

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

THE COMPLETE **MAKE-AHEAD** COOKBOOK



From Appetizers to Desserts
500 Recipes You Can Make in Advance



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INTRODUCTION

Getting dinner on the table every night of the week is a challenge for most home cooks. Countless books have tried to address the problem with fast recipes, but they’re not always the best solution, and certainly not the only lane to a good dinner. While fast recipes have their place, you may still find yourself prepping ingredients and monitoring a skillet for 45 minutes on a night when you just don’t have the time. Enter *The Complete Make-Ahead Cookbook*. It presents the canon of American home cooking from the make-ahead perspective: more than 500 versatile, fresh recipes from appetizers to desserts plus an entire chapter devoted to the holidays, the Super Bowl of stressful cooking. The promise of this book is clear and very simple: Every recipe has information in a carefully crafted box that provides every possible make-ahead option (see next page for more information). Even experienced cooks have questions when it comes to making recipes in advance, and our test cooks provide all the answers.

So how will this book help you get dinner on the table more easily? First, we spell out the time required to make each recipe so you know how much hands-on active time is needed to make a recipe and also how much total time is ultimately involved. (Recipes with 30 minutes or less of active time are tagged as Easy.) A Freeze It icon indicates which recipes are ideal for that purpose. The rest is really up to you and what sort of cook you are. Are you willing to make a big batch of stew on Sunday so some can go in the freezer, meaning dinner is solved for multiple nights now and in the future? Or would you rather spend just a few minutes the night before to ensure an easy dinner the following night by applying a spice-rub to flank steak to give it flavor (it requires only a quick sear to finish) and making a fresh corn

and bean salad ahead in just 15 minutes to go with it? There are many options across the book for easy prep-ahead meals such as this that give you a serious jump start on dinner the next night, as well as recipes you can fully assemble, like Chicken Baked in Foil (page 150) and Stuffed Eggplant (page 272), and then simply store—ready to be baked when you walk in the door. Comforting casseroles are here too, along with one-dish meals, fresh main-course salads, and numerous sides and desserts that can all be made in advance.

When it comes to entertaining, one of the hardest things is plotting out, with confidence, what you can make in advance so on the day of the party everything isn’t left to the last minute. There are many company-worthy recipes throughout the book along with holiday recipes; once you plan your menu, you can use the make-ahead boxes accompanying each recipe to organize your game plan. You’ll no longer worry that your stuffed mushrooms will be soggy or your fruit cobbler lackluster come serving time. Plus, inventive recipes like make-ahead Turkey Gravy (page 324) or Tiramisù (page 361) that you can freeze will be your aces in the hole.

This book is your ticket to a lifetime of easier meal planning, make-ahead cooking, and entertaining. It’s not a prescription for cooking for the freezer or cooking ahead on weekends. It helps you do the type of make-ahead cooking you want to do and are willing to do. There is no need to buy dozens of Tupperware containers and embark on a cooking marathon. Simply browse through the hundreds of options across the book and start planning and cooking. Follow the tips and strategies laid out in this book to become a more organized and efficient make-ahead cook.

THE MANY LANES TO DINNER (WITH ALL THE DETAILS)

If making a batch of homemade chicken soup for another day, do you store it before or after adding the rice or noodles? Is it safe to roll and stuff chicken in advance? How about a raw meatloaf or meatballs? Should pie be stored on the counter or in the fridge? How many hours ahead can you make whipped cream? For each recipe in this book, you will find a box detailing the best kitchen-tested make-ahead options. For some recipes, this is as simple as storing a partly finished dish for a day or two, and then continuing with the next step in the recipe exactly as it is written. For others, stopping

and starting a recipe may require some different instructions, such as increasing baking time or reserving some salad dressing. But don’t worry—we spell everything out, every time. The box will tell you how long you can store something before the quality starts to deteriorate, and if it needs to be refrigerated. If we give you the option to freeze something like lasagna (see below), we’ll also tell you whether or not you need to defrost it before cooking and whether to increase the baking time. By carefully following the instructions in the boxes, you’re guaranteed great results every time.

TO MAKE AHEAD

how to store

how to freeze

- Lasagna, prepared through step 3, can be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, covered with aluminum foil, and refrigerated for up to 24 hours or frozen for up to 1 month; if frozen, thaw completely in refrigerator
- To bake, unwrap lasagna, cover with greased aluminum foil, and bake on foil-lined sheet in 400-degree oven until hot throughout, about 1 hour; remove foil and continue to bake until cheese is golden, about 10 minutes

how to wrap

how to thaw

how to bake (or reheat)





We stuff sweet dates with a mixture of chopped walnuts and parsley before wrapping them with buttery prosciutto.

Prosciutto-Wrapped Figs with Gorgonzola

SERVES 8 TO 10 **EASY**

ACTIVE TIME 25 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 25 MINUTES

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Few food pairings are more perfect than savory, salty prosciutto and sweet fresh figs. To add another level of sweet-salty complexity and textural interest to this appetizer, we also incorporated bold, pungent blue cheese and golden honey into the mix. We started by halving the figs to make them easier to eat. For the cheese, tasters preferred creamy, assertive Gorgonzola. Small mounds of the cheese, placed in the center of each fig before adding the honey, offered a rich, bold counterpoint to the figs’ tender flesh and sweet flavor. Briefly microwaving the honey ensured that it was easy to drizzle over the cheese-stuffed figs. Finally, we wrapped the whole thing in thin slices of prosciutto. To guarantee the ham stayed put, we stuck a toothpick through the center of each fig. Be sure to choose ripe figs for this recipe. They not only taste best but also yield easily when mounding the blue cheese gently into the centers.

- 2 ounces Gorgonzola cheese
- 16 fresh figs, stemmed and halved lengthwise
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 16 thin slices prosciutto (8 ounces), cut in half lengthwise

Mound 1 teaspoon Gorgonzola into center of each fig half. Microwave honey in bowl to loosen, about 10 seconds, then drizzle over cheese. Wrap prosciutto securely around figs, leaving fig ends uncovered. Secure prosciutto with toothpick and serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Wrapped figs can be refrigerated for up to 8 hours
- To serve, bring to room temperature

Cheddar Cheese Coins

SERVES 10 TO 12 **EASY** **FREEZE IT**

ACTIVE TIME 30 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR 50 MINUTES (PLUS COOLING TIME)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS We wanted to come up with a simple, foolproof homemade cracker that would be cheesy, buttery, and just a little spicy—and that we could stash in the freezer. We started with a full 8 ounces of cheese and a touch of salt, cayenne, and paprika. We used the food processor to combine the dry ingredients and the shredded cheese, which helped to keep our cheese coins tender by limiting the handling of the dough. Adding a little cornstarch with the flour further ensured that the coins baked up flaky and buttery. We processed the dry ingredients with chilled butter until the mixture resembled wet sand, added water, and processed until the dough came together. Next, we rolled the dough into logs, refrigerated them until firm, and then sliced them into thin coins before baking until lightly golden and perfectly crisp.

- 8 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (2 cups)
- 1½ cups (7½ ounces) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces and chilled
- 3 tablespoons water



The dough for these easy cheesy homemade crackers can be kept in the freezer for up to a month.

1. Process cheddar, flour, cornstarch, salt, cayenne, and paprika in food processor until combined, about 30 seconds. Scatter butter pieces over top and process until mixture resembles wet sand, about 20 seconds. Add water and process until dough forms ball, about 10 seconds. Transfer dough to counter and divide in half. Roll each half into 10-inch log, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour.
2. Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Unwrap logs and slice into ¼-inch-thick coins, giving dough quarter turn after each slice to keep log round. Place coins on prepared sheets, spaced ½ inch apart.
3. Bake until light golden around edges, 22 to 28 minutes, switching and rotating sheets halfway through baking. Let coins cool completely on sheets before serving.

VARIATIONS

Parmesan and Rosemary Cheese Coins

Substitute 8 ounces finely grated Parmesan for cheddar, black pepper for cayenne, and 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary for paprika.

Gruyère, Mustard, and Caraway Cheese Coins

Substitute Gruyère for cheddar. Add 1 teaspoon caraway seeds to food processor with spices. Substitute 4 tablespoons whole-grain mustard for water.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Dough, prepared through step 1, can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month; if frozen, thaw completely before continuing with step 2
- Alternatively, baked coins can be stored at room temperature for up to 3 days

Fresh Vegetable Spring Rolls

MAKES 8 SPRING ROLLS

ACTIVE TIME 1 HOUR

TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Fresh spring rolls should offer a pleasing contrast in texture (soft wrapper, chewy noodles, and crunchy vegetables) and in flavor (fresh mint, basil, and cilantro; peanuts, spicy chiles, and salty sauce). But too often, spring rolls disappoint, with gummy noodles and bland vegetables. We set out to develop a recipe for foolproof spring rolls with fresh, bright flavors. We started by boiling the rice noodles and then tossed them with carrot, peanuts, and jalapeño in a combination of lime juice, fish sauce, and sugar. Before rolling the filling in the rice paper wrappers, we soaked the wrappers in water just long enough to make them pliable. Finally, we made a spicy hoisin-peanut sauce for dipping. If you can’t find Thai basil, do not substitute regular basil; its flavor is too gentle to stand up to the assertive flavors in the filling. Mint makes a better substitute. Be sure to make only one spring roll at a time to keep the wrappers moist and pliable.

HOISIN-PEANUT DIPPING SAUCE

- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon Asian chili-garlic sauce (optional)
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes



Our French onion soup gets its rich flavor from caramelized onions and two kinds of broth.

Ultimate French Onion Soup

SERVES 6
ACTIVE TIME 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 4 TO 5 HOURS

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS There is no denying the appeal of a great bowl of French onion soup, with its rich broth, caramelized onions, and nutty Gruyère-topped bread. For a rich soup, we caramelized the onions a full 2½ hours in the oven and then deglazed the pot several times with water, before adding a combination of chicken broth, beef broth, and more water. For the classic crouton topping, we warded off sogginess by toasting the bread before floating it in the soup, and we sprinkled the toasts with just a modest amount of nutty Gruyère so that its flavor wouldn’t overwhelm the soup. Sweet onions, such as Vidalia or Walla Walla, will make this recipe overly sweet. Use broiler-safe crocks and keep the rim of the bowls 4 to 5 inches from the broiler element to obtain a proper gratinée of melted, bubbly cheese. If using ordinary soup bowls, sprinkle the toasted bread slices with Gruyère and return them to the broiler on the baking sheet until the cheese melts, then float them on top of the soup along with a sprinkle of parsley.

- SOUP**
- 4 pounds onions, halved and sliced ¼-inch-thick through root end
 - 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 3 pieces
 - Salt and pepper
 - 2 cups water, plus extra as needed
 - ½ cup dry sherry
 - 4 cups chicken broth
 - 2 cups beef broth
 - 6 sprigs fresh thyme, tied together with kitchen twine
 - 1 bay leaf

- CHEESE CROUTONS**
- 1 (12-inch) baguette, sliced ½ inch thick
 - 8 ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded (2 cups)

- 1. FOR THE SOUP:** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Generously spray inside of Dutch oven with vegetable oil spray. Add onions, butter, and 1 teaspoon salt, cover, and bake until onions wilt slightly and look moist, about 1 hour.
2. Stir onions thoroughly, scraping bottom and sides of pot. Partially cover pot and continue to cook in oven until onions are very soft and golden brown, 1½ to 1¾ hours longer, stirring onions thoroughly after 1 hour.
3. Carefully remove pot from oven (pot will be hot) and place over medium-high heat. Being careful of hot pot, continue to cook onions, stirring and scraping pot often, until liquid evaporates, onions brown, and bottom of pot is coated with dark crust, 20 to 25 minutes. (If onions begin to brown too quickly, reduce heat to medium. Also, be sure to scrape any browned bits that collect on spoon back into onions.)
4. Stir in ¼ cup water, thoroughly scraping up browned crust. Continue to cook until water evaporates and pot bottom has formed another dark crust, 6 to 8 minutes. Repeat deglazing 2 or 3 more times, until onions are very dark brown.
5. Stir in sherry and cook until evaporated, about 5 minutes. Stir in chicken broth, beef broth, 2 cups more water, thyme bundle, bay leaf, and ½ teaspoon salt, scraping up any remaining browned bits. Bring to simmer, cover, and cook for 30 minutes. Discard thyme bundle and bay leaf.
6. **FOR THE CHEESE CROUTONS:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Lay baguette slices on rimmed baking sheet and bake until dry, crisp, and lightly golden, about 10 minutes, flipping slices over halfway through baking.
7. Position oven rack 8 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Set individual broiler-safe crocks on baking sheet. Season soup with salt and pepper to taste and fill each crock with about 1½ cups soup. Top each bowl with 1 or 2 baguette slices (do not

overlap slices) and sprinkle evenly with Gruyère. Broil until cheese is melted and bubbly around edges, 3 to 5 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Soup, prepared through step 5, can be refrigerated for up to 3 days
- To reheat, bring soup, covered, to gentle simmer, stirring often, and continue with step 6

Turkish Tomato, Bulgur, and Red Pepper Soup

SERVES 6 TO 8 **EASY** **FREEZE IT**
ACTIVE TIME 30 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS This rustic soup has onion and red bell peppers and a solid flavor backbone thanks to garlic, tomato paste, white wine, dried mint, smoked paprika, and red pepper flakes. For additional smokiness, canned fire-roasted tomatoes did the trick. For the grain, we turned to bulgur. When stirred into the soup, it absorbed the surrounding flavors and gave off starch that created a silky texture. (When we made the soup ahead, we refrigerated or froze it before adding the bulgur and simply added it in when we reheated it.) Don’t confuse bulgur with cracked wheat, which has a much longer cooking time and will not work in this recipe.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 red bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- Salt and pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried mint, crumbled
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ⅙ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- ¾ cup medium-grind bulgur, rinsed
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh mint

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, bell peppers, ¾ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper and cook until softened and lightly browned, 6 to 8 minutes.



Both dried mint and fresh mint add flavor to this bulgur-enriched smoky tomato and red bell pepper soup.

- Stir in garlic, dried mint, smoked paprika, and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomato paste and cook for 1 minute.
2. Stir in wine, scraping up any browned bits, and simmer until reduced by half, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes and their juice and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes soften and begin to break apart, about 10 minutes. Stir in broth and water and bring to simmer.
 3. Stir in bulgur, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer gently until bulgur is tender, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve, sprinkling individual portions with fresh mint.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Soup, prepared through step 2, can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month; if frozen, thaw completely in refrigerator
- To reheat, bring soup, covered, to gentle simmer, stirring often, and continue with step 3

Classic Caesar Salad

SERVES 4 TO 6 **EASY**
ACTIVE TIME 30 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS The appeal of a well-made Caesar salad is undeniable, but it is often out of reach on a busy week-night because making the dressing involves a few steps more than your usual salad; plus, there are the homemade croutons. Luckily both the dressing and croutons can be made ahead and stored. For our Caesar salad, we wanted crisp-tender romaine lettuce napped with a creamy, garlicky dressing boasting a pleasing salty undertone, with crunchy, savory croutons strewn throughout. To start, we cut the extra-virgin olive oil in the dressing with canola oil, which made for a less harsh flavor, and we used egg yolks instead of a whole egg to add richness. For a robust, though not aggressive, garlic flavor we grated the garlic into a pulp and then steeped it in lemon juice. Incorporating a portion of the Parmesan into the dressing while saving some to serve over the salad provided a double layer of cheese flavor. Tossed with slices of crisp romaine and paired with classic croutons, our Caesar is better than ever. A quarter-cup of Egg Beaters may be substituted for the egg yolks. Since anchovy fillets vary in size, more than six fillets may be necessary to yield 1 tablespoon of minced anchovies. A rasp-style grater makes quick work of turning the garlic into a paste.

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra for seasoning
- ¾ teaspoon garlic, minced to paste
- 2 large egg yolks
- 6 anchovy fillets, rinsed, patted dry, minced, and mashed to paste with fork (1 tablespoon)
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 5 tablespoons canola oil
- 5 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ ounces Parmesan, grated fine (¾ cup)
- Pepper
- 2 romaine lettuce hearts (12 ounces), cut into ¾-inch pieces (8 cups)
- 1 recipe Croutons for Caesar Salad

1. Whisk lemon juice and garlic paste together in large bowl. Let stand for 10 minutes.
2. Whisk egg yolks, anchovies, and Worcestershire into garlic mixture. While whisking constantly, drizzle canola oil and olive oil into bowl in slow, steady stream until fully emulsified. Add ½ cup Parmesan and pepper to taste; whisk until incorporated.

3. Add romaine to dressing and toss to coat. Add croutons and mix gently until evenly distributed. Season with extra lemon juice to taste. Serve immediately, passing remaining ¼ cup Parmesan separately.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Dressing, prepared through step 2, can be refrigerated for up to 2 days
- To serve, whisk dressing to loosen and continue with step 3

CROUTONS FOR CAESAR SALAD

MAKES 3 CUPS **EASY**
ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 30 MINUTES (PLUS COOLING TIME)

- 3 ounces baguette, cut into ¾-inch cubes (3 cups)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon salt

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Toss all ingredients together in bowl. Bake on rimmed baking sheet until golden and crisp, about 15 minutes. Let croutons cool completely on sheet. Serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

Croutons can be stored at room temperature for up to 24 hours

Kale Caesar Salad

SERVES 4
ACTIVE TIME 45 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Kale offers the make-ahead cook a great option for a salad. Because kale is notoriously tough and fibrous, it actually benefits from being made ahead. In fact it may be the only leafy green salad you can dress hours in advance. In order to break down the leaves and make them more palatable, we soaked them in a warm water bath for 10 minutes. Then we tossed the kale with the Caesar salad dressing, letting it marinate for at least 20 minutes. Marinating it in the dressing in the refrigerator gives the salad time to cool back down and the flavors time to meld together. To balance the strong flavor of kale, our dressing is extra-potent, with a stronger dose of lemon juice and anchovies than is



Soaking fibrous kale leaves in a warm water bath easily softens them for a more tender salad.

typical. The kale leaves must be dressed at least 20 minutes (or up to 6 hours) before serving. We like to use curly kale in this salad because its curly edges help to hold on to the dressing.

SALAD

- 12 ounces curly kale, stemmed and cut into 1-inch pieces (16 cups)
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (½ cup)
- 1 recipe Croutons for Caesar Salad (page 000)

DRESSING

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 anchovy fillets, rinsed
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1. **FOR THE SALAD** Place kale in large bowl and cover with warm tap water (110 to 115 degrees). Swish kale around to remove grit. Let kale sit in warm water bath for 10 minutes. Remove kale from water and spin dry in salad spinner in multiple batches. Pat leaves dry with paper towels if still wet.
2. **FOR THE DRESSING** Process mayonnaise, Parmesan, lemon juice, vinegar, Worcestershire, mustard, anchovies, garlic, salt, and pepper in blender until pureed, about 30 seconds. With blender running, slowly add oil until emulsified.
3. Toss kale with ¾ cup dressing in large bowl. Refrigerate dressed kale for 20 minutes.
4. Toss Parmesan and croutons with dressed kale. Serve, passing remaining ¼ cup dressing at table.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Dressed kale and remaining ¼ cup dressing, prepared through step 3, can be refrigerated separately for up to 6 hours
- To serve, whisk dressing to loosen and continue with step 4

NOTES FROM THE TEST KITCHEN

Types of Kale

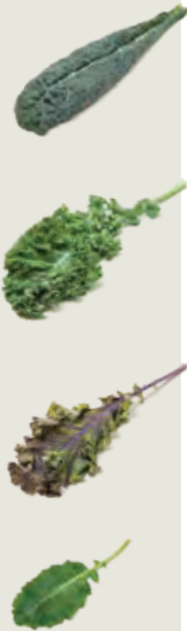
Kale comes in several different varieties, and they each have a unique flavor and texture. We use different types in different recipes.

TUSCAN KALE Tuscan kale is also called black, dinosaur, cavolo nero, or Lacinato. It has a sweet, mineral-y flavor and a tender texture when eaten raw, and becomes robust and rich when braised.

CURLY KALE Also called Scottish or green, curly kale has a pungent grassy flavor when raw that becomes nutty when braised.

RED KALE We don't use red kale (also called Russian Red or Winter Red), because we find its texture to be leathery and tough even when it's braised.

BABY KALE Tender baby kale doesn't require any soaking or massaging to be eaten raw, and it won't hold up to braising.



BIG-BATCH SLOW-COOKER PASTA SAUCES

When it comes to making big batches of pasta sauce to stash in your freezer, your slow cooker is a great helping hand because sauces can simmer away untended for hours while they develop deep flavor. **Note** All these recipes make enough sauce for 3 pounds of pasta. You will need a 5- to 7-quart slow-cooker for these recipes.

TO MAKE AHEAD

Pasta sauces can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month; if frozen, thaw completely in refrigerator before reheating

SLOW-COOKER FARM STAND TOMATO SAUCE

MAKES 9 CUPS EASY FREEZE IT
COOKING TIME 10 TO 11 HOURS ON LOW OR 7 TO 8 HOURS ON HIGH

- 2 onions, chopped fine
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for seasoning
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
- ½ cup dry red wine
- ¼ cup instant tapioca
- 2 bay leaves
- 7 pounds tomatoes, cored and peeled
- ¼ cup minced fresh basil
- Salt and pepper

1. Microwave onions, tomato paste, oil, garlic, and oregano in bowl, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, about 5 minutes; transfer to slow cooker. Stir wine, tapioca, and bay leaves into slow cooker.
2. Add tomatoes, cover, and cook until tomatoes are very soft and beginning to disintegrate, 10 to 11 hours on low or 7 to 8 hours on high.
3. Discard bay leaves. Mash tomatoes with potato masher until mostly smooth. Transfer sauce to Dutch oven, bring to simmer over medium-high heat, and cook until thickened, about 20 minutes. Stir in basil and season with salt, pepper, and extra oil to taste. Serve.

SLOW-COOKER MARINARA SAUCE

MAKES 9 CUPS EASY FREEZE IT
COOKING TIME 10 TO 11 HOURS ON LOW OR 7 TO 8 HOURS ON HIGH

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano or 2 teaspoons dried
- 2 anchovy fillets, rinsed and minced
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sugar, plus extra as needed
- Salt and pepper

1. Heat oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add onions and cook until softened and lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in garlic, tomato paste, oregano, anchovies, and red pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in wine, scraping up any browned bits. Bring to simmer and cook until thickened, about 5 minutes; transfer to slow cooker.
2. Stir in crushed and diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, and soy sauce. Cover and cook until sauce is deeply flavored, 10 to 11 hours on low or 7 to 8 hours on high. Stir in sugar and season with salt, pepper, and extra sugar to taste. Serve.

SLOW-COOKER MEATY TOMATO SAUCE

MAKES 12 CUPS EASY FREEZE IT
COOKING TIME 9 TO 10 HOURS ON LOW OR 6 TO 7 HOURS ON HIGH

Boneless pork butt roast is often labeled Boston butt in the supermarket.

- 2 onions, chopped
- 12 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano or 2 teaspoons dried
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato puree
- ¾ cup dry red wine
- ⅓ cup soy sauce
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 (3-pound) boneless pork butt roast, trimmed and quartered
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup minced fresh parsley

1. Microwave onions, garlic, tomato paste, oil, oregano, and pepper flakes in bowl, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, about 5 minutes; transfer to slow cooker. Stir in tomatoes, tomato puree, wine, soy sauce, and bay leaves. Season pork with salt and pepper and nestle into slow cooker.
2. Cover and cook until pork is tender, 9 to 10 hours on low or 6 to 7 hours on high.
3. Discard bay leaves. Using large spoon, skim excess fat from surface of sauce. Break pork into bite-size pieces with tongs. Stir in parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste.

SLOW-COOKER SHORT RIBS AND RED WINE SAUCE

MAKES 12 CUPS; ENOUGH FOR 3 POUNDS PASTA EASY FREEZE IT
COOKING TIME 9 TO 10 HOURS ON LOW OR 6 TO 7 HOURS ON HIGH

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into ¼-inch pieces
- 1 celery rib, minced
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ cups dry red wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato puree
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 pounds boneless short ribs, trimmed and cut into 1 ½-inch pieces
- Salt and pepper
- ½ cup minced fresh parsley

1. Heat oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add onions, carrots, and celery and cook until vegetables are softened and lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in wine, scraping up any browned bits, and simmer until thickened, about 6 minutes; transfer to slow cooker.
2. Stir in diced tomatoes, tomato puree, and bay leaves. Season beef with salt and pepper and nestle into slow cooker. Cover and cook until beef is tender, 9 to 10 hours on low or 6 to 7 hours on high.
3. Discard bay leaves. Using large spoon, skim excess fat from surface of sauce. Break beef into bite-size pieces with tongs. Stir in parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

SLOW-COOKER SPICY SAUSAGE RAGU WITH RED PEPPERS

MAKES ABOUT 12 CUPS EASY FREEZE IT
COOKING TIME 9 TO 10 HOURS ON LOW OR 6 TO 7 HOURS ON HIGH

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 pounds hot Italian sausage, casings removed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano or 2 teaspoons dried
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 red bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup minced fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper

1. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Brown sausage well, breaking up large pieces with wooden spoon, about 5 minutes; transfer to slow cooker.
2. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from skillet, add onions, and cook over medium heat until softened and lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in garlic, tomato paste, oregano, and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in wine, scraping up any browned bits, and simmer until thickened, about 5 minutes; transfer to slow cooker.
3. Stir in crushed tomatoes, diced tomatoes, and tomato sauce. Cover and cook until sauce is deeply flavored, 9 to 10 hours on low or 6 to 7 hours on high.



4. Microwave bell peppers with remaining 1 tablespoon oil in bowl, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 5 minutes. Using large spoon, skim excess fat from surface of sauce. Stir in bell peppers and basil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.



A two-level grill fire helps the chicken cook through without charring and also enables us to crisp the skin.

Grilled Tandoori-Style Chicken with Yogurt Sauce

SERVES 4 **EASY**

ACTIVE TIME 25 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Tandoori chicken achieves its hall-mark charred, crispy skin and juicy, flavorful meat from a combination of a three-day marinade and a superheated tandoori oven. We wanted to develop a grilled chicken dish inspired by this Indian classic. First we focused on the marinade; we chose a variety of traditional Indian spices and added oil to bloom them and a good amount of salt so that the marinade would have the effect of a brine, guaranteeing juicy meat. For the grilling method, we spread the coals over just half of the grill to create both a hot and a cooler zone; this allowed us to cook the chicken gently on the cooler side before transferring it to the hot side to sear and char the skin. To reinforce the flavors of the marinade, we created a quick yogurt sauce by reserving a few tablespoons of marinade and adding fresh cilantro and lime juice.

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons lime juice
- 4 (10- to 12-ounce) bone-in split chicken breasts, trimmed and halved crosswise

1. Process oil, water, ginger, coriander, cumin, salt, turmeric, cinnamon, and cayenne in food processor until smooth, about 20 seconds. In small bowl, combine yogurt, cilantro, lime juice, and 2 tablespoons oil-spice mixture; set aside.

2. Combine chicken and remaining oil-spice mixture in large bowl, tossing to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

3A. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (6 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over half of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

3B. FOR A GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Turn primary burner to medium-high and turn off other burner(s).

4. Clean and oil cooking grate. Place chicken skin side down on cooler side of grill with thicker ends of breasts facing hotter side of grill. Cook, covered, until chicken registers 145 to 150 degrees, 20 to 30 minutes. Slide chicken to hotter side of grill and cook, turning as needed, until chicken is browned and registers 160 degrees, about 10 minutes.

5. Transfer chicken to serving platter. Stir yogurt-marinade mixture to recombine, then drizzle over chicken. Tent with aluminum foil and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Chicken and yogurt sauce, prepared through step 2, can be refrigerated separately for up to 24 hours
- To cook, bring sauce to room temperature and continue with step 3



Cutting chicken breasts in half ensures that the vegetables won't be smothered underneath them and steam.

One-Pan Roast Chicken Breasts with Butternut Squash and Kale

SERVES 4 **EASY**

ACTIVE TIME 30 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Recipes that use a single sheet pan to cook chicken and vegetables together promise a full meal, simple prep, and minimal cleanup. However, this method often leads to unevenly cooked meat and vegetables. To get the chicken and vegetables to cook at the same rate, we used bone-in split chicken breasts, which contain less fat than a whole chicken and don't run the risk of smothering the vegetables underneath, causing them to steam. Halving the breasts further assisted in even cooking. We selected hearty, autumnal vegetables to pair with our chicken: butternut squash, kale, and shallots. A sprinkling of dried cranberries added a sweet-tart chew to the mix and a simple sage marinade worked to season both the chicken and vegetables. Because we used only breast meat, we were able to drastically shorten our cooking time (compared to a whole chicken) to just 25 minutes, plenty of time to achieve crispy chicken skin, tender

but not mushy squash, and fully cooked and lightly crisped kale. We topped our chicken with a drizzle of light, creamy yogurt sauce accented with orange zest and garlic to bring the whole dish into harmony. Both curly and Lacinato kale will work in this recipe.

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh sage
- 2 teaspoons honey
- Salt and pepper
- ¾ cup plain whole milk yogurt
- 1 tablespoon water
- 7 garlic cloves, peeled (6 whole, 1 minced)
- 1 teaspoon grated orange zest
- 8 ounces kale, stemmed and cut into 2 inch pieces
- 2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1 inch pieces, (6 cups)
- 8 shallots, peeled and halved
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 4 (10- to 12-ounce) bone-in split chicken breasts, trimmed and halved crosswise

1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Whisk oil, sage, honey, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper in large bowl until well combined. In separate bowl whisk yogurt, water, minced garlic, orange zest, and 1 tablespoon oil mixture together; set yogurt sauce aside for serving.

2. Vigorously squeeze and massage kale with hands in large bowl until leaves are uniformly darkened and slightly wilted, about 1 minute. Add squash, shallots, cranberries, whole garlic cloves, and ¼ cup oil mixture and toss to combine. Whisk paprika into remaining oil mixture, then add chicken and toss to coat.

3. Spread vegetables in single layer on rimmed baking sheet, then place chicken, skin side up, on top of vegetables. Bake until chicken registers 160 degrees, 25 to 35 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking.

4. Transfer chicken to serving platter, tent with aluminum foil, and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Toss vegetables with any

MASSAGING KALE



Vigorously squeeze and massage kale with hands on counter or in large bowl until leaves are uniformly darkened and slightly wilted, about 1 minute for flat-leaf kale (or 5 minutes for curly-leaf or red kale).



To ensure all the vegetables in this fresh sauce have the right texture, we cook them in batches adding the zucchini last.

Penne with Garden Vegetable Sauce

SERVES 4 TO 6

ACTIVE TIME 45 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 45 MINUTES

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS A fresh summer vegetable pasta sauce sounds easy, but it’s actually more difficult than you’d think. The trick was figuring out how to get distinct pieces of crisp-tender vegetables with a saucy, flavorful base. We gathered a variety of veggies—zucchini, cherry tomatoes, carrots, and bell peppers—and started sautéing. However, the flavors became too homogeneous and the vegetables cooked at different rates; some were mushy, while others were too crisp. We had better luck when we cooked the vegetables in batches. First, we sautéed the tomatoes, onion, carrots, and bell peppers until the tomatoes started to break down and created a pasta-clinging sauciness that enveloped the just-tender carrots and peppers. Porcini mushrooms, tomato paste, garlic, oregano, and just a little bit of red pepper

flakes gave depth to the sauce without drowning out the delicate vegetable flavors. We added the zucchini towards the very end to keep them from overcooking and turning mushy. A hefty portion of chopped basil, added just before serving, ensured that our dinner tasted—and looked—like it was fresh from the garden.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pound cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 yellow bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and shredded
- Salt and pepper
- ½ ounce dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed and minced
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
- ⅛ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ cup vegetable broth
- 2 zucchini, quartered lengthwise and sliced ¼ inch thick
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 pound penne
- Grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add tomatoes, bell peppers, onion, carrots, 1½ teaspoons salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and tomatoes are broken down, 8 to 10 minutes.
2. Stir in mushrooms, tomato paste, garlic, oregano, and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in broth and bring to simmer. Stir in zucchini and cook until zucchini is just tender, about 4 minutes.
3. Stir in basil and season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve ½ cup cooking water, then drain pasta and return it to pot. Add sauce and toss to combine. Stir in basil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add reserved cooking water as needed to adjust consistency. Serve with Parmesan.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Sauce, prepared through step 2, can be refrigerated for up to 3 days
- To reheat, bring sauce, covered, to gentle simmer, stirring often, and continue with step 3



A béchamel sauce binds our macaroni and cheese casserole while toasted bread crumbs make a nice, crunchy topping.

Baked Macaroni and Cheese

SERVES 6 **FREEZE IT**

ACTIVE TIME 50 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 2 HOURS

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS For a classic home-style macaroni and cheese that would appeal to adults and kids alike, we kept things simple, staying away from pungent cheeses and an overly rich sauce made with eggs and cream. Instead, we started with a béchamel sauce (butter, flour, and milk), adding chicken broth both for a savory flavor and to keep the sauce from becoming too thick in the oven. Adding a combination of sharp cheddar and Colby to the sauce gave it both ultracheesy flavor and an incredibly creamy texture. Once the cheese was incorporated, we stirred in our macaroni (cooked until nearly tender) and moved it all to a baking dish. For a crunchy topping, we toasted some panko bread crumbs with melted butter, sprinkled them over the casserole, and baked the dish until it was bubbling and golden on top.

- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, plus 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Salt and pepper
- 1 pound elbow macaroni or small shells
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3½ cups whole milk
- 2¼ cups chicken broth
- 1 pound Colby cheese, shredded (4 cups)
- 8 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (2 cups)

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Toss panko with melted butter and season with salt and pepper. Spread evenly in aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheet and bake, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 10 minutes; let cool to room temperature. Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees.
2. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add macaroni and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until just starting to soften, about 5 minutes. Drain macaroni and set aside.
3. Dry now-empty pot, add remaining 6 tablespoons butter, and melt over medium heat. Stir in garlic, mustard, and cayenne and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, until golden, about 1 minute. Slowly whisk in milk and broth until smooth. Bring to gentle simmer and cook, whisking often, until thickened, about 15 minutes.
4. Off heat, gradually whisk in Colby and cheddar until melted and smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Stir in macaroni, breaking up any clumps. Transfer macaroni mixture to 13 by 9-inch baking dish and sprinkle with panko mixture.
5. Place dish on clean aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheet and bake until bubbling around edges, 25 to 35 minutes. Let casserole cool for 20 minutes. Serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Casserole, prepared through step 4, can be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, covered with aluminum foil, and refrigerated for up to 24 hours or frozen for up to 1 month; if frozen, thaw completely in refrigerator
- To bake, unwrap casserole, cover with greased aluminum foil, and bake on foil-lined sheet in 400-degree oven until hot throughout, 20 to 25 minutes; remove foil and continue to bake until crumbs are crisp, 15 to 20 minutes



For a crisp crust and perfectly cooked interior we pan-sear the leg of lamb before putting it in the oven to finish.

Roast Boneless Leg of Lamb with Garlic-Herb Crust

SERVES 4 TO 6
ACTIVE TIME 50 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR 50 MINUTES

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Boneless leg of lamb would seem to be an easy dinner; after all, it already comes boned, rolled, and tied. But it’s not as simple as seasoning the lamb, throwing it in the oven, and then checking on it occasionally. We wanted a foolproof method for achieving a crisp crust and perfectly cooked interior every time. We first settled on a half leg as the right amount to serve four to six people. Searing the roast on the stovetop jump-started the cooking process and ensured a golden-brown crust, while finishing it in a 375-degree oven allowed the meat to cook through at an even rate, guaranteeing a juicy and tender interior. A savory crumb crust—flavored with fresh herbs, garlic, and some Parmesan—was a welcome addition to our roast. To prevent the crust from falling apart once the twine was cut,

we cut the twine halfway through cooking, after the lamb had roasted long enough to hold its shape and then applied the crust to the lamb. We prefer the sirloin end rather than the shank end for this recipe, though either will work well. We prefer this roast cooked to medium, but if you prefer it more or less done, see our guidelines on page 000. Serve with Fresh Mint Relish (page 000), if desired.

- 1 slice hearty white sandwich bread
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup minced fresh parsley
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (½ cup)
- 1 (3½- to 4-pound) boneless half leg of lamb, trimmed
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Pulse bread in food processor until coarsely ground, about 10 pulses (you should have about 1 cup crumbs); transfer to bowl. In now-empty processor, process 1 teaspoon oil, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and garlic until minced, scraping down sides of bowl as needed, about 1 minute. Transfer 1½ tablespoons herb mixture to second bowl; set aside. Scrape remaining mixture into bowl with bread crumbs; stir in Parmesan and 1 tablespoon oil and set aside.

2. Lay lamb with rough interior side (which was against bone) facing up and pound to even ¾-inch thickness; rub with

PREPARING BONELESS LEG OF LAMB



1. Place rough side of meat (side that was closest to bone) facing up on counter or cutting board. Pound meat to ¾-inch thickness to ensure even cooking.



2. Rub meat with oil then season it with salt and pepper and spread with herb mixture. Roll meat into tight cylinder and tie it with twine at 1-inch intervals.

2 teaspoons oil and season with salt and pepper. Spread reserved herb mixture evenly over meat, leaving 1-inch border around edge. Roll roast into tight cylinder, then tie with kitchen twine at 1-inch intervals. Season with salt and pepper, then rub with 1 tablespoon oil.

3. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking, about 3 minutes. Sear lamb until well browned on all sides, about 8 minutes. Using tongs, stand roast on each end to sear, about 30 seconds per end. Transfer to rack and roast until meat registers 120 degrees, 30 to 35 minutes.

4. Transfer roast to carving board and remove twine. Brush lamb exterior with mustard, then carefully press bread-crumb mixture onto top and sides of roast with your hands, pressing firmly to form solid, even coating that adheres to meat. Return coated roast to rack; roast until meat registers 130 to 135 degrees (for medium), 15 to 25 minutes longer.

5. Transfer roast to carving board, tent loosely with aluminum foil, and let rest for 15 minutes. Cut into ½-inch-thick slices and serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

Stuffed lamb and bread-crumb mixture, prepared through step 2, can be refrigerated separately for up to 24 hours

Slow-Roasted Fresh Ham

SERVES 12 TO 14
ACTIVE TIME 40 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 5 HOURS TO 6 HOURS 30 MINUTES (PLUS 12 HOURS SALTING TIME)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Fresh ham is a meaty, uncured, unsmoked cut which turns tender and flavorful with slow-roasting. We wanted to figure out a foolproof way to cook the oddly shaped, thick-skinned shank-end ham. Removing the skin allowed the fat underneath to render, adding rich flavor to the meat. Rubbing the roast with a mixture of salt, brown sugar, and herbs seasoned it thoroughly and helped the meat retain moisture during cooking. To get the seasonings even deeper into the blocky ham, we cut a large pocket in the meaty end and rubbed the seasoning into it. Cooking the ham in an oven bag kept in moisture for the necessary long cooking time. A simple glaze broiled on before serving made for a flavorful, impressive finish. Use a turkey-size oven bag for this recipe.



A fresh ham is great for a large gathering because it can be prepared and refrigerated for up to 24 hours in advance.

- 1 (8- to 10-pound) bone-in, shank-end fresh ham
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup kosher salt
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme
- 1 large oven bag
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon pepper

1. Place ham flat side down on cutting board. Using sharp knife, remove skin, leaving ½- to ¼-inch layer of fat intact. Cut 1-inch diagonal crosshatch pattern in fat, being careful not to cut into meat. Place ham on its side. Cut one 4-inch horizontal pocket about 2 inches deep in center of flat side of ham, being careful not to poke through opposite side.



CHAPTER 11

Desserts

CAKES

- 000 Easy Pound Cake ■ ■
 - Easy Lemon Pound Cake ■ ■
 - Easy Orange Pound Cake ■ ■
 - Easy Almond Pound Cake ■ ■
 - Easy Ginger Pound Cake ■ ■
- 000 Yellow Birthday Cake ■
- 000 Devil's Food Layer Cake ■
- 000 Quick and Rich Vanilla Frosting ■
 - Coffee Frosting ■
 - Peppermint Frosting ■
 - Almond Frosting ■
 - Coconut Frosting ■
- 000 Foolproof Chocolate Frosting ■
- 000 Individual Molten Chocolate Cakes ■ ■
- 000 Flourless Chocolate Cake ■
- 000 Triple-Chocolate Mousse Cake
- 000 Icebox Cheesecake ■
 - Peppermint Chip Icebox Cheesecake ■
 - Peanut Butter Icebox Cheesecake ■
- 000 New York-Style Cheesecake ■

PUDDINGS AND CUSTARDS

- 000 Tiramisù ■
- 000 Chocolate Pots de Crème ■
 - Milk Chocolate Pots de Crème ■
 - Premium Dark Chocolate Pots de Crème ■
- 000 Crème Brûlée
 - Espresso Crème Brûlée
 - Tea-Infused Crème Brûlée
- 000 Panna Cotta
 - Lemon Panna Cotta

FRUIT DESSERTS

- 000 Cranberry-Apple Crisp ■
 - Cranberry-Pear Crisp
- 000 Blueberry Cobbler ■
 - Peach or Nectarine Cobbler ■
 - Sour Cherry Cobbler ■
- 000 Strawberry Shortcakes ■
- 000 Apple Turnovers ■
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 - Cranberry-Apple Turnovers ■
 - Cheddar-Apple Turnovers ■

PIES AND TARTS

- 000 Single-Crust Pie Dough ■ ■
 - Double-Crust Pie Dough ■ ■
- 000 Pie Dough for Lattice-Top Pie ■ ■
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- 000 Deep-Dish Apple Pie ■
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- 000 Pecan Pie ■ ■
 - Maple Pecan Pie ■ ■
- 000 Pumpkin Pie
- 000 Summer Berry Pie
- 000 Key Lime Pie ■
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COOKIES AND BARS

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- 000 Chewy Oatmeal Cookies ■
- 000 Peanut Butter Cookies ■
- 000 Brown Sugar Cookies ■ ■
- 000 Holiday Cookies ■
- 000 Cookie Glazes ■
 - Easy All-Purpose Glaze ■
 - Citrus Glaze ■
 - Nutty Glaze ■
 - Coffee Glaze ■
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- 000 Almond Biscotti
 - Anise Biscotti
 - Pistachio-Spice Biscotti
 - Hazelnut-Orange Biscotti
- 000 Chewy Brownies ■ ■
- 000 Raspberry Streusel Bars ■ ■
 - Strawberry Streusel Bars ■ ■
 - Blueberry Streusel Bars ■ ■
- 000 Lemon Bars ■

DESSERT ACCOMPANIMENTS

- 000 Chocolate Sauce ■
- 000 Hot Fudge Sauce ■
- 000 Caramel Sauce ■
- 000 Butterscotch Sauce ■
- 000 Raspberry Sauce ■
- 000 Strawberry Topping ■
 - Blueberry Topping ■
 - Cherry Topping ■
 - Peach Topping ■
- 000 Whipped Cream ■
 - Small-Batch Whipped Cream ■
 - Tangy Whipped Cream ■
 - Bourbon Whipped Cream ■
 - Brown Sugar-Bourbon Whipped Cream ■

■ EASY (30 minutes or less active time) ■ FREEZE IT

Photo: Rustic Walnut Tart



Baking our New York cheesecake in a dual-temperature oven without a water bath ensures that it doesn't crack.

New York–Style Cheesecake

SERVES 12 TO 16 **FREEZE IT**

ACTIVE TIME 35 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 4 HOURS 30 MINUTES (PLUS 8 HOURS 30 MINUTES COOLING AND CHILLING TIME)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS We set out to find the secret to New York cheesecake with the plush, dense filling, impressive stature, and browned top that characterize this style. The secret turned out to be a long bake at a very low temperature to set the filling, then a final blast of heat at the end of baking to brown the top. This style of cheesecake is baked without a water bath, since that often causes it to crack across the top. Although this cheesecake took about 12 hours from start to finish, much of that time is hands-off, making it an ideal make-ahead dessert. An accurate oven thermometer and instant-read thermometer are essential. To ensure proper baking, check that the oven thermometer is holding steady at 200 degrees and refrain from frequently taking the temperature of the cheesecake (unless it is within a few degrees of 165, allow 20 minutes between checking). Keep a close eye on the cheesecake in step 5 to prevent overbrowning. Serve with Fresh Strawberry Topping (page 000) if desired.

CRUST

- 6 whole graham crackers, broken into pieces
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup packed (2 $\frac{1}{3}$ ounces) dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 7 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 6 large eggs plus 2 large egg yolks

1. FOR THE CRUST Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 325 degrees. Process cracker pieces and sugar in food processor until finely ground, about 30 seconds. Add flour and salt and pulse to combine, 2 pulses. Add 6 tablespoons melted butter and pulse until crumbs are evenly moistened, about 10 pulses. Brush bottom of 9-inch springform pan with $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon melted butter. Using your hands, press crumb mixture evenly into pan bottom. Using flat bottom of measuring cup or ramekin, firmly pack crust into pan. Bake on lower-middle rack until fragrant and beginning to brown around edges, about 13 minutes. Transfer to rimmed baking sheet and set aside to cool completely. Reduce oven temperature to 200 degrees.

2. FOR THE FILLING Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat cream cheese, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, and salt at medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Beat in remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape beater and bowl well; add sour cream, lemon juice, and vanilla and beat at low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Add egg yolks and beat at medium-low speed until thoroughly combined, about 1 minute. Scrape bowl and beater. Add whole eggs two at a time, beating until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds after each addition. Pour filling through fine-mesh strainer set in large bowl, pressing against strainer with rubber spatula or back of ladle to help filling pass through strainer.

3. Brush sides of springform pan with remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon melted butter. Pour filling into crust and set aside for 10 minutes to allow air bubbles to rise to top. Gently draw tines of fork across surface of cake to pop air bubbles that have risen to surface.

4. When oven thermometer reads 200 degrees, bake cheesecake on lower rack until center registers 165 degrees, about 3 to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Remove cake from oven and increase oven temperature to 500 degrees.

5. When oven is at 500 degrees, bake cheesecake on upper rack until top is evenly browned, 4 to 12 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes; run paring knife between cheesecake and side of springform

pan. Let cheesecake cool until barely warm, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until cold and firmly set, at least 6 hours.

6. To unmold cheesecake, remove sides of pan. Slide thin metal spatula between crust and pan bottom to loosen, then slide cheesecake onto serving plate. Let cheesecake stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes. To slice, dip sharp knife in very hot water and wipe dry between cuts. Serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

- Baked crust can be stored at room temperature for up to 24 hours before making cheesecake
- Baked cheesecake, prepared through step 5, can be refrigerated for up to 4 days or frozen for up to 1 month; if frozen, thaw completely in refrigerator, about 12 hours, before serving (crust will be less crisp)

Tiramisù

SERVES 10 TO 12 **FREEZE IT**

ACTIVE TIME 40 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 40 MINUTES (PLUS 6 HOURS CHILLING TIME)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS Tiramisù is an Italian classic. We wanted to find a streamlined approach to tiramisù that highlighted its luxurious combination of flavors and textures. Instead of making a fussy custard-based filling (called *zabaglione*), we instead simply whipped egg yolks, sugar, salt, rum, and mascarpone together. Whipped cream lightened the filling. We briefly moistened the ladyfingers in a mixture of coffee, espresso powder, and more rum. The test kitchen prefers a tiramisù with a pronounced rum flavor; for a less potent rum flavor, reduce the amount of rum in the coffee mixture. Brandy and even whiskey can be substituted for the dark rum. Do not let the mascarpone warm to room temperature before whipping, or else it might break. Dried ladyfingers are also called *savoardi*; you will need between 42 and 60 *savoardi*, depending on their size and brand.

- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups strong brewed coffee, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons instant espresso powder
- 9 tablespoons dark rum
- 6 large egg yolks
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{3}$ ounces) sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds mascarpone, chilled
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream, chilled
- 14 ounces dried Italian ladyfingers
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons Dutch-processed cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated semisweet or bittersweet chocolate (optional)



To streamline our tiramisù, we skip the fussy custard and use a simpler mix of egg yolks, mascarpone, and whipped cream.

1. Combine coffee, espresso powder, and 5 tablespoons rum in wide bowl or baking dish until espresso dissolves.

2. Using standing mixer with whisk attachment, beat yolks at low speed until just combined. Add sugar and salt and beat at medium-high speed until pale yellow, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes, scraping down bowl as needed. Reduce speed to medium, add remaining 4 tablespoons rum, and beat at medium speed until just combined, 20 to 30 seconds; scrape bowl. Add mascarpone and beat until no lumps remain, 30 to 45 seconds, scraping down bowl as needed. Transfer mixture to large bowl.

3. In now-empty mixer bowl (no need to clean mixer bowl), beat cream at medium speed until frothy, 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Increase speed to high and continue to beat until cream holds stiff peaks, 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Using rubber spatula, fold $\frac{1}{3}$ whipped cream into mascarpone mixture to lighten, then gently fold in remaining whipped cream until no white streaks remain.

4. Working with 1 ladyfinger at a time, drop half of ladyfingers into coffee mixture, roll, remove, and transfer to 13 by 9-inch baking dish. (Do not submerge ladyfingers in coffee mixture; entire process should take no longer than 2 to 3 seconds for each cookie.) Arrange soaked cookies in single layer in baking dish, breaking or trimming ladyfingers as needed to fit neatly into dish.



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