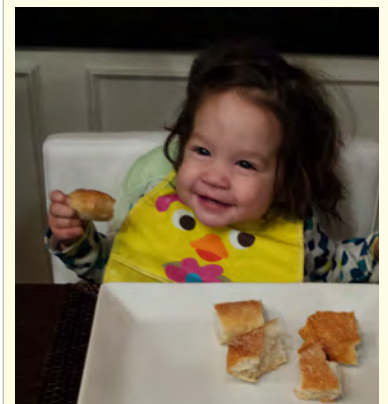


Matt and Charlie hang out in the kitchen waiting for dinner to be ready. Is that the same as helping in the kitchen?



After sitting for about 5 minutes, the meat loaf can be easily removed from the pan with a spatula.

Madison munches on some bread while waiting for dinner.



Macaroni & Cheese

Ingredients

Elbow Noodles

1 lb.

Milk

1-1/2 to 2 cups

Velveeta Cheese

2 lb.

Butter

1/2 stick melted

Italian Bread Crumbs

1 cup or enough to cover the top

Salt & Pepper

To taste



There are a lot of fancier versions of this dish, but this simple recipe is the “go to” one in our house. Each time I make it I feel as though I am paying homage to my Grandma Mertie, who made Mac & Cheese every Sunday for family dinners. I still remember vividly sitting in her kitchen and eating mass amounts of this dish with my cousin Sandy. I loved those Sunday visits with my grandparents where everyone sat around in the kitchen drinking coffee and talking at once. I often serve this as an accompaniment to Meat Loaf, and in fact, one of the most requested meals throughout the years has been Meat Loaf with Mac & Cheese.



Matt sits on my grandfather's lap in the kitchen at my grandparents' house. My grandfather always sat quietly off to the side, next to the wood stove. All the action was always in this room.

Pictured are my grandparents sitting in their kitchen in Quicksburg, VA where we'd visit and do a lot of good eating on many Sundays when I was growing up. Although sometimes the men would retire to the living room and watch football, I spent almost all the time I was there in this kitchen.





Barb and Charlie pose with a dish of Mac & Cheese while waiting for the rest of dinner to be served. Wonder if it's Meat Loaf?

1 Cook the noodles al dente. (Do not overcook or the macaroni will be mushy.) While the noodles are cooking, grate (or cut into



small pieces) the cheese. Spray baking dish liberally with cooking spray (Pam). Start by covering the bottom of the dish with noodles. Cover with cheese. Repeat until dish is full

2 Pour milk into the dish at the side edge as pictured. Continue pouring until milk is about 1/2 inch from the top. Drizzle the



melted butter over the top, then cover the top with breadcrumbs.

3 Bake at 350°F until golden brown and most of milk is absorbed, about 45 minutes for a full size, and 30 for individual servings. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving.



Above we're serving Mac & Cheese with the slider version of Al's Fancy Burgers.



Cook's Tip:

Velveeta is so soft it can be hard to grate, so stick it in the freezer for a few minutes to harden it . . . and lift weights first.



For something a little different, make the Mac & Cheese in individual baking dishes. That way everyone gets some of the crunchy stuff on top.

Ingredients

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Onion

1 large diced

Celery

2 ribs cut into 1/2-inch thick slices

Yellow Bell Peppers

2 cut into large chunks

Carrots

3 peeled and cut into 1/2-inch thick slices

Garlic

3 cloves minced

Savory

1 teaspoon chopped fresh

Sage

1/2 teaspoon dried

Rosemary

1 teaspoon chopped fresh

Thyme

1 teaspoon chopped fresh

Oregano

1/2 teaspoon dried

Basil

1/2 teaspoon dried

Beef Broth

4 cups

continued . . .

Minestrone Soup



This is a great recipe for a meatless main dish or can be served as a starter for a classic Italian dinner. It takes a little preparation time to chop up the herbs and vegetables, but once it goes into the slow cooker all you have to do is sit back and enjoy the smell. When it's time to serve, garnish this soup with some freshly grated (good quality) parmesan cheese and a sprig of fresh parsley.



Joe and Matt are all smiles while having a beer in the new kitchen.

1



Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery and bell peppers and sauté until the vegetables lose their raw

look, about 3 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic, the savory, rosemary, thyme, oregano, basil and sage, and cook for another minute. (The fresh herbs give the soup a rich flavor, but if you can't find fresh herbs, you can use dried ones instead.)



2



Transfer to a 5 to 6 quart slow cooker. Add the broth, chickpeas, vegetable juice, diced tomatoes, vinegar, salt and pepper. Cover the cooker and cook 4 to 6 hours on low.

3

Stir in the parsley and lemon zest. Serve hot and garnish with shredded parmesan cheese. Pair with a grilled sandwich for a perfect weeknight dinner.



Ingredients

. . . continued

Chickpeas

1 15-oz. can drained and rinsed

V8 Juice

1 cup

Tomatoes

1 28-oz. can diced

Red Wine Vinegar

1 tablespoon

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Black Pepper

1/4 teaspoon

Italian Flat-Leaf Parsley

1/4 cup chopped fresh

Lemon

Zest of 1/2

Parmesan Cheese

1/2 cup grated

Cook's Tip:

Minestrone Soup gets better after it sits, so prepare it a day or two ahead.

If you're not a big fan of Chickpeas, use Cannellini beans instead.

Ingredients

Olive Oil

3 tablespoons

Kielbasa Sausage

2 lb.

Onion

1 large yellow diced

Celery Stalks

3 diced

Tomato Paste

1 tablespoon

Garlic

3 cloves minced

Red Pepper Flakes

1/2 teaspoon

Chicken Stock

2 cups

Water

2 cups

Bay Leaf

1

Tomato Paste

1 tablespoon

Thyme

1 fresh sprig diced

Sage

1 sprig finely diced

Red Peppers

2 diced

Kielbasa Bean Stew



This is a hearty one dish meal perfect to serve on a cold winter evening. It's also one of those dishes whose aroma fills the kitchen while it's cooking. Sometimes I add fresh spinach, and sometimes I don't, depending on whether I have any in the house or not. This is another dish that gets even better after it sits a day or two and all the flavors blend together.

1

In a large skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, add the sausages and cook until browned on all sides, about 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate, then slice into 1-inch pieces.



2

In that same large skillet, add the onion, celery and bell peppers, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the tomato paste, garlic and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Transfer to large pot. Stir in the stock, water, bay leaf, thyme, rosemary, sage, cannellini beans, tomatoes and diced sausages. Cook over low heat until well blended, about an hour.



3

Cut a few large chunks from a baguette and pulse in food processor until bread is in crumbs. Then combine the bread crumbs, the remaining 1 tbs. olive oil, the butter, and black pepper in a sauté pan, set over medium heat and toast until crispy, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool, then stir in the parsley.



4

Ladle the beans and broth into warmed bowls and top with the sliced sausages. Serve immediately topped with the toasted bread crumbs.



Ingredients

... continued

Rosemary

1 sprig finely diced

Cannellini Beans

Dried, rinsed, soaked overnight and drained

Tomatoes

1 14.5-oz. can diced

Bread Crumbs

1 cup fresh

Butter

1 tablespoon unsalted and melted

Black Pepper

To taste

Spinach (optional)

6 oz. baby



Apricot or Raspberry Raisin Rugelach

Ingredients

Butter

1 stick

Cream Cheese

8 oz softened

Flour

1 cup all-purpose

Raspberry Jam

1 cup

Pecans

1 cup finely chopped

Raisins

1/2 cup

Cinnamon

Sugar



Original Recipe

Ruth Salton

I learned how to make this traditional Jewish pastry from my mother-in-law, Ruth. Although she uses apricot preserves, I like to make some of them with raspberry preserves as well. The rugelach are beautiful, delicious, make a festive dessert, and are great simply with a cup of coffee in the morning.

Another nice thing about this pastry is that the dough can be made ahead and frozen in smaller amounts, and can be thawed and whipped into fresh pastry whenever you'd like.

1

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a mixing bowl, cream the butter and cream cheese together. Add flour and mix lightly. Refrigerate dough for an hour or more.

2

Divide the dough into 4 balls. On a well floured surface, using a floured rolling pin, roll one ball out into a circle until about 1/8-inch thick. Spread the apricot or raspberry preserves in the center of the circle, and then sprinkle the pecans and raisins on top.



3

Cut the pastry into pie shaped wedges. For bite size rugelach, the wide end of the wedge should be about 1 to 1-1/2 inches across. Start at the wide edge and roll the dough up toward the point. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Place each pastry, seam side down, on the paper.

4

Sprinkle each pastry with the cinnamon and sugar. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until golden brown. After they cool, dust with Confectioner's sugar.



Cook's Tip:

Make sure the dough has been refrigerated for at least an hour before attempting to roll it out, or it will be too sticky. Also, when rolling out the dough, be sure to lightly cover the rolling pin and the surface with flour.

Blackened Salmon Salad

Ingredients

Salmon Fillets

2

Olive Oil

1 tablespoon

Cajun Seasoning

2 tablespoons

Mixed Salad Greens

3 cups

Candied Pecans

1/4 cup

Blue Cheese

1/4 cup

Blackberries

1/4 cup

Raspberries

1/4 cup

Tomatoes

2 sliced

Green Beans

2 cups cooked or steamed

Salad Dressing or Oil & Balsamic Vinegar



This is another version of a salmon salad that suggests the taste of summer in the middle of winter.

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove skin from salmon and rinse in cold water. Coat one side of the salmon with cajun seasoning. Heat skillet, and add olive oil, place seasoned side down and allow seasoning to blacken as the salmon cooks, 2-3 minutes. Turn over the salmon and sear the other side for 1 minute.

2 Place salmon on baking sheet with a little water, and place in oven for 15 minutes. Build the salad with greens on the bottom, sprinkling blue cheese, pecans, raspberries, and blackberries on top of the greens. Allow salmon to cool slightly, slice and place on top of the greens. Add green beans and tomatoes to the plate and serve with your favorite dressing. Yum!

Easy Chicken Parmesan



So you can't order Chicken Parmesan in Italy . . . doesn't mean it's still not good. This is super easy if you have some leftover spaghetti sauce. If not, you could even use sauce from a jar.

- 1** Wash and dry the chicken breasts and remove any remaining fat. Using a mallet, smash the breasts until they are about 3/4-inch thick. Moisten breasts, dredge lightly through flour.
- 2** Crack two eggs into a wide mouth bowl, and whisk until mixed. Dip the chicken into the egg just enough to coat. Cover with bread crumbs.
- 3** In a large skillet, heat olive oil until hot, but not burning. Brown the breasts until they are golden in color. Remove and place in a backing dish, cover with sauce and provolone cheese. Sprinkle with pepper and oregano. Bake in a 350° oven until cheese is melted and bubbly, about 15-20 minutes. Serve with a side of pasta.

Ingredients

Chicken Breasts

4 boneless, skinless

Flour

1/2 cup

Eggs

2

Italian Breadcrumbs

1/2 cup

Homemade Tomato Sauce

2-3 cups

Provolone Cheese

4 slices

Salt, Pepper & Oregano

To Taste



Charlie (posing in the kitchen with Joe above) is always ready for Chicken Parmesan.



Al & Matt smoking hookah on the deck reminds us being in Istanbul.

Ingredients

Eggs

6

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Cook's Tip:

In the past you needed to gently drop eggs into a pot of boiling water to poach, but a pan like the one shown above makes poaching eggs simple.



Poached eggs need to be cooked for **EXACTLY** 3 minutes. When the egg is broken, the yoke should run freely.

Poached Eggs



When Charlie, Joe and Sara were little, they would eat poached eggs and refer to them as “dippy eggs.” Poached eggs can be served on English muffins with Hollandaise sauce (Eggs Benedict) or on toast with a side of bacon and fresh berries.

- 1 Spray egg cups with a cooking spray like Pam. Crack eggs into egg cups.
- 2 Pour 2 inches of water in the bottom of an egg poaching pan. Bring to a bowl. Boil for 3 minutes exactly.
- 3 Remove eggs from cups with a spoon and arrange on a piece of toast or an English muffin.



Ben, Josh and Matt eating Poached Eggs while looking as cool as they can.

Sloppy Joes



My mom used to make these for us when my brother and I were kids, and they were like no other Sloppy Joe I had eaten. These Sloppy Joes are almost like a barbecue burger with the tang of the mustard combining with the sweetness of the brown sugar. Sloppy Joes are super easy to make and you can pull some ground beef from the freezer and have these whipped up in no time. Remember it's the little things that make a big difference with food. You could serve these on regular hamburger buns, OR toast some onion or sesame rolls for a really great Sloppy Joe.

- 1** Brown the meat in a large skillet. Drain liquid, if any.
- 2** Add the ketchup, mustard and brown sugar and cook until well blended, about 10 minutes. Serve on toasted onion rolls.

Ingredients

Ground Beef

1 lb.

Ketchup

1 cup

Dry Mustard

1 teaspoon

Brown Sugar

3 tablespoons

Onion

1/4 cup chopped

Apple Cider Vinegar

1 teaspoon



Regardless of how simple the fare, there's always been a lot of love shared in this kitchen.

Sausage Bread

Ingredients

Hot Roll Mix

1 16-oz. package

Hot Italian Sausage

1 pound

Red Pepper

1/2 cup finely chopped

Green Pepper

1/2 cup finely chopped

Onion

1/2 cup finely chopped

Mozzarella Cheese

1 cup (4 oz.) shredded

Parsley

2 tablespoons snipped

Italian Seasoning

1 teaspoon

Egg White

1

Water

1 tablespoon



I saw this recipe in the 1988 November edition of *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine and decided to make it for a party we were having. It was such a hit that I made it for Charlie, Joe and Sara and they loved it too. Sausage Bread is a big crowd pleaser making it a great choice for party fare.

1



Prepare the Hot Roll Mix according to the package directions through the kneading step. Cover and let rest while preparing sausage filling.

In a skillet cook the sausage,

peppers and onion until sausage is brown and vegetables are tender. Stir in cheese, parsley and Italian seasoning. By this point, the dough will have doubled in size.



2



Divide dough in half. On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of the dough into a 10x8 inch rectangle. Spoon half the sausage filling over the dough to within



1 inch of all the edges as pictured on left. Beginning at one long edge, roll up the dough jelly-roll style. Moisten and pinch ends and edges to seal.



Repeat with the remaining dough and filling to make the second loaf. Place each loaf seam-side down on a greased baking sheet and form into crescents.

3

Using kitchen scissors, snip each crescent loaf in 3 places from outer edge three-fourths of the way to the center. Cover and let rise about 20 minutes or until loaf is about doubled.



4

Meanwhile in a small bowl stir together the egg and water. Just before baking, brush the egg white mixture on top. Bake in 375°F oven for 25 minutes or until bread is golden brown. Cut into slices. Serve warm.



Cook's Tip:

Use one box of Pillsbury Hot Roll Mix to make two loaves of Sausage Bread.



Sprinkle loaves with sesame seeds before baking to add additional texture.



Al enjoys the first slice warm right out of the oven.

Origin of Recipe

Better Homes & Gardens
November 1988

Ingredients

Flour

1-1/2 cups

Beef

Stew Meat cut into 1-inch pieces

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Onion

2 yellow sliced 1/4-inch thick

Bacon

5 pieces thick slice

Carrots

5 large cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Garlic

5 cloves diced

Bay Leaves

2

Fresh Thyme

6 sprigs

Fresh Parsley

6 sprigs

Baby Bella

Mushrooms

1 pound, halved

Pinot Noir

1 bottle

Steamed Baby Red Potatoes

10-12, tossed with butter and fresh parsley

Salt and Pepper

To taste

Slow-Cooker Beef Bourguignon



Beef Bourguignon (or Boeuf Bourguignon) is a hearty stew of tender meat braised in red wine, and is a traditional dish from Burgundy, France. It's also a classic Julia Childs recipe. Although I prefer making it her way, sometimes using a slow cooker just makes more sense, especially if you want it to cook overnight or while you're not at home.

This is a great dish to make if you have a crowd to cook for since there is limited preparation time; the house smells great while it's cooking; and this recipe serves 8-10 people. Pair it with steamed red baby potatoes as shown here, or serve it with a side of egg noodles if you prefer.

1

Place the flour in a large bowl. Season the beef with salt and pepper, add to the flour and stir to coat evenly. Transfer to a plate, shaking off the excess flour.

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil until almost smoking. Working in batches, brown the beef on all sides, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a slow cooker.

2

Add the bacon, carrots, onions and garlic to the sauté pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 10 minutes. Transfer to the slow cooker along with the bay leaves, thyme, parsley and mushrooms.

3

Remove the pan from the heat and pour the wine into the sauté pan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, stirring to scrape up the browned bits from the pan bottom. Add to the slow cooker, cover and cook until the meat is fork tender, 6 hours on high or 8 hours on low. Discard the bay leaves.

Transfer the beef bourguignon to a platter and serve with steamed potatoes and sprigs of fresh herbs as a garnish.



Pair this dish with a wine from the Burgundy region of France.

Cook's Tip:

Before browning the beef, dry it in paper towels as it will not brown if damp or wet.



Above, Al and I enjoy a glass of wine while visiting with Charlie and Barb in their kitchen in Richmond. Below, Bethanne whips up a salad for a family gathering.



Ingredients

Oil

2 tablespoons

Pancetta

4 ounces chopped

Yellow Onion

1 medium chopped

Carrots

2 thinly sliced

Celery

2 stalks thinly sliced

Garlic

4 cloves

Red Pepper Flakes

1/4 teaspoon

Fresh Thyme

1/4 teaspoon

Fresh Rosemary

1/2 teaspoon

Chicken Stock

32 ounces

Cannellini Beans

2-3 cans rinsed and drained

Cherry Tomatoes

3 cups red, yellow and orange, quartered

Black Pepper

To taste

Garlic Toast

Tuscan White Bean Soup



I grew up eating Campbell's Bean Soup, but I must admit it was not in the same league as this homemade version. The canned version was bean with bacon, but my recipe is bean with pancetta.

The great thing about this recipe is that you can make this hearty soup in about a half hour, and it's perfect on a cold or rainy night. It also conjures up memories of Tuscany where white beans are a staple.

I like to make cheesy garlic toast and add it to the top of the soup for additional texture and taste.

1

Heat oil in a large dutch oven. Add pancetta and onions and cook until browned, about 5 minutes, then add the carrots and cook until soft. Add celery, garlic and red pepper flakes. Cook 5 minutes. Stir in chicken stock and tomatoes, thyme and rosemary. Bring to a boil.



2

Add beans and cook until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Take half of the soup out and purée in blender. Return puréed portion to the pot. Add black pepper to taste. Reduce heat and simmer on low for an additional 15-20 minutes.



3

Make garlic toast to top the soup. Garnish with a sprig of fresh thyme.



This soup is perfect for a winter weeknight dinner.



We brought these beautiful bowls back with us from Sicily. Using dishes from our trips always invokes happy memories. Pair leftover soup with a Grilled Cheese Sandwich for a perfect lunch or a weeknight meal.



Ingredients

Pork Sausage

2 lbs.

Flour

1 cup

Whole Milk

3-1/4 cups

Water

3/4 cup

Salt & Pepper

To taste

Glenna's Sausage Gravy



My mom has been making this gravy served over homemade biscuits since I was a kid. I must admit that I am not a fan of gravy at all really, but her grandkids certainly are big fans.

When my mom worked at the infamous “Doughnut Castle” in Winchester, she would make this regularly for her customers. She has attempted to teach my brother how to make it a few times, but he swears his is never as good as her version.

Any leftovers can be refrigerated for a few days, or frozen. When reheating, add a little additional milk.

1

Place sausage in a skillet set to medium high heat. As it begins to brown, use a spatula or spoon and, start to break up the meat. Spread it around in the pan so it can cook evenly.



Continue to stir the sausage around and crumble it as it cooks. You'll need to let it brown just to the point of where it's fully cooked. Once the sausage is cooked, add the flour and mix it

in well with the sausage. Cook 15-20 minutes. ***It's important to let it cook a little so it loses the flour taste.*** The longer it cooks, the more brown it becomes and, that determines whether you have a light gravy or dark gravy in the end.

2

Gradually begin adding the milk. You will need to add just a little at a time and work it into the mix. Don't rush or you'll be disappointed with the final results. Just let it happen . . . but keep stirring the whole time. Add the remaining milk as you stir. Then add the water. Mix well.

3

Let gravy simmer for 20 minutes more. Taste, then add salt and pepper if needed. Split open a couple of biscuits and ladle on a big spoonful or two of your Sausage Gravy. Serve warm and Enjoy!

Cook's Tip:

Here are 3 reasons why it's better to make gravy in a skillet rather than a saucepan:

1. The roux cooks faster.

Gravy-making often starts with making a roux — a cooked fat and flour mixture. The wide surface area of a frying pan allows the mixture to spread out in a thinner layer than in a saucepan, making it easier to whisk and helping the roux cook and brown faster.

2. It's easier to whisk.

The sloping sides of a frying pan also make it easier to whisk in general, with no harsh angles that a saucepan might have where lumps of roux can get stuck. If you happen to only have a large whisk, the large surface area of the frying pan gives the whisk more room to move easily.

3. The pan has a large surface area.

Finally, the large surface area of a frying pan means that more of the pan sits directly on the heating element, helping the gravy cook and reduce down faster than in a tall-sided saucepan.



Matt and Mel pose in their Grams' kitchen. They're both big fans of her cooking, including this recipe!

Homemade Buttermilk Biscuits

Ingredients

Flour

2 cups

Baking Powder

2 teaspoons

Salt

1 teaspoon

Baking Soda

1/4 teaspoon

Unsalted Butter

7 tablespoons, chilled in
freezer and cut into thin slices

Buttermilk

3/4 cup cold

Buttermilk (for brushing)

2 tablespoons



Nothing is more Southern than homemade buttermilk biscuits. When I was a kid, my mom could whip up a batch in no time. Once you get the hang of it, it doesn't take long to make a dozen, but they can be a bit tricky.

The key to real biscuits is not in the ingredients, but in the handling of the dough. In fact, it must be handled *as little as possible*, because overstimulating the gluten will result in tough biscuits.

You can make these biscuits, put them on cookie sheets, and freeze them for up to a month. Then when you want fresh biscuits, simply place them frozen on the cookie sheet and bake at 450°F for about 20 minutes.

Eat these biscuits right out of the oven with some butter and jam, or make a breakfast sandwich with egg, bacon and cheese, or cover them with Glenna's Sausage Gravy.

1 Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda together in a large bowl. Cut butter into flour mixture with a pastry blender until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs, about 5 minutes. Make a well in the center of butter and flour mixture. Pour in 3/4 cup buttermilk; stir until just combined.

2 Turn dough onto a floured work surface, pat together into a rectangle. Fold the rectangle in thirds. Turn dough a half turn, gather any crumbs, and flatten back into a rectangle. Repeat twice more, folding and pressing dough a total of three times. Your dough will look lumpy.



3 Roll dough on a floured surface to about 1/2-inch thick. Cut out 12 biscuits using a 2 1/2-inch round biscuit cutter. Transfer biscuits to the prepared baking sheet. Press an indent into the top of each biscuit with your thumb. Brush the top of each biscuit with buttermilk.



4 Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, about 15 minutes.



These biscuits are great hot out of the oven with a little butter and jam.

Cook's Tips:



Stainless steel biscuit cutters make the job of cutting biscuits easy. They come in a variety of sizes, with 2 1/2-inch being my preference. When I was growing up, my mom always used a glass turned upside down to cut biscuits, so if you don't have cutters, just improvise.



Use a pastry cutter to mix in the butter with the flour mixture. The objective is to work with the dough as little as you can so that it doesn't get tough.

Potato Pancakes

Ingredients

Mashed Potatoes

2 cups

Flour

1/4 cup

Vegetable Oil or Crisco

3-4 tablespoons

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Glenna has been making these potato pancakes for as long as I remember. Below, Mike gives them the thumbs up.



Have you ever had left over mashed potatoes and wondered what to do with them? When I was growing up, my mom would always use the leftovers to make us potato pancakes. If you've ever been to a Christmas market in Germany, you'll recognize that these are the same pancakes they serve, piping hot and with a golden crust.

1 Form pancakes, about 1/2-inch thick and 3-inches in diameter. Pour flour into a shallow dish and dredge each pancake in the flour.

2 Heat oil (or crisco) in a large skillet over medium high heat. (Use only enough oil to thoroughly cover the bottom of the pan.) Fry the pancakes, in batches, until they're golden brown and crispy on both sides, 3 to 4 minutes. Add more oil to the pan as needed between batches. (Do not overcrowd the pan and do not flip the pancakes too soon or they won't develop a crisp crust.) Transfer the pancakes to a paper towel-lined plate and immediately sprinkle them with salt and pepper. Serve plain or with green onions, chives and sour cream.

Homemade French Fries



When I was a little girl, I was so anxious to go to school that I would pretend each day to go. I would wait at the bus stop with my brother (bet he loved that), and occasionally my mom and I would “eat in the cafeteria.” That meant my mom would make me a big plate of homemade french fries. Now we don’t play school anymore, but I still love it when my mom makes these fries for me.



- 1** Heat oil. (It’s ready when it pops when you sprinkle water in it.) Fry the potatoes until they become golden brown. Don’t mess with them much while frying or they will not be crisp.
- 2** Remove from oil, place on a plate with a paper towel to blot oil. Salt and pepper to taste.

Ingredients

Potatoes

4 russet, cut into (roughly the same size) wedges

Peanut Oil

3-4 cups

Salt & Pepper

To taste



Cook’s Tips:

Using a small deep fryer makes the task of frying anything easier. If you don’t have a fryer, use a wok or deep skillet instead. Just make sure you use enough oil to cover the fries by an inch or two.





Chanukah



Creating a blended family meant we all learned, and now celebrate different holiday customs than we would have otherwise. In our home, we celebrate both Chanukah and Christmas.

Chanukah - the “Festival of Lights” - is an eight day Jewish holiday occurring any time from late November to late December. The picture above is from 2013, when the start of Chanukah and Thanksgiving were on the same day. I bought the menorah (pictured left) many years ago, and it graces our table every Chanakuh. We have a smaller one that we use to actually light the candles (lower right).

It is traditional to eat fried foods to celebrate Chanukah because of the significance of oil to the holiday, with Latkes, being our favorite.



Latkes

Ingredients

Potatoes

1 pound

Onion

1/2 cup finely chopped

Egg

1 lightly beaten

Olive Oil

1/2 to 3/4 cup

Salt & Pepper

To taste



I must admit that I had never eaten a latke until I met Al, but since then we have made them every year at Chanukah. When I was growing up, my mom would make potato cakes from leftover mashed potatoes, and although those are great, latkes are much lighter. I have used many recipes over the years, but this is the one I like best. These latkes are light, flaky and delicious. This just proves that sometimes the simplest recipes are the best!



Josh and Al help make the latkes in 2013. In that year the first day of Chanukah coincided with Thanksgiving Day, so we had both turkey and latkes.

1

Heat oven to 200 °F. Peel potatoes and coarsely grate (I use a food processor with a grater attachment), transferring to a large bowl of cold water with ice cubes as grated. Soak the potatoes for a few minutes, then drain well in a colander.

2

Spread grated potatoes and onion on a kitchen towel and roll up jelly-roll style. Twist towel tightly to wring out as much liquid as possible. Transfer to a bowl and stir in egg, salt and pepper.

3

Cover the bottom of a heavy skillet with oil and heat over moderately high heat, but not smoking. Working in batches, spoon 2 tablespoons potato mixture per latke into skillet, spreading into 3-inch rounds with a fork. Reduce heat to moderate and cook until golden brown. Turn latkes over and cook other side. Transfer to paper towels to drain and season with salt and pepper. Add more oil as needed and repeat until all latkes are cooked.

4

Keep latkes warm on a wire rack set on a baking sheet in the oven. Serve with applesauce and sour cream.



Cook's Tips:

Tip 1:

The secret to making great latkes is to use starchy potatoes, like Yukon Golds.

Tip 2:

Latkes can be made up to 8 hours ahead. Reheat on a rack set over a baking sheet in a 350°F oven for about 5 minutes or until warm throughout.

Tip 3:

Adding ice to the water after grating the potatoes keeps them from turning brown too quickly.



Josh always likes to man the stove when we're making latkes.

Ingredients

Beef Brisket

5-6 lbs.

Kosher Salt & Pepper

To taste

Flour

3-4 tablespoons

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Spanish Onions

5 large, cut into thin wedges

Garlic

8 cloves smashed

Garlic

5 cloves diced

Tomato Paste

1/2 cup

Full-Bodied Red Wine

3 cups (1 bottle)

Sugar

1 teaspoon

Celery

4 leafy inner stalks

Fresh Rosemary

2 sprigs

Bay Leaves

2

Carrots

1 lb.

Horseradish-Crusted Brisket with Carrots



Although brisket is still indispensable to Jewish holiday dinners, it has become increasingly popular to prepare it in new and creative ways. An added benefit with this cut of meat is that it is especially attractive for extended holiday eating, as it holds up well when reheating. In fact, we love to make sandwiches with the leftovers.

There are two rules for cooking brisket. First, it needs to cook for a long time. Since the meat comes from the muscular forequarters of the steer, it must be slow cooked to tenderize the meat. Properly cooked brisket should just fall apart. Second, it must be cooked with the fat. I am always so tempted to cut the fat off, but removing it before cooking will kill the taste. (You can, of course, remove before serving.) Buy a large, good-quality brisket, that is not too lean. It can even be prepared the day before and refrigerated, which allows the flavors to really be absorbed into the meat. When ready to serve, remove the fat, slice it, then reheat. If you're having a lot of guests for Chanukah, you could even serve this as Brisket Sliders.

1

Prepare the brisket: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Generously season the brisket with salt and pepper, then coat with the flour in a large bowl. Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven or ovenproof pot over medium-high heat. Brown the brisket on all sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer the meat to a plate.

2

Add the onions and 2 teaspoons salt to the pot and cook, stirring, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until the onions are caramelized, about 10 more minutes. Add the tomato paste and cook about 5 more minutes. Add the wine and 1 cup water, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Stir in the sugar. Reduce the heat to maintain a low simmer.

3

Tie the celery, rosemary and bay leaves together with kitchen twine and add to the pot along with the brisket and carrots. Cut a round of parchment paper to fit inside the pot; place directly on top of the liquid, then cover with the lid. Transfer to the oven and cook 3 hours, 30 minutes. Meanwhile, make the crust: Mince and mash the garlic with 1 teaspoon salt. Coarsely grate the horseradish. Chop the parsley with the horseradish and garlic paste until the mixture is moist.

4

Remove the pot from the oven, discard the parchment and transfer the meat to a rimmed baking sheet. Increase the oven temperature to 375 degrees F. Brush the top of the brisket with the mustard, then pat with the horseradish mixture. Return the meat to the pot and bake, uncovered, until the crust is golden, 30 to 35 minutes.

5

Transfer the brisket to a cutting board. Discard the celery-herb bundle and skim the fat from the braising liquid; thin the remaining liquid with water, if desired. Slice the meat against the grain. Serve with the carrots, onions and braising liquid.

Ingredients

For the crust . . .

Garlic

1 clove, smashed

Kosher Salt

To taste

Fresh Horseradish

6-oz. piece, grated

Fresh Parsley

1/2 cup chopped

Dijon Mustard

2-3 tablespoons



This brisket goes great with Creamy Cauliflower and carrots. Fresh horseradish and parsley are key ingredients.





Blueberry Custard Parfaits

Ingredients

Egg Yolks

2

Sugar

3 tablespoons

Lemon Zest

1/2 teaspoons

Whipping Cream

1/2 cup

Lemon Juice

1 tablespoon

Fresh Blueberries

1 pint



This is a quick and easy dessert that looks like it takes a lot longer to make than it does. Matt, in particular, loves this dessert and I have made it often as a festive end to an every day ordinary meal. I wouldn't hesitate making it when I had dinner guests either. It's light and the hint of lemon perfectly complements the blueberries. One of my college buddies, Natalie (who by the way is a great cook) faxed this recipe to me in the 1980s when we lived in Colorado. That was back in the days of thermal fax paper, and over the years the recipe became almost impossible to read, precipitating the need to put all my old recipes into some sort of an organized cookbook.

1

In a small saucepan, heat egg yolks, sugar and lemon rind until mixture starts to bubble. Let cool.

2

In a chilled bowl, beat whipping cream until it peaks. Fold into cooled custard.

3

In parfait glasses, start with fruit in the bottom, followed by a layer of custard and cream, more fruit, and so on.



I've gotten several recipes over the years from Nat, shown here with Greg in 1988.

Cook's Tips:

The blue in this dessert makes it a perfect finale for Chanukah dinner . . .

or

. . . Turn this recipe into a fabulous Christmas dessert by adding other seasonal fruit such as yellow and red raspberries or star fruit.



Origin of Recipe

Natalie Swirdovich



Cook's Tips:

If you have it, use a metal bowl to whip the cream in. Put the beaters and bowl in the freezer for several minutes before using, so they are cold when you add the cream.

If you don't have parfait glasses, use whatever you have. Any clear glass is especially good as it shows off the different layers.

Use a grater like the one shown below to zest the lemon peel. This also works great for hard cheeses as well as fresh ginger.



Madison enjoys eating this parfait as both she and her big sister Sophia, love fresh organic blueberries.



Josh always adds a flare for the dramatic as he poses for endless pictures I've taken over the last several years of food.

Raspberry Coulis



- 1** Using a potato masher, smash the raspberries in a small sauce pan. If you don't have a potato masher, put them in the blender and use the pulse setting to grind them into large chunks.



- 2** Add the raspberry jelly (you can also use raspberry preserves or red currant jelly), the water and cornstarch. Over medium heat, cook mixture until it begins to boil and thickens.

- 3** Press the mixture through a strainer. Refrigerate. Use as a topping for ice cream or cheesecake, or as a drizzle on anything with lemon or chocolate in it.

Ingredients

Fresh Raspberries

3 cups

Raspberry Jelly

1/4 cup

Cornstarch

2 teaspoons



Store the Raspberry Coulis in a squirt bottle in the refrigerator. This makes drizzling on desserts an easy task.



Nothing beats sharing delicious food with great friends.



Christmas



In our family we celebrate both Chanukah and Christmas.

I've always loved decorating the house for the Christmas holiday - I love to get a big tree, put out lots of lights, decorate inside with carolers and nutcrackers, and of course, cook festive meals. The very best part of Christmas is having family here to celebrate with, and the center point of any family celebration is sitting around the table sharing good food and drink.

I typically make some sort of beef roast for Christmas Eve dinner, make brunch on Christmas morning, then try something a little different, like duck or goose, for Christmas dinner. Everyone who is here pitches in with the shopping, chopping and meal preparation. A few years ago, Matt gave me a wine decanter as a gift, and we sat around the table for hours decanting and drinking wine long after we finished the meal.

Setting a seasonal table, filling the house with the sound of Christmas carols and with the aroma of good food cooking, has hopefully created many great Christmas memories for us all.



Ingredients

Red Wine

1 bottle bold dry

Rum

1/2 cup

Water

1 cup

Orange

1 large peeled and juiced

Lemon

1 peeled

Lime

1 peeled

Agave Syrup or Vanilla Sugar

1/2 cup

Cloves

5-6 whole

Nutmeg

1 - about 10 gratings

Cinnamon Stick

1

Vanilla Bean

1 halved

Star Anise

2

Glühwein (German Mulled Wine)



Nothing says it's Christmas Market time like Glühwein, that German mulled wine served at every Christmas market in Germany. It's fun to make this at home and reminisce about walking around the markets in Köln (Cologne) eating brats and keeping your hands warm with a hot glass of wine while shopping for Christmas ornaments, nutcrackers and other goodies of the season.

“The expression Glühwein, or ‘glowing wine’ apparently stems from the hot irons once used for mulling. Although this is no longer the case today, the historic origins of Glühwein reportedly date back to when wine started going bad, but thrifty folks did not yet want to throw it out, so they added some honey and spices to make it drinkable again.”

1

Peel large sections of skin from orange, lemon and lime. Over medium heat in a medium pot, pour in agave syrup and water, then add the peels and juice of the orange.

2

Add the vanilla bean, cloves, star anise and nutmeg gratings. Bring to a boil, then simmer for about an hour. The liquid will reduce, so around 30 minutes, add in about a half cup of wine. This allows the flavors to infuse and will create a syrup.



3

When your syrup is ready, turn the heat down to low and pour in the bottle of wine and the rum. Bring back to a gentle simmer and heat for about 5 minutes (if you want to burn off more of the alcohol, simmer a bit longer). Ladle it into glasses, serve warm, and pretend you're in Germany! Each market has its own special cup for Glühwein. We brought some of ours back with us to use at home.



Here we are enjoying the Christmas Market in Köln.



Shrimp Cocktail



Nothing makes a more festive start to a dinner than classic shrimp cocktail. You can buy shrimp that have been cleaned, deveined and flash frozen, so all you have to do is thaw them and make your cocktail sauce.

- 1** Thaw shrimp and rinse thoroughly with cold water. Squeeze with the juice of 2 lemons.
- 2** To make the cocktail sauce, mix all the ingredients together. Adjust the amount of horseradish and hot sauce to your taste. Cover the bottom of a large bowl with ice, add lettuce, then arrange shrimp and garnish with lemon wedges or prepare individual serving dishes.

Ingredients

Shrimp

Fresh or frozen cooked deveined shrimp with tails on

Ketchup

1 cup

Horseradish

1/4 cup

Worcestershire Sauce

2 teaspoons

Garlic Powder

1/4 teaspoon

Lemon Juice

2 teaspoons fresh squeezed

Hot Sauce

3 drops

Sugar

a pinch

Black Pepper

Freshly ground to taste



We often have this festive Shrimp Cocktail as a starter for Christmas Eve dinner.

Ingredients

Prime Rib Roast

at room temperature (very important)

Butter

2 tablespoons



Prime Rib



I usually make Prime Rib as dinner on Christmas Eve, but it's so good you can make it anytime. Being a very tender and flavorful piece of beef is what makes Prime Rib so special . . . especially if it is cooked properly. To remain tender, take care not to overcook. The nice thing about a rib roast is that the ends will be more done than the middle providing a variety of "doneness" at the same cooking time.

Serve with Horseradish Cream Sauce and Au Jus, twice baked potatoes and fresh green beans. Any meat leftover is fantastic in a "French Dip" sandwich.



1 Preheat oven to 450°F. Pat the room-temperature standing rib roast (prime rib roast) dry with paper towels or napkins. Smear the **cut ends only** of the roast with the butter. Place the roast, **ribs down or fat side up**, in a heavy stainless-steel roasting pan or other metal roasting pan.

2 Sear the rib roast (prime rib) for 15 minutes at 450°F, then turn the oven to 325°F degrees for the rest of the cooking time. Every half hour, baste the cut ends of the roast with the fat accumulated in the roasting pan. **Do not cover the roast.**

3 About 45 minutes before the estimated end of the roasting time, begin checking the internal temperature with a meat thermometer. When checking the temperature of your prime rib roast, insert meat thermometer so tip is in thickest part of beef, not resting in fat or touching bone. Remove from oven, cover loosely with aluminum foil, and let sit approximately 15 to 20 minutes. **NOTE: Cutting into the meat too early will cause a significant loss of juice. Do not skip the resting stage.**

Cook's Tips:

Tip 1:

Do NOT salt the outside of your prime rib roast, as salt draws out moisture from the meat while cooking.

Tip 2:

Residual Heat or Carry-Over Cooking: Remember, the rib roast will continue to cook as it sets. The temperature will rise to 125°F to 130°F internal temperature (medium rare) at 15 to 20 minutes.



Prime Rib Roast Cooking Temperatures

Rare	120-125	center is bright red, pinkish toward the exterior portion
Medium Rare	130-135	center is very pink, slightly brown toward the exterior portion
Medium	140-145	center is light pink, outer portion is brown
Medium Well	150-155	not pink
Well Done	160+	meat is uniformly brown throughout

Twice Baked Potatoes

Ingredients

Potatoes

6 russet

Half-n-Half

1 cup

Chives

1/4 cup

Bacon

6 slices, cooked and crumbled

Sour Cream

8-oz.

Cheddar Cheese

8-oz. shredded

Butter

1 stick

Salt & Pepper

To taste



1 Bake potatoes in 350°F oven until tender when pricked with a fork (about an hour). While potatoes are baking, cook 6 pieces of bacon until crispy. Let cool, then crumble.

2 Using a spoon, scrape the insides of the potatoes into a large bowl. Add the sour cream, half and half, cheddar cheese and half of the chives. Mix well. Salt and pepper to taste. Arrange the empty skins on a baking sheet. Scoop the potato mixture back into the potato skin. Sprinkle with crumbled bacon.

3 Return to oven and bake until potatoes are hot throughout and lightly browned on top.



“Fun Barb” has a few glasses of wine and tells us all kinds of stuff while grating cheddar cheese for the potatoes.

Stuffed Tomatoes



I've been making this version of stuffed tomatoes since I was in college. I found the recipe in a Betty Crocker cookbook that my Aunt Deb gave me for graduation from high school. Making these stuffed tomatoes is a great way to add a little color to any meal.

1 Wash and dry the tomatoes. Cut 1/2-inch slice from the top of each tomato. Discard tops. Scoop out insides. Discard seeds. In this version, cut the inside of the tomato into small chunks. Cut a small piece from the bottoms so that the tomatoes will sit upright.

2 In a skillet over medium heat, cook garlic in butter for 30 seconds. Stir in tomato pulp, green pepper and basil. Cook until pepper just begins to get tender. Stir in croutons and parsley. Spoon mixture unto tomatoes and arrange in a baking dish. Bake at 350° for about 10 to 15 minutes, or until heated through.

Ingredients

Tomatoes

4 medium

Garlic

2 cloves minced

Butter

1 tablespoon

Green Pepper

1/2 cup chopped

Fresh Basil

1 tablespoon snipped

Croutons

3/4 cup (I use homemade ones)

Fresh Parsley

2 tablespoons snipped



Every dish looks better with some color. Pair stuffed tomatoes with prime rib, au gratin potatoes and green beans.

Ingredients

Beef Tenderloin

3 - 4 lb. centercut

Spinach

1 10-oz. package, thawed

Goat Cheese

8 oz.

Fresh Basil

1 bunch

Fresh Thyme

1 tablespoon chopped

Roasted Red Peppers

1 12-oz. jar drained

Olive Oil

2 tablespoons

Shallots

2 minced

Port Wine

1/2 cup

Beef Stock

1 cup + 1/4 cup

Cornstarch

1 tablespoon dissolved in
1/4 cup beef stock

Tomato Paste

1/3 cup

Fresh Rosemary

1 teaspoon

Butter

2 tablespoons, cold, cut into
pieces

Stuffed Beef Tenderloin



Special occasions call for special meals, and this dish definitely fits the bill. What makes it special is not how complex it is to prepare, rather, it's the cut of meat itself. For this dish, I use a good quality beef tenderloin. The good thing about a meat roast is that it will be more done on the ends and least done in the middle, so if you have a guests who like their meat cooked to varying degrees of doneness, this is easy.

To give the tenderloin a bit of holiday pizzaz, I butterfly it and stuff it with roasted red peppers, spinach, goat cheese and fresh herbs, and top it with a port wine sauce. Now that sounds special enough for any occasion.

1



Remove any pieces of fat. Butterfly the beef tenderloin by cutting the beef lengthwise about two-thirds of the way through. Open the tenderloin. Use a meat mallet to pound the meat to 3/4-inch thickness. Place the spinach in a colander and squeeze out as much moisture as possible. Mix together the spinach, goat cheese, rosemary and thyme.

2

Season the flattened beef with salt and fresh ground pepper. Place the red peppers on top of the beef, leaving a one inch border. Place the basil leaves on top of the red peppers. Spread the cheese mixture on one



end of the peppers and basil. The cheese will be in the center of the rolled beef. Roll the beef around the cheese end in a tight cylinder.

Continue rolling jelly roll fashion. Use butcher string to secure. Refrigerate at least one hour.



Susie scrapes up the tenderloin bits to make the port wine sauce.



Joe looks dapper while getting the spinach out of the freezer.



Serve the stuffed tenderloin with a potato dish, green vegetable and a stuffed tomato.



Beef Tenderloin is also great with a side of Fettuccine Alfredo and Brussel Sprouts.



Cooking holiday meals for family has always been one of my favorite times in the kitchen.



We have to be an active family because we all like to cook and eat. Above, we've gone for a 5k run before we start making dinner.



3

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the beef



tenderloin roll and brown on all sides. Place the tenderloin on the rack of a roasting pan and roast for 30 to 40 minutes. Let meat "rest" for 10 minutes.

4

Cook the shallots over medium heat in the same pan used to brown the beef. Add the port wine to the pan and cook until the liquid is reduced by half. Add 1 cup beef stock and bring to a boil. Add the dissolved cornstarch and stir until thickened. Add the tomato paste and fresh rosemary. Season with salt and pepper. Cut the tenderloin into 1-1/2 inch slices. Ladle port wine sauce on top.



Leftover tenderloin makes great Steak-n-Cheese sandwiches the following day.

Fettuccine Alfredo



1

Cook the pasta according to package directions.

In a saucepan or skillet over low heat, warm the butter and cream. Season with salt and pepper. Place half of the Parmesan into a large serving bowl. Pour the warm butter/cream mixture over the top.

2

Drain the pasta and immediately pour it into the bowl. Toss a couple of times, and then sprinkle in the other half of the Parmesan. Toss to combine, thinning with pasta water if necessary.

Serve immediately as a main course or accompaniment to meat or salad.

Ingredients

Fettuccine

1-lb.

Butter

1 stick

Heavy Cream

1 cup

Parmesan Cheese

2 cups, freshly grated

Garlic Powder

1/8 teaspoon

Salt and Pepper

To taste



Cook's Tip:

Don't let your guests eat too many appetizers, or no one will be hungry enough to eat dinner! That's what happened to us on Christmas Eve 2014.

Raspberry Cheesecake

Ingredients

(for the crust)

Flour

3/4 cup

Sugar

3 tablespoons

Lemon Peel

1/2 teaspoon

Butter

6 tablespoons

Egg Yolk

1 slightly beaten

Vanilla

1/4 teaspoon

Cook's Hint:

A spring form pan such as the one pictured below is a must-have for making cheesecake.



The bright color of this dessert, coupled with raspberries being in season during the winter, make this cheesecake a great choice for the Christmas holiday season. It's light, with a flaky crust and the slight hint of lemon mingles perfectly with the raspberries.

First the crust . . .

- 1 Combine flour, sugar and lemon peel. Cut in butter until crumbly. Stir in beaten egg yolk and vanilla.



- 2 Pat 1/3 of dough into the bottom of a 9-inch spring form pan (sides removed), keeping remaining dough covered. Bake in 350°F oven until golden, about 7 minutes. Cool. Grease sides of pan with butter, attach to bottom. Press remaining dough 1-3/4 inches up side of pan.

Next the filling . . .

3

In a large mixer bowl beat the cream cheese, lemon peel and vanilla until fluffy.

4

Combine sugar and flour, then add to cream cheese mixture. Beat until mixed. Add 2 eggs and egg yolk. Beat with electric mixer on low speed until just mixed. *Do not over beat.* Stir in milk. Pour into crust-lined pan. Bake in 375°F oven for 35-40 minutes or until center appears nearly set. Cool 15 minutes. Loosen sides of cheesecake. Cool 30 minutes, then remove sides of pan. Cool 2 hours. Cover and chill thoroughly.

5

Arrange raspberries on top of cheesecake in concentric circles.

And then the sauce . . .

6

In a small saucepan combine the raspberries, thawed and crushed, the cornstarch and currant jelly. Cook and stir until bubbly. Cook 1 additional minute, stirring constantly. Strain and cool.



Ingredients

(for the filling & sauce)

Cream Cheese

3 8-oz. pkgs. softened

Lemon Peel

1/4 teaspoon finely grated

Vanilla

1/2 teaspoon

Sugar

1 cup

Flour

2 tablespoons

Eggs

2 whole + 1 additional yolk

Milk

1/4 cup

Raspberries

3 cups fresh

Raspberries (sauce)

1 10-oz. pkg frozen (thawed)

Currant Jelly (sauce)

1/2 cup

Cornstarch (sauce)

1 tablespoon

Ingredients

Butter

1/2 cup, plus more for
buttering ramekins

Bittersweet Chocolate

4-oz.

Eggs

2

Egg Yolks

2

Sugar

1/4 cup

Egg

1 large

Flour

2 teaspoons, plus more for
dusting ramekins

Powdered Sugar

To garnish



This Molten Cake makes a
perfect Christmas dinner
dessert.

Molten Chocolate Cake



I first made this delicious dessert for one Christmas Eve dinner, and had a bit of a problem getting some of the cakes out of the ramekins without bursting them. If this is the case, just serve it in the ramekin . . . it is still just as tasty, just a bit less dramatic in presentation.

When spooning into this molten cake, the chocolate will ooze from within. Serve this with a scoop of homemade vanilla bean ice cream and sprinkle with some confectioner's sugar.

1

Preheat oven to 450° F. In the top of a double boiler set over simmering water, heat butter and chocolate together until chocolate is almost completely melted. Meanwhile, beat together eggs, yolks and sugar until light and thick.

2

Stir melted chocolate and butter together. Pour in egg mixture and flour. Beat quickly until just combined. Butter and lightly flour 4 (4-oz.) ramekins or custard cups. Tap out excess flour then butter and flour ramekins again. Divide batter evenly among ramekins. Place ramekins on a sheet pan and bake for 6-7 minutes. The centers will be quite soft, but the sides will be set.

3

Invert each ramekin on a plate, and let them sit for about 10 seconds. Unmold by lifting up one corner of the ramekin, the cake will fall out onto the plate.



The best part of eating this dessert is dipping into it, and the molten chocolate starts to ooze out.



Christmas is a time to reminisce and we love our ornaments purchased while on vacation in beautiful places. The one above is from Florence; the one below is from New Orleans.



Below is "Baby's (Matt) First Christmas" from 1987.



Mexican Wedding Cookies

Ingredients

Butter

1 cup softened

Sugar

1/2 cup

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Flour

2 cups

Confectioner's Sugar

1 cup



I've been making these very simple cookies since I was in Junior High School in the early 1970s. They're great by themselves or as part of an assortment of baked goods. Add 1 cup of finely chopped pecans or coconut for variety.



- 1** Beat butter, sugar and vanilla until fluffy. Gradually stir in 2 cups flour. Blend well. Chill 30 minutes or until firm enough to handle.
- 2** Shape into 1-inch balls. Place one inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake in a 375°F preheated oven until light golden, about 12-15 minutes. Remove from sheet and while still warm, sift heavily with confectioner's sugar.

Chocolate Chip Cookies



Who doesn't love chocolate chip cookies? This version is especially good as the peanut butter and oatmeal give the cookies additional texture. My favorite way to eat these cookies is fresh from the oven, while they're still hot!

- 1** Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine flour, baking soda and salt in a small bowl.
- 2** Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar and vanilla in a large mixer bowl until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually beat in flour mixture, then peanut butter. Stir in oatmeal, chocolate chips and nuts. Drop by rounded spoonful onto ungreased baking sheets.
- 3** Bake for 9 to 11 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

Ingredients

Flour

2 1/4 cup

Baking Soda

1 teaspoon

Salt

1 teaspoon

Sugar

3/4 cup

Brown Sugar

3/4 cup

Butter

1 cup (2 sticks), softened

Eggs

2 large

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Chocolate Chips

2 cups

Walnuts

1 cup, chopped

Oatmeal

1 cup

Peanut Butter

1 cup

Ingredients

Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick) plus 6
tablespoons softened

Brown Sugar

3/4 cup firmly packed

Sugar

1/2 cup

Eggs

2

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Flour

1 1/2 cups

Baking Soda

1 teaspoon

Cinnamon

1 teaspoon

Salt

1/2 teaspoon

Quaker Oats

3 cups

Raisins

1 cup



Our family room is really just an extension of the kitchen, and has been the scene of many get togethers over the years.

Oatmeal Raisin Cookies



My personal favorite cookie of all time would be these Oatmeal Raisin cookies. Maybe it's because they remind me of being a kid or maybe it's because they are so chewy and good . . . whatever the reason these are always a crowd pleaser.

Oatmeal raisin cookies are packed with fiber-rich oats and naturally sweet bites of dried fruit. These ingredients add fiber and nutrients to our daily diet. However . . . they are cookies, so we can't eat as many of them as we'd like, and I usually only make them when lots of people are in the house.

1

Heat oven to 350° F. In mixer bowl, beat butter and sugars on medium speed until creamy. Add eggs and vanilla. Beat well.

2

In a separate bowl combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Add to creamed ingredients in mixer bowl and mix well. Stir in oats and raisins.

3

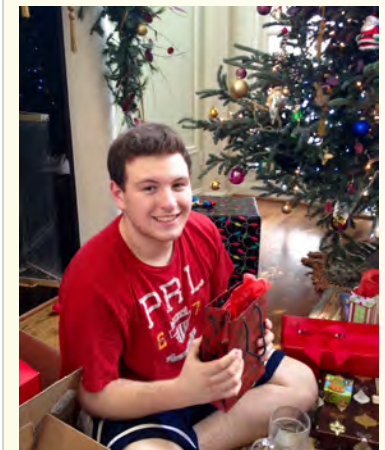
Drop dough by rounded tablespoons onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool 1 minute o cookie sheets, then remove to wire rack. Cool completely.



For a real cold weather treat, Oatmeal Raisin Cookies go great with a Pumpkin Spice Latte drizzled with Homemade Caramel Sauce.



Hanging out after a meal playing spirited board games has become a family tradition, and it never hurts to have some fresh baked cookies around.



Peanut Butter Cookies

Ingredients

Sugar

1/2 cup

Brown Sugar

1/2 cup firmly packed

Peanut Butter

1/2 cup

Butter

1/2 cup softened

Egg

1

Flour

1 1/4 cups

Baking Soda

3/4 teaspoon

Baking Powder

1/2 teaspoon



I've always been a fan of Peanut Butter Cookies and this is a quick and easy recipe for them . . . and it's another one of those recipes that I've been using since the 1970s. These are best right out of the oven!



All of our get togethers involve cooking, eating and posing for pictures!

My mom taught me how to make these cookies when I was a little girl, and she demonstrates here that she's not lost her magic touch after all these years.



1

Preheat oven to 375° F. Mix sugars, peanut butter, butter and egg in a large bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate about 2 hours or until firm.

2

Shape dough into 1 inch balls. Place about 3 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten in crisscross pattern with a fork dipped in water.

3

Bake 9 - 10 minutes or until light golden brown. Remove from cookie sheet and cool on rack. As an option, gently press a



chocolate kiss in the center of each cookie just as it comes out of the oven. These are always a hit and everyone loves to help make them.



Josh is trying to run away with the whole bowl!



Buckeyes



These peanut butter balls dipped in chocolate get their name from their resemblance to the nut of the buckeye tree. They are simple to make and even simpler to eat!

- 1** Mix all ingredients (except the chocolate) and roll into balls. Stick a toothpick in each one. Put in freezer for 30 minutes.
- 2** Melt chocolate in a double boiler. Take out a few balls at a time, pick up with a toothpick, dip into chocolate and place on wax paper. Remove toothpick. Smooth over hole from toothpick. Keep refrigerated.

Ingredients

Butter

2 sticks

Peanut Butter

2 cups

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Confectioner's Sugar

1 1/2 boxes

Chocolate

4 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

Cook's Tip:

Use a double boiler to melt the chocolate.



While you have melted chocolate, dip a few strawberries in as well.



Pecan Pie Cookies



If you like traditional pecan pie, then you'll love these thumbprint cookies, perfect for holiday gatherings or gift giving, perfect for anytime.

- 1** Heat oven to 350° F. Combine all ingredients EXCEPT flour and baking powder in a large bowl. Beat at medium speed until creamy. Reduce to low, add flour and baking powder. Beat until well mixed.
- 2** Shape in 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Make an indentation with your thumb; rotate thumb to hollow out slightly.

Combine all filling ingredients in a small bowl. Fill each cookie with 1 rounded teaspoon filling. Bake 8 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool 1 minute, remove from cookie sheet.

Ingredients

(for the Cookie)

Brown Sugar

1 cup firmly packed

Butter

3/4 cup softened

Egg

1

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Flour

2 cups

Baking Powder

1 teaspoon

(for the Filling)

Pecans

1 cup chopped

Brown Sugar

1/2 cup firmly packed

Heavy Whipping Cream

1/4 cup

Vanilla

1 teaspoon



Put some of the cookies in a festive box, add decorative ribbon and a copy of the recipe.

Ginger Spice Cookies



Ingredients

Flour

2 cups

Ground Ginger

2 1/2 teaspoons

Baking Soda

2 teaspoons

Cinnamon

1 teaspoon

Ground Cloves

1 teaspoon

Salt

3/4 teaspoon

Crystallized Ginger

3/4 cup chopped

Dark Brown Sugar

1 cup firmly packed

Vegetable Shortening

1/2 cup

Butter

1/2 stick

Egg

1 large

Molasses

1/4 cup

One staple we always had in our house growing up was my dad's bag of ginger snaps. He never had much of a sweet tooth, but he always got up during the middle of the night to eat these cookies.

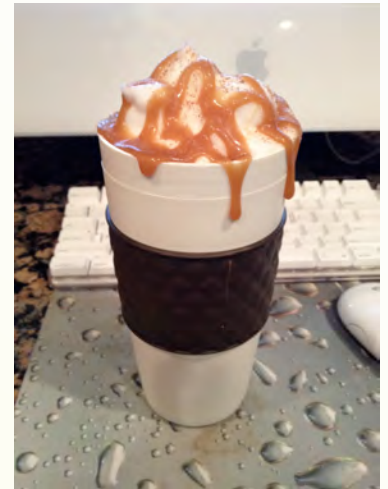
The crystallized ginger used in this recipe provides just the right amount of spice and is a welcome departure from all the sweet and chocolate associated with most cookies.

On March 10, 2015 I lost my dad, but I will never be able to see a ginger snap and not think of him.

1 Combine first 6 ingredients in a medium bowl; whisk to blend. Mix in crystallized ginger. Using electric mixer, beat brown sugar, shortening and butter in a large bowl until fluffy. Add egg and molasses and beat until blended. Add flour mixture and mix until just blended. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour.

2 Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly butter 2 baking sheets. Spoon sugar in thick layer onto small plate. Using wet hands, form dough into 1 1/4-inch balls; roll in sugar to coat completely. Place balls on prepared sheets, spacing 2 inches apart.

3 Bake cookies until cracked on top but still soft to touch, about 12 minutes. Cool on sheets 1 minute. Carefully transfer to racks and cool.



These cookies are great with a latte with a little caramel drizzle.



For something a little different, arrange these soft spicy cookies on a platter with apples and cheddar cheese and serve them with hot apple cider.



Here's a picture of my dad in 1959 with my brother and me in our first house in Winchester.

It's really amazing how certain foods and the smell of things cooking can take you immediately back to somewhere in your childhood. We're very fortunate that in our family these memories are such happy ones.



My mom always had ginger snaps in the house for my dad.

Linzer Sandwich Cookies

Ingredients

Flour

1 1/3 cup

Baking Powder

1/4 teaspoon

Salt

1/4 teaspoon

Sugar

3/4 cup

Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick), softened

Egg

1 large

Vanilla

1 teaspoon

Powdered Sugar

1 teaspoon

Seedless Raspberry Preserves



These cookies are not as good as Ruth's Linzer Torte, but they are still a fun and festive addition to your Christmas cookie repertoire. They are light, and provide a break from all the chocolate associated with the season.



Make these Linzer Cookies as a part of your annual Christmas cookie collection.

1

Place flour, baking powder and salt in small bowl. Stir to combine. Beat granulated sugar and butter in medium bowl with electric mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy. Beat at low speed until dough forms. Divide dough in half; cover and refrigerate 2 hours or until firm.

2

Preheat oven to 375 F°. Working with one portion at a time, roll out dough on lightly floured surface to 3/16-inch thickness. Cut dough into desired shapes with floured cookie cutters. Cut out equal numbers of each shape (if dough becomes too soft, refrigerate several minutes before continuing). Cut 1-inch centers out of half the cookies of each shape (for the tops). Reroll trimmings and cut out more cookies.

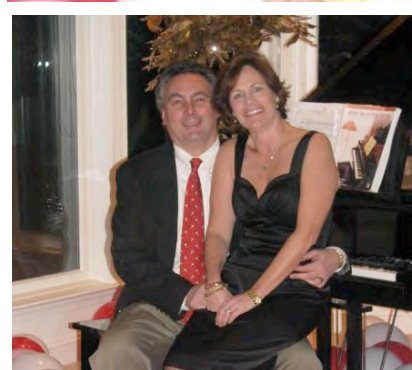
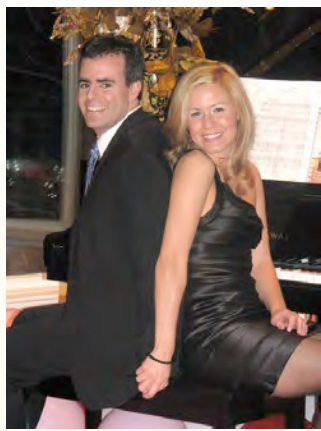
3

Place cookies 1-1/2 to 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 7 to 9 minutes or until edges are lightly brown. Let cookies stand on cookie sheets 1 to 2 minutes. Remove cookies to wire racks; cool completely.

4

Sprinkle cookies with holes with powdered sugar. Spread 1 teaspoon raspberry preserves on flat side of whole cookies, spreading almost to edges. Place cookies with hole, flat side down, over jam, making a “sandwich.” Store tightly covered at room temperature or freeze up to 3 months.





Valentine's Day



Who can ever forget our big family Valentine's Day weekend event! This is when it's the most fun of all to cook - when everyone is gathered together for a special event. You don't have to make things that are especially difficult. Rather, you can make a regular meal much more festive by getting everyone to dress up, setting a nice table, printing out a menu for the meal, and adding a few (or a lot of) balloons.

Stuffed Chicken Breasts make an ideal main dish for a large group of people because you can do all the prep work ahead of time and freeze them, and all you have to do on the day of the meal is brown them and put them in the oven. To round out your theme, serve dessert in heart shaped ramekins, or keep it simple and use napkins with a heart design, use red candle holders, or scatter some confetti on the table.



Ingredients

Mixed Greens

4 cups

Strawberries

6-8 fresh sliced

Caramelized Pecans

10-12

Blue Cheese

1 oz.

Dressing

Honey Mustard



This salad makes a great starter course, side dish or add *Blackened Chicken Breasts*, grilled and sliced, to this salad and immediately transform it into a hearty main dish.



Salad with Strawberries, Caramelized Pecans & Blue Cheese



One of our favorite salads is this simple one, especially when fresh strawberries are in season. It's not only delicious, but it's colorful as well. When Al and I were dating, we would go to a place for lunch where we'd often order this, so that makes it all the more special.

- 1 Put greens in bowls. Arrange strawberries, pecans and blue cheese on top.
- 2 Add small bowl of honey mustard dressing to side and serve. Optionally, to dress this one up, add some toast points.

Stuffed Chicken Breasts



This dish has been a family favorite for as long as I can remember. The breasts can be filled with many different combinations of ingredients, and is perfect with a side of pasta and a steamed green vegetable. It can be made ahead and stored in the refrigerator overnight or frozen and cooked at a later date.

Matt coined the version with cream cheese and herbs as “Chicken with Cream Cheese” and has requested it often through the years.



Matt and Drew have a drink and catch up while dinner is cooking.

There never seems to be a shortage of fun when we all get together for a family celebration.

Ingredients

Chicken

4 breasts, skinless, boneless and halved

Eggs

2 well beaten

Flour

1 cup

Italian Bread Crumbs

1 cup

Olive Oil

1/4 cup

Filling of Your Choice

(See next page)



Keep the pasta side dish simple as you want to complement the taste of the chicken, not fight with it.

Chicken with Cream Cheese

Cream Cheese

1 8-oz. pkg. room temperature

Butter

1/4 cup, room temperature

Whipping Cream

1/2 tablespoon

Garlic Powder

1/2 teaspoon

Dried Herbs

1/4 teaspoon each :

- Oregano
- Thyme
- Marjoram
- Dill Weed
- Basil

Al has whipped up some pretty great meals in this kitchen over the years . . . and looks pretty darn good while doing it! Even when I'm cooking, he's always in the kitchen with me acting as my sous-chef.



1



To begin, butterfly the breasts (cut in half horizontally) and lay flat. You will need a sharp knife to do this.

2



Cover breast with a piece of plastic wrap, and using a kitchen mallet, pound each breast out thin and evenly.

3



Place filling in the center of each breast. For Cordon Bleu roll the ham and cheese into a tube. Fold over sides, then roll up tight. Use a little water on your fingers to seal the breasts shut. Salt and pepper to taste.

4



Roll the stuffed breast in flour, then dip and roll through egg, followed immediately by the bread crumbs. I have found the easiest way to do this is

to take one breast at a time through all the steps. Wash hands, then repeat with the next breast.

5



Refrigerate rolled breasts for one hour. Preheat oven to 350.° Heat olive oil in large skillet until hot, but not smoking.

6



Brown the breasts on all sides. Place in baking dish and bake in 350 oven for 20-25 minutes.

Chicken Cordon Bleu

Prosciutto or Black Forest Ham

8 slices

Imported Swiss Cheese

8 slices

Boursin Cheese & Sun-dried Tomatoes

Boursin Cheese

1 pkg with Garlic & Herbs

Sun-dried Tomatoes

10-12 in oil, chopped into small pieces



Al and I thought this dish was nice enough that we served it for our Valentine's Weekend family dinner. It can be a weeknight dinner or it can be served at a nice dinner party.

Ingredients

For the Crust . . .

Sugar

2 tablespoons

Graham Cracker Crumbs

1 1/4 cups

Butter

5 tablespoons melted

For the Filling . . .

Sweetened Condensed Milk

1 can

Egg Yolks

4 large

Lemon Zest

Zest of 1 lemon

Lemon Juice

3/4 cup freshly squeezed

For the Garnish . . .

Confectioner's Sugar

Raspberry Coulis

Lemon Peel

Easy Lemon Bars



This recipe for lemon bars is so easy to make, I made it after dinner while drinking yet another glass of wine with Al and John. In fact, this recipe reminds me a lot of my recipe for key lime pie in its velvety consistency and utter simplicity.



These lemon bars are good to eat by themselves, but since I love the combination of lemon and raspberry, I like to serve them as a proper dessert with some homemade Raspberry Coulis and sprinkled confectioner's sugar.

Joe enjoys a late night treat after a long flight.

1

Heat oven to 350°F. Put graham crackers in a plastic bag and smash into crumbs. Mix together graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter. The mixture will be crumbly.



Place liners in a cupcake pan and fill each one with a heaping large spoon of crumb mixture. Press mixture flat on the bottom of the cupcake liners.

2

Bake in oven for 10 minutes and remove. In a medium bowl, combine the lemon juice, sweetened condensed milk, egg yolks and lemon zest. Whisk ingredients for a minute or so until well blended. Pour on top of prepared graham cracker crusts. Place cupcake pan back in the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Let cool.

3

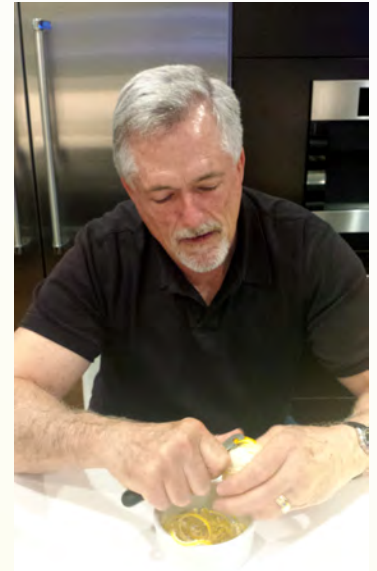
Sprinkle confectioner's sugar on a small plate. Place one tart in middle of plate. Drizzle Raspberry Coulis across plate, including lemon bar. Top with a curled piece of lemon peel.



Having the right tools makes every job in the kitchen easier.

On the far left is a microplane used to zest a lemon. Next to it is a hand peeler.

If you don't have a microplane, use a hand grater, and lemon peel pieces can be created with a sharp knife.



John expertly creates lemon peel twists for the garnish.

Cook's Tip:

When zesting the lemon, be sure you do not grate into the white part of the peel as that can be very bitter.



The lemon peel for the garnish should be about 1-1/2 inches long, just enough length to twist, not like this crazy piece shown below that John created.





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To Dad . . .

I wouldn't credit you with teaching me how to cook, although you certainly gave me plenty of pointers from the sideline. You did teach me how to do many other things, and most of all you taught me that "any job worth doing is worth doing well." It took me 10 years to complete this cookbook, but I kept hearing your voice in my head encouraging me to finish what I started. I lost you before you got to see this, but I think you'd be proud to see all the happy memories we have made as a family.