Lockdown Cookbook

When the Covid lockdown hit hard on March 17, 2020, cooking kept us happy at home. I shared recipes with friends, and began collecting them in a cookbook and bartender's guide. Happily, we are now "unlocked," but I've continued the cookbook and bar guide as an ongoing project.

Chris & Karen Meyer's Kitchen in Boise, Idaho

Last revision: October 1, 2026

This cookbook is subject to incessant tinkering, revision, and expansion.
Updated versions are available on my firm's website: www.givenspursley.com/publications.
Comments and criticism are welcome. Please email me at chrismeyer@givenspursley.com.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

This cookbook is dedicated to our mentors (page 9) and to our food tasters, Maggie and Abby (below).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Table of Contents

JULIA CHILD **9**

MY MENTORS **9**

BASIC TECHNIQUES **11**
How to boil and peel an egg 12
How to peel and chop garlic 13
How to oven-fry bacon 14
Prepping eggplants (salt technique) 15
Pasta – basic quantities & timing 16
Scallops (types and sizes) 17
Wagyu beef 17
Romertopf prep 18
Basic Traeger instructions 18
Care of cast iron 18

BASIC SAUCES **19**
Roux, White Sauce, and Cheese Sauce 20
Remoulade Sauce 21
Simple Midwestern Tartar Sauce 22
Chermoula (Moroccan condiment) 23
Balsamic Vinegar Reduction 25

APPETIZERS **26**
Moo's Melted Brie 27
Guacamole de Barbacoa 28
Karen's Deviled Eggs 29
Nancy's Fig & Olive Tapenade 30
Fig Spread & Goat Cheese Crackers 31
Fig & Almond Crackers with Stilton & Green Apples 32

SALADS **33**
Caprese Salad with Balsamic Reduction 34
Tomato and Onion Salad 35
Kimmy's Vinaigrette (Salad Dressing) 36
Ensalada Mixta 37

BEEF & VEAL **38**
Le Boeuf Christophe (my take on Steak au Poivre) 39
Mrs. Nixon's Meatloaf 42
The Jucy Lucy (Dad's Favorite Hamburger) 44
Steak Diane 46
Tsar Nicholas's Beef Stroganoff 49
Rouladen Der Wiesbaden 52
Wiener Schnitzel or Veal Milanese 54
Chicken Fried Steak 57
Shepherd's Pie 58
Chili con Carne y Poblanos Asados 60

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Standing Rib Roast 62
Yorkshire Pudding 65
Veal Piccata (see Piccata on page 142) 66

PORK 67
Russ Fereday's Bratwursts 68
Nana's Ham Roll-ups 69
Broiled Ham Steak with Pineapple 70
Very Manley Pork Chops 71
All American Beans and Franks 72

LAMB 74
Herb-Crusted Rack of Lamb 75
Dad's Grilled Lamb Chops 77
Moroccan Lamb Stew 78

CHICKEN 80
Grandpa Meyer's Chicken 81
Wine-Braised Chicken with Olives, Artichokes, and Orzo 84
Moroccan Chicken with Apricots, Prunes, and Almonds 86
Pollo en Pepitoria (Spanish Braised Chicken) 88
Paprikás Csirke (Chicken Paprikash) 91
Fran's Parmesan-Crusted Chicken 93
Chicken Stroganoff 95
Chicken Francese with Spicy White Beans and Spinach 97
Emeril's Roasted Chicken 99
Karen's Roasted Chicken with Gravy 100
Karen's Tex-Mex Chicken Casserole 101
Chicken Schnitzel (see Weiner Schnitzel on page 52) 102

SEAFOOD 103
Sole Meunière 104
Sole Piccata (see Piccata on page 142) 106
Blue Cheese Sole 107
Hazelnut-Crusted Sole 108
Sea Scallops with Angel Hair Pasta 109
Sea Scallops with Browned Butter, Capers & Lemon 112
Coquilles St. Jacques au Gratin (Scallops) 114
Dad's from Scratch Crab Cakes 117
Easy Fish Fry 119
Salmon on the Traeger 120
Crab Legs 121

PASTA & ITALIAN 122
Earthquake Spaghetti 123
Pasta alla Vodka 125
Spaghetti alla Carbonara 128
Ravioli with Burnt Butter, Lemon, and Sage 132
Lobster Ravioli with Lemon Cream Sauce 133
Fettuccini Alfredo 134
Lasagna alla Bolognese 137

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Burnt Butter and Mizithra with Angel Hair 141
Spaghetti Aglio e Olio 142
Piccata (chicken, veal, sole, or pork) with Penne Pasta 143
Melanzane alla Parmigiana (Eggplant Parmesan) 145
Saltimbocca alla Romana 147
Sea Scallops with Angel Hair Pasta (see page 108) 149

MACARONI 150
Dad's Macaroni & Cheese 151

MEXICAN 153
Karen's Romantic Tacos 154
Karen's Frijoles Refritos (Refried Beans) 156
Enchiladas de Mole con Pollo 157
Tamales 159
Pretty Authentic Mexican Rice (see recipe on page 193) 160

POLISH 161
Pierogi & Kielbasa 162

ASIAN 164
Kimmy's Sweet and Sour Meatballs 165

SWISS ALPS 167
Karen's Classic Swiss Fondue 168
Raclette 170

POTATOES 172
Potatoes Anna (Pommes Anna) 173
Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes with Sour Cream 175
Karen's Oven-Fried Potatoes 176
Andy's Greek Smashed Potatoes 177
Potatoes Southcombe 178
Emeril's Scalloped Potatoes 179
Fried Mashed Potato Pancakes 181
French Fries (Pommes Frites) 182
Patatas Panaderas (oven-roasted Spanish potatoes) 183
Candied Sweet Potatoes with Chambord 186
Anwar Sadat's Over-Cooked Sweet Potatoes 187
Baked Potatoes 188
Parmesan Roasted Red Potatoes 189
Karen's Best Ever Potato Salad 190

RICE, ORZO, COUSCOUS & POLENTA 191
Plain old rice 192
Karen's Onion Rice 193
Pretty Authentic Mexican Rice 194
Orzo di Giovanni 196
Couscous—Simple Version 198
Couscous—Complicated Version 199
Creamy Polenta 200

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Andy's Fried Polenta 201
Wine-Braised Chicken with Olives, Artichokes and Orzo (see recipe on page 83) 202

TURKEY & FIXINGS 203
Thanksgiving Turkey (in tin foil) 204
Turkey Gravy 206
Cheater Chicken Gravy 206
Cranberry Sauce 207
Karen's Turkey Tetrazzini 208
Mashed Potatoes (see recipe under "Potatoes") 209
Candied Sweet Potatoes with Chambord (see recipe under "Potatoes") 209
Oyster Dressing (see recipe under "Stuffing") 209
Stuffing with Currants and Chutney (see recipe under "Stuffing") 209
Dad's Thanksgiving Spinach Casserole (see recipe under "Vegetables") 209

STUFFING & BREADCRUMBS 210
Nancy Meyer's Oyster Dressing (aka Scalloped Oysters) 211
Heavenly Stuffing with Currants and Chutney 212
Homemade Breadcrumbs 214

VEGETABLES 215
Nederland-Style Broiled Tomatoes 216
Imam Bayildi (Turkish Eggplant Casserole) 217
Carrots à l'Orange 219
Spinaci all'aglio e olio or Spinaci alla Romana (Sautéed Spinach) 220
Grilled Asparagus 221
Seared Asparagus of the Gods 222
Jiffy Beans and Shrooms 223
Green Beans and Mushrooms with Creamy Lemon Vinaigrette 224
Hunan Style Green Beans with Mushrooms (or Broccoli) 225
Oven-Roasted Zucchini with Breadcrumbs and Parmesan 226
Nana's Cauliflower with Stuff on it 227
Stir-Fried Broccoli or Broccolini 228
Acorn Squash 229
Don Anderson's Vegetables de la Mode 230
Easy Cheesy Casserole - with Broccoli or Cauliflower 232
Karen's German Sweet & Sour Cabbage 233
Dad's Thanksgiving Spinach Casserole 235
Becky's Very Complicated Asparagus 236
Moroccan Vegetable Tagine 237

BREAKFAST 239
Grits 240
Egg-in-a-Hole (or Faux French Toast) 241
French Toast (Pain Perdu) 243
Hells Canyon Pancakes 245
Home Fried Potatoes, Corned Beef Hash, or Flatiron Scramble, ...247
Easy Hashbrowns 249
Perfectly Easy Ham, Egg & Cheese Scramble 250
Daniel's Mountain Corned Beef Hash 251
Daniel's Mountain Fried Apples 252

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Huevos Rancheros 253
Chipped Beef on Toast.....255
Oatmeal 257
Omelets for a Crowd.....258

DESSERTS 260
Karen's Key Lime Pie.....261
Karen's Lemon Meringue Pie.....263
Karen's Chocolate Pecan Pie.....264
Karen's Pumpkin Pie 265
Karen's Chocolate Fondue.....266
Chris's Strawberry topping for ice cream or shortcake 267
Bananas Foster 268
Affogato 269
Drunken Affogato 269

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

JULIA CHILD

Julia Child on wine: “I enjoy cooking with wine. Sometimes I even put it in the food.”
She also noted: “Everything in moderation . . . including moderation.”

Other insights by dear Julia are sprinkled throughout this cookbook.

MY MENTORS

My mother (aka “Moo”) and Karen’s mother (aka “Nana”) were both talented chefs and inspirations to their children—inspiring us both in the kitchen and in our lives. Many of these recipes come from their hand-written note cards and our fond memories.

Many other recipes (and important life lessons) were taught to me by Don Anderson, my mentor and roommate in Washington, D.C. in the 1970s. Don threw wonderful dinner parties at our tiny apartment, serving elaborate meals to his many friends in the policy world of the Carter White House. Don transformed me from a casual chef to passionate one. To his most cherished friends, he would often give a Romertopf (page 18), declaring that the gift they were about to open “will change your life.” Mine did.
Don played the bagpipes at our wedding. Karen and I performed in many of the Shakespearian productions he directed at his ancestral home at Daniel’s Mountain along the James River in western Virginia. The outdoor stage he built for these performances was a stone’s throw from the small graveyard with a wrought iron fence where his ancestors are buried. They worked this land as slaves, and then bought it at auction during Reconstruction. I discovered much later that my mother used to play bridge with Don’ sister in Tallahassee. Excerpts of his obituary, published in in *The Washington Post*, follow:

Donald Anderson Dies
By Patricia Sullivan
January 20, 2004

Donald L. Anderson, 71, executive director of a self-help organization for poor Southern blacks and a former congressional staff member who worked on anti-poverty legislation in the 1960s, died of cancer Jan. 17 at Washington Hospital Center.
Mr. Anderson, the great-grandson of a slave, was born in Pittsburgh and moved with his family to Washington when he was 14. His father, a geneticist and physician, began a medical internship at what is now Howard University Hospital.
Mr. Anderson graduated from the University of Michigan and served in the Army from 1953 to 1955, at one point as a skiing instructor in Colorado.
He received a master’s degree in economics from the London School of Economics in 1957 and was a 1960 graduate of the University of Michigan law school.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Unable to land a job with a blue-chip law firm, he went to Pittsburgh, where he worked as a law clerk in the Common Pleas Court and taught at what is now Carlow College.

In 1962, he learned of an opening on the staff of Rep. Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. Powell also was President Lyndon B. Johnson's manager of the "War on Poverty."

Mr. Anderson was hired and became general counsel for the committee in 1964. He helped draft the initial anti-poverty legislation passed by Congress.

He left Capitol Hill in 1968, with the idea of forming an organization based on Thomas Jefferson's idea of decision-making caucuses called "assemblies," small units of citizens who decide how to solve problems.

"He was a genius at teaching poor and illiterate citizens a process by which they were able to articulate their own needs and then discover, through his methods, a way of achieving them," said former senator Wyche Fowler Jr. (D-Ga.), who has known Mr. Anderson for 40 years.

Mr. Anderson enjoyed opera and Shakespeare and once tried out for the Washington Shakespeare Co. On his bedside table before he died were works by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Cervantes.

Earlier in his life, he fell in love with the sound of bagpipes and immediately set out to learn that instrument, becoming proficient enough to win awards at bagpipe festivals in the Southeast.

He lived in Washington and raised prize-winning Tennessee Walker horses near Eagle Rock, Va., on land deeded to his great-grandfather, the freed slave.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BASIC TECHNIQUES

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HOW TO BOIL AND PEEL AN EGG

Boil them:

Using a slotted spoon, gently place the eggs in a pot of boiling water one at a time. When it returns to a full boil, reduce to medium or low heat as needed to maintain a strong simmer or very gentle boil. Boil for 12 to 13 minutes. You may cover the pot, to prevent the water from boiling away. If you let the pot get above a strong simmer, the eggshells may crack and you will have a mess.

Note: If you see a greenish-gray ring on the cooked egg yolks, they were cooked too long. It is harmless, but the egg yolk will taste better if cooked less.

Adjust cooking time if boiling eggs at a higher or lower elevation than Boise (2,730 feet). Shorter time for lower elevation.

Ice bath:

Using a slotted spoon, remove the eggs to a plate or something. Empty the pot and run cold water to cool it. Then fill it with ice water. Let the eggs sit in the cold, icy water for 10 minutes until they are “chill” and happy.

Peel them promptly:

Unless you are going to paint Easter eggs, remove the shell promptly after the ice water bath, while the eggs are still slightly warm or cool to the touch. When you put hot eggs straight into ice water, the sudden temperature change shrinks the egg slightly inside the shell and loosens the inner membrane. Leaving them in the fridge before peeling can make the egg white contract tightly against a dry membrane, causing the shell to stick and tear the egg white.

Gently tap the egg several times to crack it all over. Then peel it submerged in a bowl of water or under a running faucet so the water slips under the membrane.

Alternatively:

Cook’s Illustrated magazine (July/Aug 2025) suggests steaming them, rather than boiling. Use a vegetable steamer in a covered pot with some water. Don’t stack more than one-egg deep. Then remove eggs to an ice bath. The magazine’s cook times are pretty short. I have not yet tested this approach.

Size of egg	Soft-boiled	Jammy	Hard-boiled
Jumbo	7 min. 15 sec.	9 minutes	16 min. 30 sec.
Extra-large	7 minutes	8 minutes 30 sec.	15 minutes
Large	6 min. 30 sec.	8 minutes	13 minutes

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HOW TO PEEL AND CHOP GARLIC

There are countless contraptions for peeling garlic. Fuggedaboudit. If you need to peel more than a couple of cloves, use this trick:

Lay the whole head of garlic on a cutting board. Lay the flat side of a large knife on the head. Give it a good smack with your hand. The individual cloves will go flying in all directions, effortlessly separated from each other.

Gather the cloves and put them in a medium-sized metal bowl. Place an identical metal bowl on top facing the other direction to make a globe. If you don't have two identical metal bowls, buy them.

Hold them together by the rims and shake the living daylights out of them for 45 seconds. This will make quite a racket. If your arms tire, you may pause and then continue shaking. Remove the top bowl and discover that nearly all of the cloves are naked (or nearly so), having shed their peels during the ruckus. A few stubborn ones may require personal attention, but 95% of your work is done. In some case, but not all, you will need to cut off the hard "stem" at the bottom of the clove. Discard the mountain of peels.

The cloves are now ready for chopping, slicing, or mincing, using your kitchen knife.

Or should you use a garlic press? Anthony Bourdain said, writing in his book, *Kitchen Confidential*, offered this assessment:

> Garlic is divine. Few food items can taste so many distinct ways, handled correctly. Misuse of garlic is a crime. Old garlic, burnt garlic, garlic cut too long ago and garlic that has been tragically smashed through one of those abominations, the garlic press, are all disgusting. Please treat your garlic with respect. Sliver it for pasta, like you saw in Goodfellas; don't burn it. Smash it, with the flat of your knife blade if you like, but don't put it through a press. I don't know what that junk is that squeezes out the end of those things, but it ain't garlic. And try roasting garlic. It gets mellower and sweeter if you roast it whole, still on the clove, to be squeezed out later when it's soft and brown. Nothing will permeate your food more irrevocably and irreparably than burnt or rancid garlic. Avoid at all costs that vile spew you see rotting in oil in screw-top jars. Too lazy to peel fresh? You don't deserve to eat garlic."

Anthony's commentary was acknowledged and rebutted by chef Dawn Perry, in an article titled "In Defense of the Garlic Press" published in *Bon Appetit* on 10/28/2014. Everyone has their opinion.

Commentators generally agree that hand-chopping produces a milder garlic taste. Using a garlic press or a microplane damages more cells, releasing more potent sulfur compounds.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HOW TO OVEN-FRY BACON

Equipment:
Use the a small broiling pan (for a few slices). Use a large broiling pan for a larger batch.

If you wish, you may skip the upper slotted pan (which is a bother to clean) and just put the bacon in the bottom of the broiling pan or on a jelly roll pan. This way the bacon will fry in its own grease. When cooked, remove the bacon and place it on a paper towel.

Directions:
Lay the raw bacon in a single layer on a broiling pan. If you overlap the pieces more than a tiny bit, you will get uneven cooking results.

Pop it into a 350º oven for:

35 minutes or so for very thick bacon.
20 minutes or so for regular bacon.

Use judgment. Cooking times vary. Small servings take less time.

If cooking for dishes like Rouladen or Spaghetti alla Carbonara, cook less well done than if making bacon for breakfast.

Just try it:
Like everyone growing up in America, I learned how to fry bacon (crispy or chewy) in a frying pan or griddle. The thought of cooking it in an oven—or worse yet, in a microwave—offends my sensibilities. After seven decades of frying the old-fashioned American way, I was persuaded by my son that bacon in the oven is just as good or better. And much easier. So long as you plan ahead a half hour.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PREPPING EGGPLANTS (SALT TECHNIQUE)

If making eggplant slices for Melanzane alla Parmigiana, Imam Bayildi, or other dishes, this salting process will extract some of the water and bitterness while transforming the eggplant interior into a creamier texture. This salting process is far less important today, because eggplants have been bred to be less bitter than the ones our grandparents salted. But it's still worth doing if you have the time.

The eggplant may be peeled, unpeeled, or peeled in zebra stripes—depending on preference and the particular dish.

Slice the eggplants to the proper thinness for the dish.

Place the sliced eggplants in one by one in a large colander. With each layer, salt them very generously. And the next layer, salt, and repeat.

Pick a colander size the results in the eggplants being slightly mounded when finished. Two large eggplants will fill a medium colander.

Place a dinner plate under the colander (to catch the "eggplant juice"). Place another dinner plate on top to press down the eggplants. Put a weight on top of the plate (some cans, a tea kettle, or a very calm cat).

Let the eggplants sit for at least 30 minutes, preferably an hour. A brown liquid will collect in the plate. Toss it out. That's the bitterness that has been extracted from the eggplants.

Wash the eggplants thoroughly. It is surprising how much salt clings to them! Dry the eggplants with paper towels and place them on a plate with paper towels. Add a paper towel between each layer of eggplant.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PASTA – BASIC QUANTITIES & TIMING

For two people:
Dried pasta: 6 to 8 oz. (5 oz. as a side for stroganoff, etc.)
Bionaturæ traditional tagliatelle: 8.8 oz. (fresh weight) (5 minutes hard boil, max. Package calls for 4 minutes)
Ferranti Fresh Ravioli: 11.4 oz. (fresh weight)

Conversion:
If buying imported pasta, 500 grams is 1.1 lbs.

Italian Lesson:

This is “Penne,” a tube pasta. It is pronounced PEH-neigh—lingering on the “n” sound in the middle.	This is “Pene.” It is not a pasta. It is pronounced PEY-neh. Use a single, short “n” sound. The first “e” is generally shorter, and the entire word feels faster and lighter.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SCALLOPS (TYPES AND SIZES)

Dry vs. wet. If possible, use "dry-packed" sea scallops. Dry-packed means they were packed without added chemicals. Less expensive "wet-packed" scallops are soaked in a phosphate solution (sodium tripolyphosphate aka STPP) prior to freezing, which causes them to bleach white and bloat (take on water to increase their weight). Because they're filled with water, they cost less per pound. Their bright white color is a dead give-away of cheap wet scallops. The chemicals give them a soapy taste, and the water is released when cooked—making it difficult to obtain a proper sear, producing a tough, flavorless result. Dry scallops have a slightly tan or pale coral color.

Size matters, but each has its merits. There are sea scallops and bay scallops. Sea scallops are harvested in deep cold waters. Bay scallops come from shallow waters. Bay scallops are the sweetest and most succulent. But they are not appropriate for recipes calling for sautéing the scallops. Bay scallops are typically used in stews and soups.
Scallops are sold by size, labeled "U" followed by a number referring to the number of scallops in a pound. The "U" stands for "under" meaning "no more than." The largest sea scallops are labeled "U/10," meaning that it takes ten or fewer scallops to make a pound. Those labeled "U/15" are still plenty big. Those labeled "20/30" require between 20 and 30 scallops to make a pound. Smaller bay scallops might be labeled "70/120."

Fresh vs. frozen. Fresh scallops are great if you live on the coast. But if you live in Idaho and are not eating at Chandlers (where they are flown in), the "fresh" scallops are probably thawed out versions of previously frozen. In which case, just buy the frozen ones. If you are going to keep them in the freezer, re-package them in vacuum-sealed bags (using a vacuum sealer machine). In any event, eat them soon.

Harvesting options. "Diver scallops" (seen only at fancy restaurants) are literally harvested by hand by divers. These are very expensive (and the most protective of the ocean floor). "Dayboat scallops" are harvested on boats that return to the shore within 24 hours of departing. These, too, are very fresh and very expensive. In contrast to dayboats, tripboats may be as sea for a week or longer. Most scallops are harvested using tripboats (meaning they are out to sea for more than a day), by trawling (scraping) the ocean floor, after which the scallops are frozen aboard ship.

Veal: Not all scallops are bivalve marine mollusks. Thin slices of meat (typically veal, chicken, or pork) are also called "scallops." These scallops are used in dishes like Weiner Schnitzel or Saltimbocca alla Romana.

Scalloped: Curiously, the cooking term "scalloped" means to bake in a cream sauce, typically covered with seasoned bread or cracker crumbs. According to the 1931 version of *The Joy of Cooking*, the term "scalloped" may be traced to the recipe for Coquilles St. Jacques. This French recipe for scallops was made with cream. But now any creamy thing has come to be referred to as "scalloped" (as in scalloped potatoes or scalloped oysters), which, of course, has nothing to do with scallops. (See "Etymology" under the recipe for Coquilles St. Jacque on page 114 for further history.)

WAGYU BEEF

The term Wagyu refers generically to all Japanese beef cattle (or to Japanese cattle raised in the U.S.). Cattle in Japan were used as draft animals. As a result, they have increased intramuscular fat (marbling). The highest grade is Kobe ("A5" in the Japanese rating system). The U.S. version of Wagyu is considered very good—with even more marbling than prime. But, for reasons I do not understand, U.S. Wagyu does not or cannot achieve the same level of perfection as the highest grades of Japanese beef. Hence, the extraordinary price of Japanese Kobe beef.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ROMERTOPF PREP

A Romertopf (German clay pot) is ideal for slow roasting. I learned this from Don Anderson (see page 9), who described the Romertopf as a “gift that will change your life.” It releases water to steam the meat while cooking.

If using a Romertopf, you must take steps to ensure that it does not crack while cooking. Submerge both the top and bottom in water (if not completely submerged, at least put them on the counter and fill them with water) for 20 minutes or more before cooking. Then begin cooking in a COLD oven.

BASIC TRAEGER INSTRUCTIONS

Start the Traeger on “smoke” with lid open until fire is established (about 4 minutes). If the lid is closed, it will smoke a lot, but this doesn’t really matter. Once it is going well, set the desired temperature. It may take 10 minutes to reach the desired temperature.

CARE OF CAST IRON

My cast iron frying pans and Dutch ovens are treasured. I don’t use them daily, because they require care and attention. But when needed (e.g., for browning meats before roasting), nothing else does the job—because of the heat retention.

If properly seasoned and used for many years, they develop a remarkable, almost non-stick surface.

To achieve this, it is essential to NEVER wash them with soap or other cleansers. Soap destroys the oils that become part of the pan’s surface. Once you have achieved a good surface, it will usually wipe clean easily. If need be, add a generous amount of Kosher salt and scrub with the salt. Then just clean with hot water and dry thoroughly.

For the first couple decades, you need to work on the seasoning each time by adding a swirl of oil, wiping it out, and heating the pan on the stove for a while. Eventually, this becomes no longer necessary.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BASIC SAUCES

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ROUX, WHITE SAUCE, AND CHEESE SAUCE

Ingredients	2 1/2 cups white sauce
Roux	
Butter	2 Tbsp. = 1/4 stick = 1/8 cup
Flour	2 Tbsp. = 1/8 cup
White Sauce	
Whole milk and/or half & half	2 cups (or as needed)
Cheese sauce	
Cheddar or other cheese	10 oz.

Equipment:
A good frying pan

Directions:

The roux

Melt the butter. Add the flour. Stir over medium heat 2 minutes to eliminate the floury taste.

The white sauce

Over medium-low heat, very gradually add the milk/cream, stirring in each splash before adding more. Don't worry amount the quantity of milk; worry about the consistency. Aim for something thinner than you ultimately want. It will thicken later.
Stop here if you're just looking for a white sauce.

The cheese sauce

Over medium-low heat, gradually add the grated cheeses. Which cheeses you use depends on the recipe, your taste and mood, and what is in your refrigerator. Ditto for the seasonings and their quantities. This is highly subjective.
As needed, add more milk to thin the cheese sauce.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

REMOULADE SAUCE

Ingredients	2 servings
Mayonnaise	⅓ cup
Dijon mustard	1 Tbsp.
Ketchup	1 Tbsp.
Paprika	½ tsp.
Capers (chopped)	2 tsp. (⅔ Tbsp.)
Sweet pickle relish	1 ¼ Tbsp.
Fresh lemon juice	juice of ⅓ lemon
Crystal hot sauce	a little shake

Directions:
Mix ingredients. Keep in fridge until ready to serve

Serve with:
The Louisiana version is served with fried fish, crab cakes, po boy sandwiches, artichokes, fried green tomatoes, even fried chicken!

Origin:
This is a traditional French sauce, as adapted by Louisiana Creole cuisine (as well as Cajun). Adaptations of it are found throughout Europe. The Danish put it on open-face roast beef sandwiches!

Pronunciation: "Reh-moo-lahd"

Source:
I observed John Moeller make this in his kitchen, but didn't keep notes. I then read 100 online recipes and came up with this.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SIMPLE MIDWESTERN TARTAR SAUCE

Ingredients	2 servings
Mayonnaise	⅓ cup
Sweet pickle relish	⅓ cup
Fresh lemon juice	juice of ¼ lemon

Directions:
Mix ingredients. Keep in fridge until ready to serve

Serve with:
Serve with fried fish, crab cakes, salmon cakes, etc.

Notes:
Some recipes add black pepper.
Many recipes add dill, which I hate.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHERMOULA (MOROCCAN CONDIMENT)

Ingredients	6 to 8 servings
Cumin seeds	2 Tbsp.
Garlic (minced or from jar)	3 Tbsp.
Fresh cilantro (remove thick stems) (washed & spin dried)	6 cups (lightly pressed, after larges stems removed) (2 large bunches)
Fresh flat-leaf Italian parsley (remove thick stems) (washed & spin dried)	4 cups (lightly pressed, after large stems removed) (1 large bunch)
Salt	1 tsp.
Smoked paprika	3 Tbsp.
Fresh lemon juice (or preserved lemon, if you are so lucky)	1 lemon (about 6 Tbsp.)
Good olive oil	½ cup
Chinese or Vietnamese chili garlic sauce	1 ⅓ Tbsp. (4 tsp.)
Saffron threads	½ tsp.
Ginger	2 tsp.

Equipment*:*

This is traditionally prepared in a mortar & pestle. I use a Cuisinart with cutting blade (for this size) or mini-chopper (for very small batch). You should run the Cuisinart blade a long time to completely reduce into a sauce. Don't worry. You will still be able to detect the feel and texture of the fresh herbs.

Directions:

Toast the cumin seeds in a dry frying pan (with no oil) over medium high heat, stirring (or flipping), until they smell fragrant (about 4 minutes).
Wash and spin dry the cilantro and parsley. Cut off and discard the biggest fattest stems. No need to be fastidious about this.
Combine all ingredients in Cuisinart or mini-chopper. Grind until smooth.
Test and add more olive oil and/or lemon juice as required to make a loose paste.
all the paste ingredients in Cuisinart.

Serve with:

This North African condiment is traditionally served grilled fish. It is also excellent with chicken, lamb, and vegetables. We love it with Emeril's Roasted Chicken (recipe on page 99). But it would be good with any chicken—even a rotisserie chicken from Costco.

Advance prep:

If making in advance, this can be stored in a well-sealed jar in the fridge for up to 3 days. If storing more than overnight, pour some olive oil on top before closing jar to seal out the oxygen.

Similar green sauces from other cultures:

Before refrigeration, our forebears used herbs and spices to help preserve foods and mask funky flavors. People around the world came to use remarkably similar green, herb-based sauces:

- Chermoula originated in North Africa, particularly Morocco. Chermoula uses warming spices like cumin and paprika, along with lemon juice for acidity.
- Chimichurri originated in Argentina and is now widely adopted throughout South America. Chimichurri features a sharper, tangier flavor due to red wine vinegar and spicy hot peppers.
- The Yemenis have a cilantro-heavy version they call zhoug.
- Italy has its version, salsa verde (literally "green sauce"), which is based on parsley, garlic, capers, and anchovies.
- Mexico's version (also called salsa verde) is based on tomatillos, cilantro, and green chiles.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Origin of this recipe:

Randy Fife (formerly City Attorney for Moscow and then Idaho Falls) sent me this recipe in 2016 in response to my Xmas letter recipe. I then compared and incorporated ideas from Chefs David Lebovitz and Joshua Bousel (which I found online).

Randy Fife grills chicken breast, chops it into pieces, and tosses it with the Chermoula. He then serves over brown rice with a sprinkle of pine nuts. Very clever.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BALSAMIC VINEGAR REDUCTION

Ingredients	2 servings	6 people
Balsamic vinegar	¼ cup	½ cup
Honey	½ Tbsp.	1 Tbsp

Equipment

I use a cute mini-sized Le Creuset pot. Any small pot will do. Skip the cover, which is unnecessary and increases the chance of a boil-over.

Directions

Simmer the balsamic vinegar very gently – long enough to reduce by half. This will take 20 minutes or longer.
Add a generous drizzle of honey during last 10 minutes.

Quantity

Two-person recipe calls for ¼ cup of vinegar, because it is difficult to make less than that. For six people or more, you may use less than proportionate multiples of the two-person recipe.

Vinegars

Use a good balsamic vinegar. I am also fond of flavored vinegars. Our favorites (for Caprese salad or Becky's Very Complicated Asparagus) include:

- Georgetown Olive Oil Company's Huckleberry Balsamic Vinegar. Available online from the company.
- Raspberry Balsamic Vinegar, made by Texas Hill Country Olive Company. Available on Amazon.com.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

APPETIZERS

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MOO'S MELTED BRIE

Ingredients	Appetizer size
Small round of brie (or a wedge of brie)	7 or 8 oz.
Chutney (your choice: sweet mango, hot mango or Major Grey) (good brands are Crosse & Blackwell and Patak's)	12 oz. jar
Slivered almonds	2.25 oz. package (or less)
Serve with:	
French baguette (sliced thin)	

Directions:

If using round brie, cut into eight pie-shaped wedges. Leave the slices in pie shape, but separate wedged out so there is some room in between each and an open space in the middle. Then scoop chutney into the middle so that it oozes around between the wedges. Sprinkle generously with almonds. Bake at 350 or 400 for about 15 min. Serve with thinly sliced crusty bread (baguette).

Note:

This is based on Mom's recipe card. (Her children affectionately called her Moo or the Jersey Mother—for no apparent reason.) She cut the brie into six wedges and alternated each wedge with topping chutney, nuts, and minced green onions.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

GUACAMOLE DE BARBACOA

Ingredients	3-4 servings (as light appetizer)
Ripe avocados	2 avocados
Pico de gallo (or fresh salsa)	4 Tbsp.
Red onion (fine dice) – skip if plenty of onion in the pico de gallo	2 Tbsp. (½ small onion)
Olive oil	1 Tbsp.
Garlic (mashed)	1 tsp.
Jalapeños (super fine chop)	2 Tbsp.
Green Tabasco sauce	2 Tbsp.
Cilantro	2 Tbsp.
Fresh lime (for juice)	1 lime
Thyme	Pinch
Sea salt	Two pinches

Mash everything together with a potato masher.
Serve with the best tortilla chips you can get.

Source:

Barbacoa's Restaurant in Boise makes the best tableside guacamole in the world. Enrique's in Kuna runs a close second. The guacamole at Barrio' taco restaurant in Bown Crossing (Boise) is also fantastic (but not prepared tableside).
This recipe is modeled on Barbacoa's, based on close observation of their tableside service.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S DEVILED EGGS

Ingredients	15 deviled eggs
Boil the eggs	
Eggs	10 eggs (see note below)
Devil them	
Mayonnaise	½ cup
White vinegar	1 ½ tsp
Mustard (Grey Poupon or old fashioned yellow)	1 ½ tsp
Salt	¼ tsp.
Freshly ground pepper	A good shake
Sprinkle with paprika	
Smoked Spanish paprika	A sprinkle on top

Equipment:
Use a very large pot and lots of water to boil the eggs. Heat retention is important.
Extra eggs*:*
Our antique (1940s) deviled egg platter holds 15 half eggs. Instead of making 8 eggs, Karen makes 10 in case a couple don't turn out right. For some reason, occasionally one will be difficult to peel and will fall apart. If they all turn out perfectly, then you have a couple extra to eat!
Directions:

Boil the eggs

Boil and peel the eggs. (See "How to boil an egg" on page 12.)

Devil them

Cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Remove the yolks to a separate bowl.
Place the whites on a serving platter.
Mash the yolks into a fine crumble using a fork. Add mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Mix well.
Heap a spoonful of the egg mixture into each of the egg whites. Sprinkle with paprika. Serve at once or chill and serve later.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

NANCY'S FIG & OLIVE TAPENADE

Ingredients	
Dried figs, chopped	1 cup
Pitted kalamata olives, chopped	1/3 cup
Olive oil	2 Tbsp.
Balsamic vinegar	1 Tbsp.
Capers, drained	1 Tbsp.
Fresh thyme, chopped	½ tsp.
Goat cheese	About 10 oz. (2 logs)
Chopped toasted walnuts	A bunch

Mix it up. Serve with sliced bread, toasts, crackers, or whatever.

Source: Nancy & Murray Feldman

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FIG SPREAD & GOAT CHEESE CRACKERS

Ingredients	A small crowd
Goat cheese (in a package or a tube, do not use crumbled version) or substitute brie	8 oz.
Dalmatia brand Adriatic fig spread (from Whole Foods)	8.5 oz. jar
Choice of crackers: Firehook artisan baked crackers with rosemary & sea salt (from Whole Foods) or La Panzanelli "Croccantini" crackers with rosemary or sea salt (from Whole Foods fancy Albertsons) or	3 oz. (half of a 6 oz. package)

You may want to break the long 5-inch crackers in half to make them more bite-sized.
Top each cracker with some goat cheese or a slice of raw brie. Add fig spread on top of cheese.
Enjoy.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FIG & ALMOND CRACKERS WITH STILTON & GREEN APPLES

Ingredients	A small crowd
Olina's Backhouse Fig & Almond Crackers (available at the fancy Albertsons on Broadway)	5 oz. package
Stilon or other bleu cheese (stilton with blueberries is nice)	⅓ lb. (5 oz)
Green apple	1 apple

Serve these very dense crackers with the cheese and slivers of apples

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SALADS

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Caprese Salad with Balsamic Reduction

Ingredients	2 generous servings
The salad:	
Ripe tomatoes (thinly sliced) (preferably heirloom)	2 medium tomatoes or 1 very large tomato
Salt & pepper	Very lightly
Burrata mozzarella (e.g., Bel Gioioso brand) Or regular mozzarella cheese (sliced)	8 oz.
Fresh basil	One plastic container or half of a “live” plant
The reduction:	
Balsamic vinegar (fruit-flavored ones work well, too)	¼ cup
Honey	½ Tbsp.
The oil:	
Olive oil	A drizzle

Equipment

For the balsamic reduction, I use a cute mini-sized Le Creuset pot. Any small pot will do. Skip the cover, which is unnecessary and increases the chance of a boil-over.

Directions

Slice the tomatoes and sprinkle them with a tiny bit of salt & pepper.

Pull the leaves off the fresh basil. Rinse them, and dry them with a paper towel.

Arrange the tomato slices on their individual serving plates. Top each tomato slice generously with basil leaves. Finally, add the sliced mozzarella. This is traditionally arranged with the slices stacked and leaning together. I prefer a presentation with them each laid out on the plate next to each other. It doesn’t matter.

Set them aside until dinner is ready. If the plates accumulate any liquid while waiting, quickly switch to fresh plates.

Make the balsamic vinegar reduction. Consider using a fruit-flavored balsamic vinegar. Simmer the balsamic vinegar very gently – long enough to reduce by half. This will take 20 minutes or longer. Add a generous drizzle of honey during last 10 minutes. (See recipe for balsamic vinegar reduction on page 25 for more details.)

When everything is ready to be served, drizzle the salads very lightly with olive oil.

Finish with a tiny drizzle of the balsamic vinegar reduction. Don’t over-do it. This is powerful stuff. You can always add more.

Source

I learned the balsamic reduction from my son, Andy.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

TOMATO AND ONION SALAD

Ingredients	2 servings
Tomatoes & onion:	
Heirloom tomatoes (thinly sliced)	1 large tomato
Vidalia onions (thinly sliced, then cut)	½ large onion
Salt	Lightly
Pepper (none if married to Karen)	
The oil & vinegar:	
Very good olive oil (flavored with herbs de Provence, if possible)	A generous drizzle
Huckleberry or other fruit flavored balsamic vinegar	A generous drizzle
(or substitute huckleberry vinaigrette, and skip the olive oil)	A generous drizzle

Directions:
Slice the tomatoes and arrange on salad plates.
Slice the onions, then cut each slice in half, producing individual long pieces of onion. Arrange them on top of the tomatoes.
Sprinkle lightly with salt & pepper.
Dress with your best olive oil and vinegar.

Olive Oil Options:
I like an olive oil flavored with herbs de Provence, but any good olive oil will do.

Huckleberry Options:
Any good balsamic may be used, but I love the huckleberry flavor with this salad.
Georgetown Olive Oil Co. makes a nice huckleberry balsamic vinegar ($20 for 6.7 oz.).
Texas Hill Country Olive Oil Co. makes a nice huckleberry vinaigrette ($23 for 8.5 oz).
Note: Vinaigrette is made with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, so skip the additional olive oil if using vinaigrette.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KIMMY'S VINAIGRETTE (SALAD DRESSING)

Ingredients	4 servings
Good extra virgin olive oil	⅓ cup
Apple cider vinegar	2 Tbsp.
(or substitute huckleberry or other balsamic vinegar)	3 Tbsp.
Grey Poupon mustard	2 tsp.
Honey	1 Tbsp.
Shallot (minced)	1 Tbsp.
Salt & pepper	Very lightly

Equipment*:*

Use a glass salad oil container, if you have one. Otherwise, use an empty jar with lid.

Directions*:*

Combine olive oil, vinegar, mustard, honey, and shallots in salad oil container.
Place jar in sink (to minimize mess). Grind a little salt and pepper into the jar.
Close lid and shake vigorously until blended.

Keep in fridge until ready to serve. Refrigerate any left over for up to 3 weeks.

Emulsification:

The Dijon mustard helps to emulsify the oil and vinegar. (Emulsify means to mix liquid ingredients that don't normally mix well.) The oil and vinegar will separate as it sits. The dressing may solidify in the refrigerator. If so, set it out at room temperature for 30 minutes, or run the jar under hot water.

Source:

Karen's sister, Kim Neal, made this simple but delicious dressing when she visited Boise in 2023. Kimmy uses apple cider vinegar. I substituted huckleberry balsamic vinegar. Other recipes call for any good balsamic vinegar.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ENSALADA MIXTA

Ingredients	4 servings
The salad	
Iceberg lettuce (cut into ⅛ wedges, then loosely torn apart) (or substitute Romaine, but iceberg is more traditional for this Spanish salad)	½ head
Tomatoes (cut in wedges)	1 large or 2 small tomatoes
White onion (cut in half, then very thinly sliced)	⅓ onion
Imported canned line-caught tuna in olive oil (e.g., Conservas Ortiz El Velero - Bonito del Norte, available from Tienda.com, about $13 per can)—Skip the tuna for a lighter salad!	1 tin
Hard boiled eggs (quartered)	2 eggs
Spanish or Basque green olives (seedless and stuffed with pimento or other things) My favorite is Serpis brand Las Rellenas (stuffed with serrano ham)	½ cup (4.59 oz. can)
White asparagus (in jar) (e.g., Bajamar brand imported from the Basque Country of Spain, about $18 per jar)	12.2 oz. jar (about 8 spears)
Canned corn (drained)—traditional, but quite optional	Not too much
The dressing	
Extra virgin olive oil (the best you have)	3 oz.
White, red, or sherry wine vinegar	1 oz.
Sea salt	generous sprinkle

Equipment*:*

A big salad bowl or shallow serving platter.

Directions*:*

Boil the eggs gently and let cool in ice bath. (See “How to boil an egg” on page 15.) Peel and slice into quarters.

Scatter the lettuce across the bottom of a large bowl or platter. Nestle the tomato wedges and thin onion ribbons evenly over the lettuce. Drain the olive oil from your costly imported Spanish canned tuna. Use as fork to flake the tuna over the center of the salad. (Or skip the tuna altogether to make a lighter salad). Arrange the hard-boiled egg quarters, and scatter the green olives beautifully around the plate. Sprinkle on some corn, if you wish. If you are lucky and wealthy, fan out spears of white asparagus.

Traditionally in Spain, the three dressing ingredients are poured over the salad just before it is served, one-by-one, in the order listed above. Alternatively, you could put them in a bowl, measuring cup, or whatever and whisk them together. In any event, add the dressing just before serving or allow guests to dress their own salads after plating.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Notes:

Ensalada Mixta is the Spanish sibling of Salad Niçoise (from Nice, France).
Compare and contrast:

	Ensalada Mixta (Spanish)	Salad Niçoise (from Nice, France)
Presentation	Served tossed or layered casually in a serving platter or salad bowl.	Served composed (arranged in neat, beautiful groups on a platter).
Eggs	Both salads include hard-boiled eggs.	
Tuna	The Spanish version adheres to canned tuna—packed in olive oil. This is considered a top-tier ingredient, not a cheap shortcut. Spain has a massive, world-renowned culture surrounding high-end canned seafood ("conservas"). This is line-caught, hand packed tuna that bears no resemblance to the mass produced canned tuna Americans use for a tuna sandwich.	Upscale French restaurants today use fresh, pan-seared tuna. Historically in France, anchovies were the only fish used in in this salad, because tuna was too expensive. Now you see both.
Olives	Plump, green Manzanilla or stuffed olives (often with pimientos).	Small, dark, and briny Niçoise olives.
Veggies	Built on a heavy base of crisp iceberg or romaine lettuce, thick slices of white onion. And, sometimes, cucumbers.	Heavily emphasizes tomatoes, radishes, and often green beans and potatoes (in modern versions).
Other additions	Frequently includes canned white asparagus spears and sometimes sweet corn.	Frequently includes anchovies and capers.
Dressing	Strictly extra virgin olive oil, white wine vinegar, and salt (dressed right at the table).	Olive oil or a red wine vinaigrette (sometimes with Dijon mustard).

BEEF & VEAL

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

LE BOEUF CHRISTOPHE (MY TAKE ON STEAK AU POIVRE)

Ingredients	2 servings
The Steaks:	
Filet mignon (ribeye or NY strip is really good too).	¾ to 1 lb. (6-8 oz. per person)
McCormick Grill Mates' Montreal Steak seasoning	A nice sprinkle on both sides of the steaks. Be generous, but don't overdo. This is very salty.
Optional: Bacon	Two thin slices wrapped around each filet, then tied with a string
The Sauce:	(This is generous amount of sauce)
Whole peppercorns (coarsely ground)	1 ½ Tbsp. (this is Karen's level of pepperiness, which is pretty high)
Garlic (fine mince)	2 Tbsp. if using chopped from jar. 4 large cloves or 8 small cloves
Shallots (fine mince) (Onion may be substituted.)	2 large shallots (3 oz.) (or ¼ of a large onion)
Olive oil	As needed (about 2 Tbsp.)
Cognac (for flaming)	⅓ cup
Heavy cream	1 ¼ cup
Veal or beef demi-glace (from Williams Sonoma)	2 Tbsp.
Cognac (again, when almost done)	1 tsp.
Juice from the steak (after resting)	

Equipment: 10 inch frying pan (for up to 4 people); otherwise, used largest available.
Prep: Remove the steaks from the fridge and allow them to come to room temperature.
Directions:

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Peppercorns

Crush the peppercorns in a mini-chopper (takes two minutes!). (Or you can do it with a mortar & pestle if you have strong arms and an hour or so.) You want them fairly fine, without big chunks of peppercorn. But not completely pulverized and turned to dust.

Sauté

Mince the shallots. Sauté them in good olive oil for a minute (to give it a head start), then add the garlic and continue sautéing for another couple of minutes. Add the crushed pepper. Then add the cognac. Let the cognac heat a few seconds, then tilt pan to flame. Watch out! Very fiery! Take off the heat or turn heat to low and wait till it's done flaming.
Stir in the demi-glace. It will melt right in!
Pause now if you like; this can sit quite a while.

The Cream

Final step: About 20 or 30 minutes before serving dinner, add the cream. Simmer on low heat (just bubbling) about 15 minutes to reduce cream by at least a third. Finally, add another teaspoon of cognac to the sauce. (This is an Alton Brown trick.) Try to time the sauce so it doesn't sit around too long before going on the steaks.

Prep the steaks

Carefully remove any fat or gristle. (Cook it and feed to dogs.)
Sprinkle steaks with seasoning.
Optional: Wrap each filet in a strip or two of bacon. Tie with a string and cut off extra string.

Grill the Steaks

Every chef approaches the BBQ differently. Here is my approach, using a gas Weber:
Preheat the BBQ grill to highest temperature, all burners on – over 600 degrees.
Sear the steaks over the "searing station" for 3 ½ minutes per side (less for small filets).
(If doing lots of steaks, or you don't have a searing station, sear with all burners set to high.)
This searing is the main part of the cooking. Indeed, for a very rare steak, you may be done!
After searing, turn off all burners but one (unless it's cold outside). Move steaks to area with no burner. Monitor other burners to achieve 400 degrees, but don't turn on any burners under the steaks.
Cook another 2-8 minutes to desired temperature. (Take out before reaching the desired temperature! The temperature will go up as much as 5 degrees while resting!)
NOTE: COOKING TIMES VARY WILDLY. For example, very large steaks cook may take longer. As will winter cooking. Pay attention to the internal temperature.

Rare = 125°
Medium rare = 135°
Medium = 145°
Medium well = 150°
Well done = 160°

Rest the Steaks

Remove steaks to a plate and cover with tin foil. After resting 5-8 minutes, pour the juice that collects into the brandy cream sauce and stir it in. (This is divine.)

Plate the Steaks

Serve steaks with sauce in a gravy boat for people to apply to their liking. The sauce also is good on mashed potatoes like a gravy.

Non-dairy alternative for sauce (for the lactose intolerant):
Substitute almond milk and/or beef broth for the cream.

Serve with:

Excellent with potato-kale cakes, Potatoes Anna, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, Emeril's potatoes, oven-fried potatoes, or creamy polenta. May be accompanied by spinach sautéed in garlic, roasted tomatoes, green beans, grilled asparagus, sautéed zucchini, and/or carrots à l'orange.

Etymology:

Poivre is French for pepper. The name simply means pepper steak.

Aphrodisiac:

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

This dish originated in Normandy France where it was a nineteenth century bistro staple. It particularly popular because it was believed to be an aphrodisiac. Indeed, piperine, an alkaloid found in pepper, has been shown to increase blood flow in various organs.

Julia Child:

The first published recipe for Steak au Poivre published in the U.S. is Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (with Louisette Bertholle and Simon Beck, 1970), in which she disparaged the whole cognac flaming thing. "Steak au poivre can be very good when it is not so buried in pepper and doused with flaming brandy that the flavor of the meat is utterly disguised. In fact, we do not care at all for flaming brandy with this dish; it is too reminiscent of restaurant show-off cooking for tourists. And the alcohol taste, as it is not boiled off completely, remains in the brandy, spoiling the taste of the meat."

Classic:

In a traditional *steak au poivre*, crushed pepper is pressed into the steak. Instead, I put the pepper into the sauce. A traditional *steak au poivre* is cooked in a skillet with butter and oil. The cognac sauce is then prepared and flamed (often tableside) in the pan after the steaks are removed. I prepare the sauce in its own pan, because I use the grill for the steaks. My sauce roughly corresponds to the traditional sauce, but I added the demi-glace (which is killer), and I simmer it longer.

Martha Washington:

An early version of steak au poivre (minus the cream sauce) is fun to read. Quoted from Fourpoundsflour.com:

"Martha Washington's *Booke of Cookery* is a manuscript collection of recipes, gifted to Martha on the occasion of her first marriage to Daniel Custis [prior to her marriage to our Founding Father]. The recipe book– copied from recipes of her in-laws–includes recipes that date from the late medieval era to the early 18th century. One in particular caught my eye: a roast of venison crusted in black pepper.

"To Season a Venison

"Take out ye bones & turne ye fat syde downe upon a board. yn take ye pill of 2 leamons & break them in pieces as long as yr finger & thrust them into every hole of yr venison. then take 2 ounces of beaten pepper & thrice as much salt, mingle it, then wring out ye juice of lemon into ye pepper & salt & season it, first taking ye leamon pills haveing layn soe a night. then paste it with gross pepper layd on ye top & good store of butter or muton suet.

"Here's a rough translation of the recipe: De-bone a roast of venison. Take the peel of two lemons and cut it into finger length strips, stuffing them into any holes left from the bones. Let the meat sit overnight, and remove the lemon peels. Take two ounces ground pepper and six ounces salt, mixed with the juice of one lemon, and season the holes the lemon peels previously occupied. Crust it with cracked pepper and butter or fat."

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MRS. NIXON'S MEATLOAF

Ingredients	1 meatloaf (serves 2 or more)	3 meatloaves (serves 6 or more)
Sautéed Onions		
Sweet onion (fine chop)	⅓ large onion	1 large onion
Good olive oil	A generous splash	A generous splash
Thyme (fresh or dried)	A pinch	1 tsp (fresh) ½ tsp. (dried)
Worcestershire sauce	⅔ Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
Milky bread		
Homemade breadcrumbs (from baguette or other good white bread with crust on)	⅓ cup	1 cup
Whole milk	⅓ cup	1 cup
Meat mixture		
Eggs	1 egg	3 eggs
Ground beef (preferably wagyu, or regular beef 80% lean) Optional: up ⅓ of the meat may be ground veal, lamb, or Duroc pork	1 lb.	3 lbs.
Chili sauce (preferably "Homade" brand)	⅓ of a 12 oz. jar	one 12 oz. jar
Salt	⅓ tsp. (max)	1 tsp. (max)
Pepper	⅓ tsp. (max)	1 tsp. (max)
Top off the loaves		
Chili sauce (preferably "Homade" brand)	⅔ of a 12 oz. jar	two 12 oz. jars
Thick-sliced bacon (cut slices in half)	5 half slices (4 oz.)	15 half slices (12 oz.)

Oven

Preheat to 350°, with high broil at the end.

Equipment

I prefer a copper frying pan for the onions (the large one for three loaves).
The meatloaves do best on a broiling pan with slots, which let the juices drip into the pan below.

Directions

Sauté the onions

Sauté the finely chopped onions in olive oil over low/medium heat until they just begin to brown. If you have time, do them over very low heat for 30 to 90 minutes to caramelize. During last 10 minutes of sauté, stir in the Worcestershire sauce and thyme. Optional: Drain and set aside. Or if not too oily, don't worry about it.

Soak the bread

If you don't have leftover breadcrumbs in your freezer, make some. Cut bread into pieces (leaving the crust on). Put them in the Cuisinart and pulverize them with the metal chopping blade for a minute. Make extra with whatever old bread you have, and freeze the leftovers! Measure the breadcrumbs in a measuring cup. Add whole milk (or broth, if you're lactose intolerant) to soften. Let sit for a good 10 minutes.

Meat mixture

Beat the eggs in a mixing bowl that is large enough to hold the meat.
Add the ground meat, the sautéed onions, the milky bread, ⅓ of the chili sauce, salt & pepper.
Mix together gently, just enough to combine. If overworked, the meatloaf will taste "tougher."

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Top off with chili sauce & bacon

Divide and form into loaves on the broiling pan. The loaves will be very loose (falling apart). Spoon the remaining ⅔ of the chili sauce on top of each meatloaf. (Yes, it's a lot. Just do it.) Top with bacon slices. (Karen likes this much bacon. You could use less. Or none, if you are feeling a tad Kosher).

Bake one hour (no more) at 350°.

Broil the bacon

Thick bacon may require a quick broil at the end. Leave meatloaves in the oven, turn to high broil, leave for 3 minutes max. Remove meatloaves from oven. Tent and let rest 10 minutes before slicing.

NOTES:

Serve with

We often serve this with Karen's sour cream mashed Yukon Gold potatoes and sometimes Vegetables de la Mode—bringing great joy each time.

Chili sauce

In my version, one third of the chili sauce goes into the meatloaves; two thirds goes on top. I prefer Homade brand chili sauce. Karen's mom and Mrs. Nixon used tomato sauce. Even ketchup will do. This is America! (Even Ina Garten uses ketchup.)

Leftovers

The leftover meatloaf sandwiches the next day are the best (served on sourdough bread with a touch of ketchup).

It is brilliant (as the British would say) to make extra meatloaves. They freeze well. Cook them first. When cool, vacuum seal them. If you don't have a vacuum sealer, wrap them in tinfoil and then put in an Zip-lock bag.

To reheat: Thaw. Remove tinfoil. Put on broiling pan or cookie sheet—no slotted pan required. Cover with yet more chili sauce (generously). Rewarm gently (uncovered) in a 300° oven for about an hour.

Origin story

This recipe is derived from Fran Adam's (Karen's mom) recipe, which she got from Pat Nixon (published in a newspaper). This was the first dish that Fran Adams made for Chris on his first visit to Connecticut! Fran's version was fantastic, served with simple white rice. The recipe has evolved considerably since we started making it. Mrs. Nixon's version was pure 1950s simplicity—just beef, plain tomato sauce, salt & pepper; no milky bread, no onions, no seasonings, no bacon. Indeed, it would be fair to say that his recipe bears no resemblance to Mrs. Nixon's. But we keep the name for old time's sake, and to honor one of the good things that came from that otherwise forsaken presidency (right up there with the creation of the EPA, the enactment of NEPA and the ESA, the negotiation of SALT II, and the opening of China relations).

When Andy visited for Christmas 2025, he showed me an Ina Garten (the Barefoot Contessa) video of her meatloaf recipe. Turns out that our version aligned closely with the Contessa's version. Except she added sautéed onions, Worcestershire sauce, and fresh thyme, which I promptly incorporated into our recipe.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

THE JUCY LUCY (DAD'S FAVORITE HAMBURGER)

Ingredients	2 servings
Onions:	
Onion (half rings)	1 large onion (or 2 small onions)
Olive oil, grapeseed oil, or avocado oil	3 Tbsp.
Crushed red pepper	⅔ Tbsp.
Or Mushrooms:	
Mushrooms (sliced)	8 oz.
Olive oil or butter	3 Tbsp.
Crushed red pepper	⅔ Tbsp.
The Hamburgers:	
Ground beef (Our favorite is Snake River Farms Wagyu. Wagyu does not display a fat %. If you use regular beef, 20% fat has the most flavor.)	⅔ pound (two ⅓ pound burgers) (You could make ½ pound burgers, but we find those too big)
Salt & pepper	A light sprinkle on every other patty
BBQ sauce, e.g., Phil McGrade's Secret Sauce Rib Rack Sweet Honey, Signature Southern Style Whiskey, or Rufus Teague Honey Sweet	2 Tbsp. total (1 Tbsp. per burger)
Dried minced onion	1 Tbsp. total (½ Tbsp. per burger)
Pepper Jack, cheddar, or white American cheese	For each burger: 2 slices stacked and folded into fourths (3 slices for ½ lb. burgers), or grated cheese mashed into something approaching the size of a golf ball. This looks like way too much, but it is not; assuming you want a little cheese oozing out of your hamburgers when they are done.
Soft hamburger buns – brioche is best (toasted in oven or on grill)	

Equipment

A large frying pan for the onions and/or mushrooms (medium size will barely fit for two people).
Large surface area browns better.
Hamburgers on the grill.
Buns may be toasted in oven broiler or on the grill.

Directions

Brown the onions:

Cut the onions in half. Then slice each half into half rings.
Sauté the sliced onions in oil on rather high heat until browned (10 minutes or longer), with stirring and attention. Add the crushed red pepper. Then turn heat to low (⅓ on my lower right burner) for a long time (while everything else cooks) to caramelize the onions (another 45 minutes or more is great).

(and/or) Sauté the mushrooms:

Sauté the sliced mushrooms on high heat in good olive oil until nicely browned (10 minutes).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Prep the hamburgers:

Set out beef to bring to room temperature.
Make one "cheese-ball" for each hamburger (roll up shredded cheddar into a ball a bit smaller than a golf ball or fold sliced cheese into a similar size—which is more of a cube).
Put the beef on a plate or cutting board.
Divide each ⅓ or ½ pound in half. Press each into a mini-patty. (If making for 2 people, there would be 4 mini-patties.) Make patties thin and large so that there is room to keep the "stuff" in the middle. Sprinkle half of the mini-patties with salt & pepper, add the BBQ sauce, the dried onions, and the cheese (fits best if done in that order). Try to keep all these ingredients in the middle. Place the plain patty on top. Carefully meld the patties them together into hamburgers, so they don't come apart on the grill.
For a party, you can make the patties in advance and put them in fridge. Bring them to room temperature before grilling!

Cook the hamburgers:

A slow cook is essential to get the cheese melted inside the burger.
For my Weber gas grill, I preheat to high temp. When burgers go on, I keep the burner under the burgers on lowest setting and adjust the burner furthest away to maintain exactly 425º -- no más.
For ⅓ lb. burgers: 13 minutes total (flip after 7 minutes) -- no más.
For ½ lb. burgers: 16 minutes total (flip after 8 minutes) – no más.
Cooking time varies widely, use judgment.

Serve:

Remove burgers. Tent them under tinfoil, and serve soon.
Goes well with Karen's oven-fried potatoes, homemade cole slaw, and corn on the cob.

Why "Jucy Lucy" is misspelled

I have been making these cheese-in-the-middle concoctions for many years. In 2024, my son (Andy) pointed out to me that I am actually making what has been known since the 1950s as the Jucy Lucy. It was named, according to legend, after the first customer to sample it exclaimed, "**Ohhh! That's one juicy lucy!"** The inexplicable name stuck, and the restaurant put it on the menu, misspelling the word juicy. Two bars in Minneapolis contend they are the creator of this cheese-in-the-middle burger. One has kept the original misspelling. The other spells Juicy correctly. A powerful rivalry between the bars (and their respective patrons) continues to this day. One sells shirts proclaiming, "If it's spelled right, it's done right." The other bar's shirts retort: "Remember, if it's spelled correctly, you're eating a shameless rip-off!" President Obama sampled an original Jucy Lucy in 2014, prompting an immediate invitation from the other bar.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

STEAK DIANE

Ingredients	2 servings (generous)
Steak marinade:	
Filet mignon (prime) (from Costco, is great)	1.0 lb. (pre-trim weight) (1 ½ large filets)
Soy sauce	light drizzle (don't overdo)
Olive oil	generous drizzle
Prep the cream sauce:	
Heavy cream	*¾ cup*
Dijon mustard	*1 Tbsp.*
Veal or beef demi-glace	*2 ½ Tbsp.*
Worcestershire sauce	*1 Tbsp.*
Crystal hot sauce	*1 tsp.*
Pepper	*a generous sprinkle (salt not needed)*
Sauté the mushrooms, shallots & garlic:	
Butter	2 Tbsp. (adding more as needed)
Olive oil	2 Tbsp. (adding more as needed)
Shallots (finely minced) Or substitute onion	5 oz. whole (4 to 5 modestly sized shallots) or ½ onion (½ cup after chopping)
Garlic (minced) (or from jar)	⅔ Tbsp. (3 cloves)
White mushrooms (sliced)	½ lb. (8 oz.)—or more if you like!!
Sauté the steaks:	
Butter	50/50 butter & olive oil: ⅛ inch deep in pan.
Olive oil	
The flambé sauce:	
Cognac	⅓ cup
Fresh lemon juice	Juice of 1 lemon
Fresh chives or Italian parsley (chopped fine)	½ of a "bunch" (reserving some for plating)
Plate:	
The reserved chives or parsley	A nice sprinkle

Equipment

For the marinade, use a jelly roll pan, lasagna pan, or anything with sides to hold the marinade.
For 1-4 people, I use 2 frying pans (I prefer copper)—one for the mushrooms/shallots/ garlic and one for the steaks. For more than 4 people, I use a deep copper pan with 4-inch sides for the mushrooms/shallots/ garlic and a separate frying pan for the steaks.

Directions

Prep the steaks (start early!):

Trim the filets. Be aggressive about removing any gristle. (Gristle may be cooked in oven for a dog treat.)
Cut each filet crosswise (across the grain). Then cut them lengthwise, as needed. Depending on size, each filet will yield two to six pieces, each piece weighing about 3 oz. Place each piece of filet into a zip-lock bag and pound it relatively thin (⅜ to ½ inch) with the flat side of a meat mallet. Don't pound them too thin! You want a steak with a pink center when done. Don't worry if you end up with odd-shaped pieces of different sizes. After pounding, remove additional gristle that becomes exposed.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Marinate the steaks:

Lay out the steaks in a large jelly roll pan. Drizzle them with soy sauce followed by a generous amount of olive oil. (Put on the soy sauce first; otherwise it will just roll off the olive oil.) The marinade should overflow the steaks. Flip them back and forth to get the marinade on all parts, adding more soy sauce and olive oil if necessary. If you have a lot of steaks, they may be layered in the pan as each one is prepped. Allow the steaks to marinate in the refrigerator (or on the counter) for at least 30 minutes. An hour is better. They can go up to 2 hours.

Prep the shallots, mushrooms, parsley, garlic & lemon:

Chop the shallots. Slice the mushrooms. Chop the parsley. Chop the garlic (if using fresh). Juice the lemon.

Combine cream sauce ingredients:

You may combine in advance the cream, mustard, demi-glace, Worcestershire, hot sauce, and pepper. This is not necessary, but it will save time later (time matters, because you will be cooking this after the guests arrive). You may also squeeze the lemon juice and measure the cognac, but don't mix those with the cream sauce.

Sauté the shallots, garlic & mushrooms:

Sauté the mushrooms, shallots & garlic together on high heat, starting with the mushrooms, adding the shallots after 4 minutes, and adding the garlic 4 minutes later. Total about 15-20 minutes, until mushrooms are tender and reduced in size. No need to brown them, but all of the mushroom water must be evaporated.

Pause for guests

All the above may be done before the guests arrive. Now discuss politics, religion, and death.

Sauté the filets:

Heat a separate large frying pan over high heat. Add butter and olive oil (50/50) to no more than ⅛ inch deep. (Add more, if needed, for each batch of steaks. Sauté the steaks in batches on very high heat for 45 seconds before turning, then 35 seconds on second side. (I use my super burner on less than full blast, or regular burner on high.) The steaks should be lightly browned on outside, rare on inside. Remove them to a plate and let them rest while the remaining steaks cook. Tent the steaks under tin foil.

Flambé:

Re-heat the mushrooms to very hot. To avoid excessive flaming, add less than ¼ cup of cognac. If you have a gas stove, tilt the pan to flame it, then immediately turn off the gas flame. (If you don't have a gas stove or the flame doesn't catch, use a long lighter.)

Complete the sauce:

When the cognac flames subside, add the remaining cognac, the lemon juice, and the "cream sauce" (cream, mustard, demi-glace, Worcestershire Sauce, hot sauce, and pepper). Stir on moderately high heat (a strong simmer) for 5 or 10 minutes as needed to thicken the cream sauce. Add most of the fresh chives or parsley (reserving the rest for garnish). Return the steaks to the frying pan, together with any accumulated juices. Turn the steaks to coat them in the sauce and let them simmer for just a minute to get them fully warmed. Serve immediately.

Plate:

Serve with mashed potatoes. Plate the steaks and mushroom sauce partially overlapping the potatoes. Garnish with the remaining parsley.

History:

Steak Diane is a dish of a pan-fried filet mignon with a sauce made from the seasoned pan juices, generally prepared in restaurants tableside and flambéed. It may be thought of as an tableside version of the classic French dish, Steak au Poivre.

Steak Diane does not appear in the classics of French cuisine. Instead, the dish is thought to have originated in upscale restaurants in London in the 1930s. (However, restaurants in cities ranging from Ostend, Belgium to Rio de Janeiro claim they were the originators.)

During the thirties, Lord Mountbatten (who was blown to pieces aboard his humble fishing boat by the Irish Republican Army in 1979) dined regularly at the Café de Paris in London where he routinely ordered 18 oysters on the half shell followed by Steak Diane.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

By the 1940s, the dish traveled to top-tier supper clubs in New York City, and soon spread across the U.S. It remained hugely popular through the flambé craze of the 1960s, but was considered dated and retro by the 1980s. It has enjoyed a mini-revival (with the emphasis on mini) in recent years, thanks to chefs like Emeril Lagasse, who re-introduced it when he opened his NOLA restaurants.

Etymology:

Although the dish is not French in origin, it borrows the French term "à la Diane." This is a style of preparing wild game in a pan sauce thickened with cream and heavily seasoned with pepper and truffles. The name refers to Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt.

OK. So, why isn't it called Steak Diana? This is because the Latin name for the Roman goddess is Diana (the same as in English). But the French version is Diane (pronounced DEE-ahn). By the time this peppery-cream-based cooking style crossed the English Channel to England (and the Atlantic to America), the name became simply "Steak Diane."

Sources of this recipe:

Though described in America as "continental cuisine," this is not a classic French dish. You will not find it, for example, in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* by Child, Bertholle & Beck. However, that book contains a similar dish, albeit non-flaming, named *Sauté de Boeuf à la Parisienne*.

A recipe for Steak Diane appears in *Julia Child & Company* (1979). See also Julia Child's recipe as presented in *Cuisine At Home* magazine 2/2007 (available online at www.cuisineathome.com. Julia's version, by the way, has no cream or brandy—which is odd, because those ingredients are usually considered foundational to this dish (and to Steak au Poivre).

Emeril Lagasse has a Steak Diane recipe that includes cream and brandy and is much closer to Steak au Poivre.

My recipe is substantially modified from these, and is far more complicated than the tableside versions done in old school steakhouses.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

TSAR NICHOLAS'S BEEF STROGANOFF

Ingredients	4 modest servings
Sauté or caramelize the shallots:	
Shallots (minced) – or substitute onions	1 cup minced (a lot)
Butter	2 Tbsp. (as needed)
Olive oil	1 Tbsp. (as needed)
Sugar (if caramelizing)	the tiniest sprinkle (⅛ tsp.)
Sauté the mushrooms:	
Mushrooms (wash, cut off stems, slice thick)	16 oz.
Nutmeg (preferably freshly grated)	¼ tsp.
Tarragon (dried is fine)	½ tsp.
Butter	3 Tbsp. (more as needed)
Olive oil	1 Tbs. (more as needed)
Slice the beef:	
Filet mignon	1 ¼ lb. (before trimming)
Seasoned flour for dredge:	
Flour	¾ cup
Sweet paprika	2 Tbsp.
Red pepper flakes	⅔ Tbsp.
Garlic powder	½ tsp.
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	½ tsp.
Pan-fry the breaded beef:	
Olive oil	Add to frying pan as needed
The roux and sauce:	
Butter	Add butter more only if needed for roux
Use the left-over seasoned flour	5 Tbsp.
Beef stock (or mushroom stock, if you have it)	3 cups (or even more if needed)
Veal or beef demi-glace (from Williams Sonoma)	2 Tbsp.
Dijon mustard	1 ¼ Tbsp.
Juice of fresh lemon	1 lemon or 2 Meyer lemons
Add the sour cream last:	
Sour cream	16 oz.
Boil the noodles:	
Instead of the traditional egg noodles I use pappardelle or fettuccini nests. Great options are: De Cecco Pappardelle no. 101; Rustichella D'Abruzzo fettuccine nests from the Co-op; Delverde tagliatelle nests. I do <u>not</u> recommend "fresh" pasta for stroganoff. If all else fails, use egg noodles.	10 oz. fresh noodles
Plate with paprika:	
Paprika	Sprinkle on top

Equipment

If cooking for 4 or fewer, everything may be cooked in one very large frying pan. I prefer a copper pan. For a large batch, you may use a large Dutch oven (e.g., Le Creuset) for the final combination.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions

The shallots:

Sauté shallots in butter and olive oil on moderate heat for about 10 minutes. Better yet, if you have time, caramelize them (20 to 60 minutes). This is the same as a sauté, except it is mostly at low heat. Near the end of caramelization, add a tiny sprinkle of sugar and a little butter to aid the caramelization process. Remove the shallots to a bowl and set aside.

The mushrooms:

Sauté the mushrooms in butter and olive oil with some nutmeg and tarragon (about 15 minutes). Move to a bowl and set aside.

Slice the beef:

Slice the filet across the grain into slices ¼ of an inch thick. If some of the pieces are huge, cut them in half. You want medallions of beef, not strips or little pieces.

Blend the flour & spices for dredge:

Mix the flour, paprika, red pepper flakes, garlic powder, and salt & pepper in a large bowl.

Dredge the beef:

Dredge the filet medallions in the flour mixture. You may toss them into the bowl of seasoned flour. Set aside the dusted steaks on clean plates. Keep them separated; don't pile them up.

Take a break:

You may proceed directly to the cooking, or you may pause, relax, and socialize. Or you may prefer to retreat to your study to study the New Testament, Quran, Torah, or Book of Mormon. The last steps cannot be undertaken until you are mentally ready and appropriately inspired. Ideally, the shallots & mushrooms are in a warming oven. The beef may be left on the counter for a while. Don't put it in the fridge. It should not be cold when it hits the pan.

If needed, dredge the beef a second time:

If the beef has been left on the counter for 20 minutes or longer, it will have absorbed all of the flour—which needs to be fixed. Throw them back into the bowl of flour mix; remove after a quick toss in the flour.

Pan-fry the beef:

Add olive oil to the frying pan (without cleaning after the sauté). You want a thin layer of oil (about ¼ inch deep). Heat the oil to high temperature (but not crazy high). Sauté the dusted filets (in batches if making for more than two people). Sauté them for 2 minutes or so (1 minute on each side). They should be on the rare side. They will continue to cook after you transfer them to a clean plate. Don't put them in the warming oven, or they will be too well done.

After cooking, you may cut these into strips—so that the dish can be eaten with a fork. That is an aesthetic question for you to decide.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Boil the noodles:

Now might be a good time to start cooking the noodles in a ton of boiling water. You may salt it very lightly, if you like. Drain when tender. Save some pasta water just in case you need to moisten the noodles later.

Make the sour cream sauce:

In the same frying pan, make a roux of the leftover melted butter/oil (adding more butter only if necessary) and some flour. You want a 1:1 ratio of oil/butter to flour. Cook the roux 3 minutes to eliminate the raw flour taste. Gradually add the beef stock as needed to make a very thin gravy. Add the demi-glace, mustard, and fresh lemon juice.

Finally, add the mountain of sour cream. Stir this together until all has gotten quite warm. Add more broth if needed to keep sour cream sauce from getting too thick.

Add the shallots, mushrooms, and cooked beef:

When the sour cream sauce is hot, return the shallots and mushrooms to the pan and re-heat. Finally, add the cooked filet and bring it all back to a hot temperature. Just long enough to warm—don't overcook that beautifully medium rare steak.

Plate:

Serve the stroganoff over egg noodles or fettuccini. Top with a sprinkle of paprika (for show).

Notes

Stroganoff is often made with inexpensive cuts of beef like chuck roast or round steak. The more expensive cuts make a world of difference. Some go with rib eye, sirloin, or steak tips. But to me this dish is about texture as much as flavor. We go with the filet mignon, preferably prime.

It is also fabulous with chicken. See recipe for Chicken Stroganoff on page 95.

History

Back in the day, every Russian palace was staffed by French chefs. Not surprisingly, this dish is a marriage of tastes: Russian (the sour cream) and French (the mustard). It is attributed to a French chef working for Russian General (and mathematics professor) named Count Pavel Alexandrovich Stroganov (born in 1774). The Stroganoffs were the richest family in Russia. The Count was born in Paris, when his parents were living at the court of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The Russians traditionally served this dish (originally made without mushrooms) with fried shoestring potatoes. Following the revolution in 1917, many Russians fled to China, where the dish is still popular. The Chinese served it with rice and then (brilliantly) with noodles. The iconic Russian Tea Room in NYC popularized serving it with rice or noodles in the 1930s. Noodles are now the standard in the U.S. It became popular in the U.S. when servicemen returned from Europe in World War II, with peak popularity in the 1950s and 60s.

My recipe is richer, heavier, and more complex that the traditional, far more understated versions served in authentic Russian restaurants. We each have our ways.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ROULADEN DER WIESBADEN

Ingredients	6-8 servings (about 18 rouladens) (your hearty eaters will eat three each)
Bacon filling:	
Thick cut bacon	1 ½ lb.
Vidalia or other sweet onions (medium-fine dice)	2 medium-large onions
Dill pickle relish	16 oz.
Crystal hot sauce	1 ½ Tbsp. (that's a lot, but the heat dissipates)
Paprika	2 ½ Tbsp.
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	1 tsp
Beef roll-ups:	
Top round steak — sliced thin: 0.5 cm (a tad thinner than ¼ inch)	4 lbs.
Dijon mustard	16 oz. (as needed for rolls)
Braise:	
Beef stock	48 oz. or more (e.g., three 16 oz. cans) (use as much as needed to cover)
Gravy:	
Butter	¾ stick
Flour	½ cup
Reserved sauce from rouladen	3 cups or more
Sour cream	½ cup
Juice of lemon	1 lemon

Butcher: Have your butcher slice the top round steak. Make sure it's as thin as specified above, or else you'll be pounding it with a meat tenderizer to make it thinner, which takes forever. Note: You can use bottom round, if top round is unavailable. But top round is much more tender.

Equipment: I prefer a large copper frying pan. Cast iron is also great. Use it for browning the onion, for browning the rouladens, and for the gravy.

For the braise (in oven), this quantity fits easily into a very large red Dutch oven.

If oven-frying the bacon (which I prefer), use the bottom of a broiling pan or a jelly roll pan (no need to use the slotted part, which is a bother to clean).

Note: If serving with German sweet & sour cabbage, you may prepare enough onion and bacon for both recipes.

Rouladen with mashed potatoes and German sweet & sour cabbage

Source: Based on a recipe from Fraű Margie Wauge (pronounced "VO-ga") in Wiesbaden, Germany. (Margie was the Adams family cook when they lived in Germany in 1961-63). I have made significant changes to her recipe, particularly to the gravy. Mine is richer and creamier than the authentic version.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions:

Oven-fry the bacon

Lay out thick bacon strips in a large broiling pan. Bake at 350º for 25-30 minutes (barely cooked and chewy). Remove to a paper towel. Reserve the grease. Cut the cooked bacon into thin strips (¼ inch). (See "How to oven-fry bacon" on page 14.)

Fry the onion

Sauté the diced onion with the reserved bacon grease in large frying pan with some bacon grease until deeply golden. Remove the onion, but SAVE THE PRECIOUS BACON GREASE for browning the rouladens.

Combine filling ingredients in bowl

Combine all filling ingredients in a mixing bowl: fried onion, bacon, pickle relish, hot sauce, paprika, salt, and pepper.

Make the beef rolls

Note: The tricky part is to put on just enough bacon mixture on each rouladen so that you use it all up, but don't run out. You may want to count how many heaping tablespoons of filling you have (moving it from one bowl to another) and compare that with the number of rouladen slices you have. That will let you know how generous each dollop of filling can be.

Note: Depending on the butcher, the beef slices are often triangle shaped. If so, put the mustard and filling on the skinny end.

Lay out a piece of beef. Cut off any gristle or fat and put on a side plate to cook for the dogs. Smear about ½ to ⅔ of the slice with mustard, then spread around a heaping tablespoon of the bacon mixture over the portion with the mustard. Roll it up. (Leaving the widest portion without mustard or bacon mixture makes it easier roll up so that it sticks together.)

Brown the beef rolls

Brown the rouladens in the reserved bacon grease in the same frying pans. Leave room between each rouladen to improve browning (five rouladens in a large frying pan). Brown on two sides. If using high heat, this will just take a minute or two per side. (I use my super burner at 2/3 max.) After each batch, scrape out any filling that fell into the pan; save it and add to the Dutch oven.

Combine beef & broth in Dutch oven

Place rouladens in a large Dutch oven. Add in any stuffing that come out in the frying pan or any leftover stuffing that didn't fit into the rouladens. Pour in the beef stock to completely cover the rouladens. (You want a lot, which will be used for the gravy.) Cover with lid or tin foil. This can be done ahead of time—even overnight, and put into fridge.

Braise in oven (which may be the next day)

Cover and bake at 325° for 2 ½ hours. If you put it in cold from the fridge, add another 45 minutes cooking time. When done, the rouladens should be very tender.

Gently remove the rouladens to a serving platter. Reserve the broth that it was cooked in. Put the platter of rouladens in a warming oven while the gravy is made.

Note: If the rouladens are done cooking well before being served, move the covered pot to a warming oven for up to another hour (the rouladens will continue to cook).

The Gravy

Make the gravy just before serving (using same frying pan). Begin with a roux of butter and flour. Cook 2 minutes. Gradually add the reserved cooking broth as needed (including any tasty little pieces of stuff from the pot of rouladens). The braising broth is powerfully flavorful. After taste testing, you may want to switch over and finish making the gravy using beef or chicken broth. Near the end, add juice of lemon and sour cream. All told, you will probably use 4 to 5 cups of liquid.

Plate

Plate the rouladens and top with lots of gravy (or allow guests to serve their own).

Serve with

Goes great with mashed potatoes, which also love the gravy. Or you may serve with spätzle or "fake spätzle"—casarecce pasta with butter (twisted pasta tubes from Sicily).

This dish begs to be served with German Sweet & Sour Cabbage.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

WIENER SCHNITZEL OR VEAL MILANESE

Ingredients	2 people
Pound the cutlets:	
Veal scaloppini (Sofia Farms veal from Albertsons is excellent), Pork cutlets, or Chicken cutlets	0.9 lbs.
The crumb/panko mixture:	
Homemade breadcrumbs	¾ cup
Panko	¾ cup
Salt	1 tsp.
Pepper	½ tsp.
Parmigiano-Reggiano (only for veal Milanese)	2 Tbsp.
Additional items for the breading process:	
Flour	½ cup
Eggs	2 eggs
Paprika (only for schnitzel)—added to beaten eggs	A pinch
Cream (only for schnitzel)—added to beaten eggs	1 ½ Tbsp.
Fry the cutlets:	
Canola, corn, or other vegetable oil	about ½ inch or enough to "float" the veal scallops
Olive oil (add a little for veal Milanese)	About 3 Tbsp.
Butter (add some for Wiener schnitzel)	About 3 Tbsp.
Alternatively, and best of all, use nothing but clarified butter!	
Options for serving:	
Classic Wiener Schnitzel (Viennese style):	
Fresh lemon slices	
Capers (old school)	
Schnitzel mit Preiselbeeren:	
Swedish lingonberries	
Fresh lemon slices	
A la Holstein:	
Fried egg	
Anchovies	
Capers	
Jägerschnitzel (Hunter style):	
Brown mushroom gravy	
Zigeunerschnitzel (Gypsy style):	
Creamy paprika gravy with red peppers and onion	
Veal Milanese:	
Fresh lemon wedges	
Pasta on the side, with aglio e olio or a light tomato sauce	

Equipment: For breadcrumbs, use a Cuisinart with the slicing blade. For schnitzels, use a large frying pan (or even a le Creuset Dutch oven) that is deep enough to allow you to shake schnitzels in the oil.

Pound the cutlets:
Cut off any non-tender fat from cutlets or scaloppini.
One at time, place them in a large Ziploc bag and pound with the flat side of a meat mallet until quite thin (less than ¼ inch). Set aside.

Make breadcrumbs:
Coarsely chop good French bread (with crust on) into cubes. Pulse it in the Cuisinart with the slicing blade long enough to get very fine crumbs. There is no need to dry them. (These freeze well for future use!)

The crumb mixture set-up:

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

In a small mixing bowl, combine the fresh breadcrumbs, the panko, and the salt and pepper.
Pour some of the crumb mixture onto a plate.
Put flour on another plate.
Finally, beat the eggs in another bowl.

Bread the cutlets:

Use tongs (so you don't have to constantly wash eggy flour goo off your hands). Dredge each cutlet in flour, then dip in the eggs long enough to become fully coated. Let the egg mixture drain off before laying them in the crumb mixture. Flip them back and forth in the crumbs, gently pressing in the crumbs. Don't stack the finished slices; spread them out on plates or a jelly roll pan. As you make these, use the bowl of fresh crumb mixture to replenish the plate as needed. This avoids getting the crumb mixture goopy with egg during the breading process.

Optional: Let them rest:

Before frying them, you may allow the breaded cutlets to rest an hour in the refrigerator. (Some recipes say a pause allowing them to "set up" is helpful, but most recipes call for immediate frying.)

Fry the cutlets:

Fry the cutlets in large frying pan with a generous amount of oil and butter. Should be enough to nearly cover the cutlets—about ½ inch deep. Once they start frying, the oil mixture will foam up around them. Fry at moderately high temperature, not super-hot—you want them to cook through before browning. Shake the pan to keep the schnitzels "floating" in the oil, and also ladle some oil on top with a spoon. Fry no more than two at a time to avoid crowding and to keep oil hot. Fry until golden brown (roughly 1½ minutes per side). (See Technique discussion below.)
Remove the cooked schnitzels to a plate covered with a paper towel. As each batch is done, keep the schnitzels warm in 240° oven for up to 15 minutes before serving. You may stack them with layers with paper towels between the schnitzels.

Etymology: The German word "schnitzel" is a diminutive of "sniz," meaning "slice." It refers to a small slice or cutlet of meat. The city of Vienna is called "Wien" in Austria. Wiener is a name for a long elegant hot dog known as the Vienna sausage. It bears no resemblance to the little things in a can found in the USA (which we use as pill pockets for our dogs). Wiener has another colloquial meaning, as Carlos Danger can explain. Neither meaning is employed here. Wiener schnitzel is simply schnitzel in the Viennese style—which is its purest and simplest (in contrast to heavier German versions with sauce).
The meat: Under Austrian law, a schnitzel may not be called Wiener schnitzel (Austria's national dish) unless it is made with veal. But many Austrians and Germans prefer the pork version (schweineschnitzel).
History: Some argue that Wiener schnitzel originated in northern Italy, which showcases its *cotoletta alla Milanese* (veal Milanese). According to a hotly disputed legend, it was not until 1857 that Austrian Field Marshall Joseph Radetzky brought the dish back to Vienna from the Italian territories of the Habsburg Empire. Given that the Habsburgs ruled both places, this is really no more than a family argument. German-Americans living in the Hill Country of Texas modified the dish into what we call chicken fried steak. The French have a version called côtelette de veau. In 1899, a fancy restaurant in Tokyo (Renga-tei, which still operates in the elite Ginza district) did a twist on the French version, creating what is now the enormously popular dish known as tonkatsu (which the Koreans call donkaseu). Egypt has a version of schnitzel which they call "frakh pané" (if made with chicken) or "boftik" (if made with veal). It may be found in Namibia, which was colonized by Germany. Iran serves a version known as "shenitsel" (thought to have arrived during the World Wars) that is thicker and made with more breading. In Israel, you may find a turkey or chicken version (a recipe modified by Ashkenazi Jews in the early years when veal was unavailable).
Veal Milanese: Wiener schnitzel is virtually identical to *veal Milanese*. Traditionally, the Italian version (at high end restaurants) is based on a bone-on veal chop, pounded thin. The Italians sometimes add a bit of Parmigiano Reggiano and spices to the breadcrumbs. And the Italian version may be fried in olive oil, rather than butter and vegetable oil. It may be served with an arugula salad or a side of angel hair *aglio e olio* (garlic and olive oil).
Tonkatsu: For tonkatsu, use a ¾" boneless loin chop with a thin fat cap. Cut slices into the fat cap to prevent the chops from buckling. Unlike the recipes above, do not pound it thinner. The meat is later sliced, leaving the breading around the edges. Bread with salt, flour, egg, and panko (instead of breadcrumbs). Deep fry in vegetable oil only (no butter). (Some chefs prefer a shallow fry.) Test to be

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

sure it is cooked through. Place cooked chops vertically (use a taco stand or even an English toast holder) to let them drain and rest for 5 minutes. Serve sliced over white rice, with tonkatsu sauce on the side. The Japanese also serve thinly shredded cabbage on the side. Place shredded cabbage in salad spinner with ice and cold water. When ice melts and cabbage is cold and crisp, spin out the water. (See *Cook's Illustrated* July/Aug 2024.)

Technique: A true Wiener schnitzel is made with a puffy, wrinkly breading that lifts off the meat and looks like a Shar Pei dog. This result is difficult to achieve. It requires very fine, lighter breadcrumbs (no Panko), a little cream with the egg, and not pressing the breadcrumbs into the meat. The cutlets should "float" on the bubbling oil and be shaken with a pan-swivel technique the Germans call "souffieren." Meanwhile, oil/butter from the pan is ladled on top with a spoon. Turning them over more than once is permissible. Brent Southcombe sent me a note saying that the trick is to use clarified butter, which is indeed called for in the traditional recipes (along with lard and duck fat).

Serve with: Wiener schnitzel is traditionally served with a German-style cucumber or bibb lettuce salad. It may also be served with spätzle. Real spätzle is too hard to make, so we serve it with Karen's oven fried potatoes or Potatoes Anna. Switch to angel hair pasta for veal Milanese.

DaVinci's secret: Gino Vuolo, may he rest in peace, made the best Veal Milanese I've ever tasted. I have no clue how he achieved his delicate, almost soft, breading. He then topped it with thin tomato slices—a taste I eventually acquired. He took his secret recipe with him. DaVinci's Italian Restaurant in Eagle also makes an exceptional veal Milanese. It is not on the menu, but the former owner/chef (Tony Piotter) used to make it for me by request. I persuaded him to reveal that he makes his breading with a combination of sour dough breadcrumbs and crushed corn flakes! And he cooks the veal in a combination of 80% vegetable oil and 20% olive oil (with no butter). Fantastic!

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHICKEN FRIED STEAK

Ingredients	2 servings
The steaks	
Cube steak	1 pound
Salt (to pre-salt the steak)	a sprinkle
The flour mixture	
Flour	1 cup
Baking powder	1 tsp.
Baking soda	1 tsp.
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	½ tsp.
Cayenne	
The liquid mixture	
Eggs	1 egg
Whole milk or buttermilk if you have it!	¾ cup
Crystal hot sauce	1 Tbsp.
Canola oil, peanut oil, Crisco, or extra virgin olive oil	Enough to cover pan ¼ inch deep
The gravy	
Pan drippings and	
Cayenne	
Garlic powder	

Equipment*:*

Everything is done in a large frying pan. Cast iron is nice for Deep South tradition, but not required.

Directions:

Pound and salt the meat

Place the cube steak in a large zip-lock bag and pound it with the spiked end of the mallet to make it thinner—a little thicker than ¼ inch.

Spread them out on plates or something, and sprinkle a little salt on them.

Prepare the flour mixture

In a bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and pepper.

In another bowl, combine the beaten egg, milk, and hot sauce.

Bread the steaks

Dredge each steak in the flour mixture, then in the egg/milk mixture, and then in the flour again.

Source: My first attempt at this dish (3/14/2021) was inspired by a column in the Idaho Statesman by Jeanne Huff published on 1/10/2021. She described the dish she learned from her mother, who, according to family lore, secured a marriage proposal from husband after serving him this dish. Heanne's recipe, curiously, uses saltine crackers—crushed with a rolling pin (instead of flour or breadcrumbs). I have not given that a try yet. It departs from tradition, but who knows? Maybe that really is the secret of marriage.

Origin: The Austrians and the Italians argue over which came first—Wiener schnitzel or veal Milanese (while the Japanese have their Tonkatsu). Meanwhile, German-Americans living in the Hill Country of Texas modified the dish into what we call chicken fried steak.

Notes: Some recipes say you may use round steak instead of cube steak. We used cube steak on 3/14/2021 and it was fabulous.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SHEPHERD'S PIE

"So good, you'll wish you were a shepherd."

Ingredients	3 servings
The Vegetables:	
Onion (chopped medium-fine)	1 onion
Green, yellow or red pepper (chopped medium-fine)	½ pepper
Butter	2 Tbsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	A good sprinkle
Garlic (jar is OK)	1 tsp.
The Hash:	
Your choice of beef (typically leftovers): Prime rib (if you are so lucky) or Roast beef or Corned beef (which you can make yourself or get at the deli) or Morton's of Omaha fully cooked "Beef Pot Roast with Gravy" (from Costco), or Hereford brand of corned beef in a tin	1 lb. (after trim)
Crystal hot sauce	A good splash
Your choice of seasoning: Organics brand Cajun seasoning, or Kinder's brand Prime Rib seasoning, or Paul Prudhomme's "Meat Magic" or Emeril's Essence, or Grill Mates Montreal Steak Seasoning	A generous sprinkle
Mashed Potatoes:	
see separate recipe (including sour cream, whole milk, seasoned salt & pepper)	3 lb. baking potatoes or Yukon golds
The Pie:	
Fresh corn on the cob. Boil for 40 minutes, then cut off the kernels with a knife. Or frozen corn or succotash	3 ears of corn (about 1 cup) 10 oz. package
Cheddar cheese and/or Pepper Jack (grated)	8 oz.

Equipment: All the sautéing can be done in a large frying pan. If you use a Dutch oven to boil the potatoes, use it as your covered baking dish for the shepherd's pie.

Sauté the vegetables:

Chop onion and green pepper. Brown onion and green pepper in olive oil and butter, adding a sprinkle of chili flakes. If cooking together, give onion 3 minute head start. Then the green pepper for another couple minutes. Better yet, caramelize the onions for 30 minutes separately. At the end, add the garlic on high heat for a minute or two.

Prepare hash:

Cut the beef into tiny pieces (not necessary if using canned corned beef)
Add beef and your choice of seasonings to sautéed onions & green pepper in the frying pan.
Brown for another few minutes until everything is perfect.

Prepare mashed potatoes:

Meanwhile, boil potatoes in lots of salted water.
Drain in colander and return to pot.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Mash in the butter, sour cream, milk, seasoned salt, and pepper. Go light on the salt; everything else is salty. They should be quite wet (milky) before going into the pie.

Build the pie:

Arrange mashed potatoes in a baking dish, or leave them in the pot used to make them. For a nice presentation, make a “well” in the potatoes (an indentation made with a spoon). But if making a big batch, just make a flat layer.
Sprinkle potatoes with corn or succotash.
Place hash in “well” or distribute on top of potatoes.
Top with grated cheese.
Cover and bake at 350˚ for 30 minutes (assuming everything was warm going into oven).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHILI CON CARNE Y POBLANOS ASADOS

Ingredients	5 servings
Prep the chiles (optional, but wonderful)	
Poblano chiles	4 ½ poblanos (1 lb.)
Olive oil	Drizzle on peppers
Barely brown the beef	
Ground beef (80% lean, or Wagyu if you can get it)	2 lbs.
Salt & pepper	
Sauté the onions, jalapeños, and garlic	
Yellow onion (medium chop)	2 large onions
Jalapeños (fine chop)	1 or 2 jalapeños
Chopped garlic	2 Tbsp.
Good olive oil	As needed for sauté
Combine in pot with spices & beer	
Chipotle chile powder	1 Tbsp.
Ground cumin	1 ½ Tbsp.
Salt	1 tsp.
Beer (Mexican or other good beer, dark is nice)	2 beers (24 oz.) add more later if needed
Canned chili beans (or kidney beans or pinto beans)	40 oz.
Canned diced tomatoes and green chilies (or fire-roasted tomatoes), undrained (include juice)	25 oz.
Further seasoning of your choice: Crystal hot sauce, Red Duck brand Korean taco sauce, other hot sauce, and/or dried chili flakes	1 Tbsp. (optional)
Flour	1 Tbsp. (More may be added later if needed to thicken)

Equipment:

Frying pan for browning the beef, onions, jalapeños, and garlic. Large Dutch oven for chili, but you'll need a large pot for the 10-person batch (which will fit in the oven if you take out the top rack).

Directions:

Prep the poblanos (70 minutes) (this may be done the day before)

Preheat oven to 350, then switch to the broiler. Double line a large jelly roll or other pan with tinfoil. (This is critical to clean-up.) Lay out the whole poblano peppers. Poke them once with a fork to prevent them from exploding. Drizzle them with olive oil. Broil under high heat for 10 minutes until they turn really black and scary. Flip them over, drizzle a wee tiny bit more olive oil, and broil for another 7 minutes. Promptly remove chiles from pan and place them in one a Ziploc bag while they are still hot. Let sit for 30 minutes while the chiles sweat. (This makes removing the skin easier.)

Remove the chiles from the bag. Gently peel off the blackened skin and discard, revealing the marvelous flesh of the peppers. Pull out the stems, seeds, and any stringy stuff. Gently rinse them under a faucet in the sink to remove the last of the seeds and any stray pieces of blackened skin. Dice them up in large pieces.

This can be done the day before, and then stored in the Ziploc bag.

Note: If things go wrong and you can't get the skins off, don't worry. Just chop the whole poblanos up very fine.

Brown the hamburger (10 minutes)

Put the ground beef in skillet and season generously with salt & pepper. Barely brown the hamburger, stirring constantly on high heat. (Perhaps 10 minutes. This step is mostly to get rid of the grease, not to cook it thoroughly. It has plenty of time later to cook.) Put in browned beef in colander to drain the grease.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Sauté the onions, jalapeños, and garlic (30 minutes)
Wash the jalapeños. Cut off the stem and discard. Cut each jalapeños in half; remove seeds and ribs. Chop them finely.
Sauté the onion, jalapeños, and garlic in frying pan with good olive oil until soft (10 minutes or so, or long and slow (40 minutes) if you have time to caramelize them). Some jalapeños are much hotter than others. Depending on your audience, go easy on the jalapeños, and add more later, if needed. The seeds are the hottest, but even that heat will dissipate in the cooking process.
Combine everything in pot (3 hours)
In a large Dutch oven or Calphalon pot, combine everything: the beef, onion & jalapeños mixture, chili beans, tomatoes, beer, seasonings, and a bit of flour. With all the beer and other liquids, this will be very soupy. Don't worry, this will cook down and thicken slowly over time.
Heat in 345° oven, uncovered, for 3 hours. Stir every 20 minutes or so. Add a cover if it gets too thick. After 3 hours, it may be kept longer (covered) in a warm oven. Check and correct the seasoning/heat after a while. (If no room in oven, the whole thing may be done on low heat on stovetop.)
Plate it
Optional: Some serve this with grated cheddar and chopped raw onion. Some people offer chopped cilantro.
Definitely serve with cornbread. (A simple boxed version like Famous Dave's, Jiffy, or Marie Callender's will suffice.)
The chili can be served with macaroni and cheese, known as Chili Mac, which is highly recommended if you're from Missouri.

Poblano Notes*:*
Preparing the poblanos is the hardest part. The poblanos can be skipped altogether if time does not permit, but you will be so sorry.
One can char these chiles in the oven (as called for in this recipe). I find this easier and more predictable. But real Mexican cooks, it seems, do not do this. Indeed, when I worked for Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Union in the 1970s, I recall the cooks (always women) invariably roasted the chiles, one by one, over a direct flame (or other intense heat) on the stove top. It takes just a minute or so each.

Spelling lesson*:*
Is it chile or chili? There is inconsistency in use of the "i" and the "e," even by authoritative sources. (Wikipedia insists on using "i" for everything.) The best rule is: Chile (with an "e") is used for various peppers used in cooking. (And, of course, it is a beautiful country.) Some authentic Mexican cookbooks also use chile for all of the dishes made with these peppers. But it is more common in the U.S. to use chili (with an "i") to describe a dish made with chiles and other spices. For example, chili verde or chili con carne. Likewise, chile powder is from solely chile peppers, while chili powder is a combination of chiles and other spices, notably, cumin.
By the way, etymology is the study of the origin of words. It should not be confused with entomology, which is the study of insects.

Source*:*
The poblano part comes from www.pioneerwoman.com. The chili part is largely Karen's old standby recipe. The beer comes from www.myrecipies.com. Karen used to make this with "Stinking Good" brand chili sauce from Costco. We switched to real poblanos when they stopped carrying that in 2014. The poblano version is even better.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

STANDING RIB ROAST

Ingredients	6 or more servings
The roast:	
Standing (bone-in) rib roast (small end preferred). Or: Use a boneless rib roast. Or: Costco makes a "seasoned" bone-in rib roast that is already dry-rubbed with garlic inserted.	6 lbs.
Salt cure:	
Salt	1 cup
Bed of seasonings:	
Garlic (entire head cut in half, no need to trim)	2 heads
Onion (entire onion cut in half, no need to trim)	1 or 2 onions
Rosemary (fresh)	1 package
Thyme (fresh)	1 package
Olive oil	a drizzle
Mustard paste:	
Choice of mustard: Inglehofer stone ground mustard, or other good country-style German mustard	⅓ cup
Garlic (fresh or from jar)	3 cloves or 1 tsp.
Olive oil	½ cup
Kinder's (brand) Prime Rib seasoning	¼ cup
Or concoct your own seasons with: Rosemary (fresh or dried) Thyme (fresh or dried) and/or Paul Prudhomme's blackened beef seasoning, or Spade L Ranch Beef Marinade and Seasoning, or Cajun's Choice Blackened Seasoning, or McCormick Montreal Steak Seasoning	
The crust (very optional):	
Panko	6 oz.
Olive oil	2 oz. (to moisten)
A*u Jus Sauce*:	
Low sodium beef broth	2 ¼ cups
Dry red wine	½ cup
Kitchen Bouquet brand browning & seasoning sauce	
Veal or beef demi-glace (from Williams Sonoma)	2 Tbsp.
Butter	4 Tbsp.
Corn starch	A touch, only if needed
Horseradish sauce	
Sour cream	¾ cup
Prepared horseradish (Beaver brand cream horseradish is great)	¼ cup
Lemon juice	4 Tbsp.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

The Salt-Cure

Do not remove the layer of fat. Rub ½ cup of salt all over the roast and let stand for 10 minutes. Repeat with another ½ cup of the salt. Set a rack over a baking sheet. Transfer the roast to the rack and refrigerate uncovered for 12 to 24 hours. When done, hold the roast in the sink and rinse off the salt.
Let roast warm fully to room temperature (2 to 3 hours) before cooking.

Bed of seasonings

(optional)
Layer the bottom of the roasting pan with garlic, onion, thyme & rosemary. Drizzle with olive oil.

Initial Browning

Place beef on rack over a roasting pan (fat side up).
Place into 500º oven for 15 minutes or so to brown. Remove from oven. Let it cool for several minutes (cool enough to be handled when applying the mustard paste).

The Mustard Paste

Combine ingredients for mustard paste in bowl (mustard, seasonings, garlic & olive oil).
Rub mustard paste all over the roast (top, bottom, sides) after it has browned in hot oven.

Very Optional Panko Crust

If you like, you may add a panko crust. First moisten the panko with olive oil. Then cover the roast entirely, pressing the panko mixture to form a thin crust on top of the mustard paste.

Slow roasting

Turn temperature down and roast at 225° (this is not a typo). This may take 2 ¾ hours for a 6 lb. roast (not counting the initial browning). A 16 lb. roast could take 6-8 hours! Goal is internal temperature of 125° for medium rare or 130° for medium. My perfect point is 134º. This will give you some red slices in the middle and the ends well done. Remove from oven, tent with tin foil, and allow to rest for 45 minutes. As it rests, temperature will continue to rise a bit (but not much IF done in a slow oven).

Au Jus

(Note: If you are making Yorkshire pudding, reserve most of the drippings.)
Put roasting pan on stove with drippings over medium heat.
If you added "bed of seasonings" to the roasting pan, leave them in throughout this process. They will come out at the end (with a strainer).
If you don't have much drippings, don't panic. This can be made in a separate frying pan.
Add beef broth and wine. Deglaze (stir to scrape up browned bits).
Add whisk in demi-glace, Kitchen Bouquet, and butter. Stir and simmer 15 to 20 minutes to reduce. (Only if needed, add a little corn starch to thicken to the point of silkiness.)
Pour through a strainer into gravy pitcher.

Creamed horseradish sauce

Combine sour cream, horse radish and lemon juice. This may be done a few hours in advance and kept in fridge.

Plate

Serve with au jus sauce and horseradish sauce. Goes nicely with potatoes Anna and vegetables de la mode.

Quantity:

In a restaurant, a traditional "he-man" serving is a full pound (very thick slice). A ladies' cut might be half that.

Standing:

A "standing" rib roast is a bone-in roast that is cooked "standing" (vertically) with the bone structure on the bottom so that the meat does not touch the pan. A bone-in roast has better flavor, but is also more expensive (bones cost as much as the meat). When carving, you must cut off the bones first, before slicing the meat. A compromise is to ask

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

your butcher to cut the bone off and tie it back on to the roast with twine. This makes it much easier to cut and serve, while preserving some or all of the bone flavor.

Prime grading:

According to the USDA, a "prime rib roast" does not have to be a "prime" cut (based on grading). It is called prime because it comes from the "rib primal" section of beef. Depending on the degree of marbling, the meat may be also be labeled "prime" (the most expensive) or "choice." Thus, if you are served "prime rib" at a restaurant, it may not be prime grade.

Prime rib:

Prime rib roast (aka standing rib roast) includes meat from ribs numbered 6 through 12. "Chuck beef" begins at the 5th rib—the larger end, while the "loin" begins at the 13th rib. The best prime rib is the small end (rib 12), closest to the loin.

Ribeye:

Ribeye steaks (for grilling, not roasting) are cut from the same meat—a standing rib. A ribeye steak is typically boned and most of the fat is removed.

Bed of seasonings:

Several modern recipes urge the use of a bed of seasonings (garlic, rosemary, etc.). They say this eliminates the need for a rack in the roasting pan, but I use a rack anyway. I'm doubtful these seasonings really change the flavor of the roast that much. But I love the idea of them going into the au jus at the end!

Panko crust:

A non-traditional option is to add a panko crust to the rib roast. This seems to have peaked in popularity during the early 2000s. It's tasty, but also a bit distracting. And the crumbs will fall in the broiling pan and soak up your precious juices. So, consider this an option, but not necessarily the best option. If you do a panko crust, you cannot do the reverse sear. The panko goes on after the browning and before the roasting.

Garlic:

Many recipes call for inserting cloves of garlic into the raw roast before cooking. This is a fine thing to do. The only reason I don't include it in this recipe is the extra work.

Horseradish:

The horseradish sauce can be made with pure "prepared" horseradish or a cream version (which is easier to find in the store). If you are truly adventurous and have 10 minutes to spare, you may make your own prepared horseradish. Take a horseradish root (which looks like a gnarly 10-inch-long king crab leg). Use a vegetable peeler to remove the brown part and get down to the white part. Cut the white part into small cubes. Blend the horseradish in a food processor with a couple splashes of water. Add vinegar a teaspoon at a time to stabilize the hotness level. Transfer to a covered jar. This is not a joke: This exercise produces intense eye-burning gasses. Undertake only in a well-ventilated room. You may want to wear goggles.

Reverse sear:

The standard approach for a rib roast is to start in a very hot oven to brown and then finish in a slow oven. This approach is used here. Some fancy new chefs now encourage a "reverse sear" in which you start at 225 or 250 degrees, cook almost to desired temperature. Let it rest thoroughly. And then return to a very hot oven at the last minute for 10 minutes or so to brown. According to these self-proclaimed experts, this results in more "even" cooking (more consistently cooked meat, without the browning on the outer layer).

Source:

This recipe is based on trial-and-error, with strong influences from *Joy of Cooking*, *Bon Appetite* (12/2002), *Food and Wine* (12/2013), and various internet recipes, notably Joshua Weismann. All the recipes disagree. This is an amalgam that I largely made up. The salt-curing (which I strongly recommend) comes from a recipe in www.foodandwine.com (and various other sources).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

YORKSHIRE PUDDING

Ingredients	12 servings
Eggs	3 large eggs
Whole milk	1 ½ cup
Flour	1 cup
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	Pinch
Chives	
Vegetable oil (or pan drippings)	¼ cup

Preheat oven to 450°.
In medium bowl, mix eggs and milk. Stir in the flour, salt & pepper, and chives.
Beat to make satiny smooth.
Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.
Brush the empty pudding cups with oil. Heat them (empty) in the oven.
Add ¼ cup batter to each cup (about half full).
Bake until golden brown, 15-25 minutes.
Remove carefully to a serving dish, and serve immediately.

Source: Based on an old recipe from Fran Adams (clipped out of a newspaper). I have slightly modified it based on other recipes, including a Rachel Ray internet recipe.

Equipment: I have a Yorkshire pudding rack, which is splendid. You may also make this in muffin tins or individual ramekins. Some recipes even all for making one big pudding in 9”x13” baking dish and then cutting it up.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

VEAL PICCATA (SEE PICCATA ON PAGE 143)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PORK

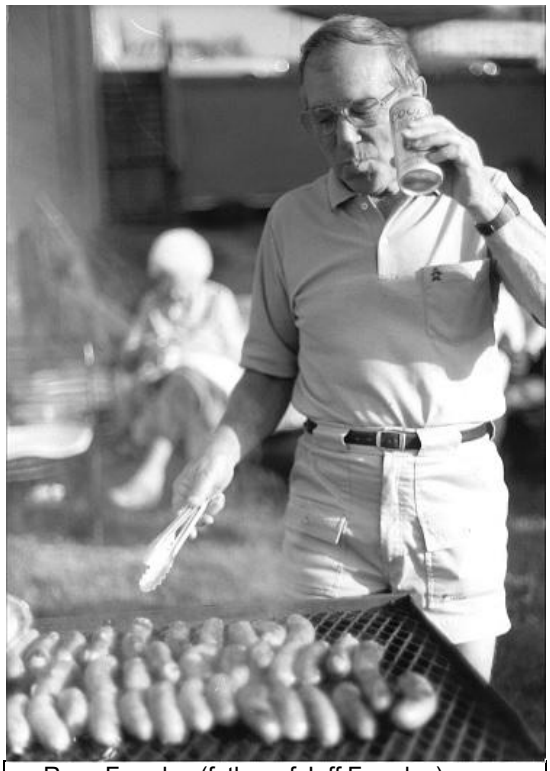
© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

RUSS FEREDAY'S BRATWURSTS

Ingredients	2 servings
Sauté:	
Onions (coarsely sliced, do not chop)	2 large onions (don't skimp, they reduce)
Butter	2/3 stick
Red pepper flakes	1 tsp.
Garlic (chopped) (from jar is fine)	1 tsp.
Salt	1 tsp.
Pepper	1 tsp.
Simmer:	
Bratwursts (cook them whole – do not slice)	4 brats
Good beer	2 cans
Chicken broth	1 cup
Serve with:	
Hoagie buns	2 buns
Good mustard	

Combine onions, butter, red pepper, garlic, salt & pepper large pot (Le Creuset is good). Sauté the onions on high heat (with careful turning and attention) until caramelized (just beyond golden, barely starting to turn brown). For a large batch, this may take as long as an hour.

Add the whole brats to the pot along with enough beer and chicken broth to cover them. Simmer uncovered 8-10 minutes. (Can be simmered longer – very low – if need be.) Remove the brats. Drain the onions in colander (discard broth – or save for a wonderful broth for another meal). Grill the brats whole (not sliced) a few minutes on preheated BBQ grill until nicely browned. Meanwhile brown the buns on the grill. Let the brats rest a few minutes to re-absorb their wonderful juices. Only then may you slice them lengthwise. Put two brats on each bun and top with lots and lots of onions. Slather with mustard. Prepare for ecstasy.



Russ Fereday (father of Jeff Fereday) cooking his famous brats circa 1999.

Source: I learned this recipe from my partner and dear friend, Jeff Fereday. Russ's recipe was handed out at Russ Fereday's celebration of life service on August 4, 2013 at Hillcrest Country Club.

Notes: Brats from Whole Foods are really good for this. Likewise for the brioche buns. Russ's (like most) calls for just beer. Jeff and Kay tried adding some chicken broth, and this was really good.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

NANA'S HAM ROLL-UPS

Ingredients	3 servings (6 rolls)
Ham rolls:	
Sliced ham from deli, sliced very thick – halfway between ⅛ and ¼ inch. If their machine runs metric, ask for 5 mm. (or thinly hand-slice a real ham)	6 slices (2 per serving) (15-16 oz.)
Asparagus (4 spears per roll-up) (more if thin)	24 spears (more if thin) = 12 oz.
Cheese sauce:	
Butter	⅓ stick
Flour	3 Tbsp. (just under ¼ cup)
Half & half	1 cup
Milk	1 cup
Cheddar cheese (you may also add in some Gouda or whatever else you have on hand)	10 oz.
Crystal hot sauce	2 tsp. (or more if you like it hot)
Crushed red chili flakes	1 tsp. (or more if you like it hot)
Paprika	2 tsp.

See separate recipe for Karen's Onion Rice. Once cup is generous for 3 servings.

Equipment:

Use a large frying pan to brown the onion for the onion rice.
You may use the same large frying pan—without washing (or other pan) to make the cheese sauce.
Use a covered lasagna pan for the casserole.

The onion rice:

Follow recipe for Karen's Onion Rice.

The cheese sauce:

Melt butter and add flour to make a roux. Stir over low heat 3 minutes to "cook" the flour.
Over low heat, gradually add half & half and milk in small increments, incorporating fully and maintaining a light bubbling head before adding more milk. You want a fairly thin sauce. A spatula scrap in the pan should take 3 or 4 seconds to completely fill. If needed, you may add more milk.
Gradually add the grated cheese.
Season with hot sauce, chili flakes, and paprika. I don't find that salt & pepper is necessary, but add if you like.
The cheese will thicken the sauce. If needed, add more milk to thin the sauce.

The asparagus:

Cut off ends of the asparagus.
Steam (parboil) the asparagus (under-done). Remember, they will finish in the oven. Check after 4-5 minutes (from a cold start). It doesn't take long. Run under cold water to stop cooking.

The casserole:

Butter a lasagna pan; place rice on bottom of pan.
Roll each ham slice around 3 or 4 spears of asparagus (more if skinny asparagus).
Place ham rolls on top of rice.
Pour all of the cheese sauce over ham rolls and rice.
Cover and put in 350° oven for 35 minutes.
Remove cover and finish under broiler (high heat) for 5 minutes to brown it up a bit.
Let it rest a few minutes before serving.

Source: Fran Adams made this up. We've been making it for decades.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BROILED HAM STEAK WITH PINEAPPLE

Ingredients	2 servings
Your choice of ham steak: Falls Brand (from Albertsons) Homestead brand (from Whole Foods)	1 pound or more (½+ lb. per person)
Your choice of spice rub. We have used: Dan-O's Original Johnny's Chicken & Pork Seasoning Cajun's Choice Blackened Seasoning Emeril's Essence Paul Prudhomme's pork or chicken seasoning Traeger Sweet Rub	
Your choice of fruity glaze: Mango Chutney (sweet or hot) (Patak's or Crosse & Blackwell) Major Grey's Chutney (Crosse & Blackwell) Apricot jam (Bonne Maman) Ham Glaze (Crosse & Blackwell) Apricot Mustard Sauce (Silver Palate)	5 Tbsp. (more or less, to taste)
Fresh pineapple (sliced and cored), or Canned pineapple slices (toss the juice)	½ fresh pineapple 20 oz. can
Honey, or Lyle's Golden Syrup	A good drizzle

Equipment:
Select a "jelly roll" baking pan with an inch high edge (so sauce doesn't run all over your oven). Tinfoil is the key to easy clean-up. If you enjoy hopelessly scrubbing pans and then throwing them out, skip the tin foil. (The syrupy juices will caramelize and adhere permanently to your pan.) Best is 18" tinfoil, which will completely cover the jelly roll pan. Two layers is best. If you only have 12" wide tinfoil, you will need to cover it with four or five layers of foil. (The juice somehow finds its way between the overlapping layers.)

Recipe:

Fresh pineapple (optional)

If using fresh pineapple, cut off the beautiful top with the leaves. Then cut off the bottom. Cut off the "bark" all around the pineapple. Cut slices (circles). Use a circular hole-cutter-thingy to cut the core out of each slice. Now they look just like the ones in a can.

The ham

Place ham steaks on the tin foil covered pan. Sprinkle seasoning on both sides.
Optional: Press cloves into ham steak. (If you are married to Karen, skip this step. She despises cloves.)
Spread the top side of the ham with fruity glaze.
Top generously with pineapple.
Drizzle with sweetener on top.
Bake uncovered at 400° for 30 minutes. Or 375° for 40 minutes.
Finish under broiler turned on high for 2-5 minutes, but watch carefully. This will caramelize the sauce and brown the pineapples very quickly.

Plating

Cut the ham steak in half. Put a half a steak (with pineapples on top) on each plate.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

VERY MANLEY PORK CHOPS

Ingredients	2 servings
Pork loin rib chops (bone-in) (cut thin or not, your choice) or cutlets	1.8 lb. (4 bone-in chops, cut thin) 0.8 lb. (4 cutlets)
Eggs	2 eggs
Milk	¼ cup milk
Panko	1 ½ cup
Salt	1 ½ tsp.
Pepper	1 ½ tsp.
Butter (melted)	1 stick
Olive oil	a delicate drizzle
Lingonberries	(for serving)

Equipment:

To bake the pork chops, use a lasagna pan or other baking dish (uncovered). For a large batch, use a "jelly roll" pan with a rim.

Recipe:

Mix eggs and milk in a shallow bowl. Put panko, salt & pepper in a bowl. Mix with a spoon or fork. Put a little of panko onto a dinner plate.

Dip chops in egg mixture. Dredge them in the panko on the dinner plate. Use a spoon to sprinkle on more fresh panko from the bowl, as needed. The goal is to get a lot of panko onto the chops. Set aside the breaded chops on additional dinner plates (or whatever).

When ready to cook, pour melted butter into baking pan. Carefully arrange chops on top of butter, so as to keep the panko intact. Then drizzle a little olive oil on top of the chops.

Bake at 435° for @ 10 minutes (for cutlets) or 15 minutes (for bone-in). Flip and cook another @ 10-15 minutes. Cooking time varies depending on thickness of chops. Take out when meat is white. If necessary, turn the broiler on high for a couple minutes at the end to get a little browning action.

Source:

This dish is named in honor of the beloved icon of Boise dining--Manley's Restaurant (named after W. Manley Morrow). Closed in 1997, it was soon demolished and replaced by Terry Day Park (at 1225 S. Federal Way). This ma and pa dive was our absolute fav when we arrived here in 1991. I don't actually know how they made their delicious pork chops, which they served with homemade jam (not lingonberries). This recipe is my attempt to reconstruct it, based on the fondest of memories.

Excerpts from a column by Tim Woodward (*Boise Statesman* 11/4/2019; *Idaho Press* 11/3/1999):

Food junkies in Idaho and beyond get misty-eyed just thinking about Manley's, a modest but unforgettable eatery on Boise's Federal Way. It was a small, low-slung, rundown building with faded white paint, a rickety screen door and a dirt parking lot. Inside were a few well-worn tables, beat-up stools lining a Formica counter and a bustling kitchen where cooks prepared meals remembered for life.

People came from all over to dine at the little cafe with the big big reputation. Celebrity customers included Clint Eastwood, Arnold Palmer and concert violinist Eugene Fodor, who agreed to play in Boise on the condition that he be taken to the legendary Idaho cafe where no one ever left hungry.

When journalist-humorist-food writer Calvin Trillin visited Boise for a story he was writing for the *New Yorker* magazine, some co-workers and I took him to Manley's for lunch. His reaction upon seeing the humble, grease-glazed interior was surprise, followed by a grin that illuminated his face. "People associate me with New York, but I'm from Kansas City," he said. "When I travel, people always take me to the fancy restaurant in the revolving glass ball on top of the tallest building in town. The food is always awful. This is my kind of place."

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ALL AMERICAN BEANS AND FRANKS

Ingredients	2 servings	4 servings
Choice of meat (uncooked options are the best!):		
Your choice (or combo), our favorites include: Beer bratwurst (uncooked) English bangers (uncooked) Kielbasa (Holmes Smokehouse, small batch) Snake River Farms gourmet franks (Wagyu beef) Boar's Head bratwurst or frankfurters Basque chorizo (uncooked) Hebrew National hot dogs The Lottie (brand) smoked pork sausage	12 oz.	24 oz.
Brown the onions:		
Onions – small chop	1 large onion	2 large onions
Crushed red pepper	1 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil	2 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.
Oven-fry the bacon (quite optional):		
Bacon	*⅓ lb.*	*⅔ lb.*
The beans:		
Baked beans (e.g., Bush's Country Style), and/or Pinto beans (with the liquid) (ideally, use a combination of both)	28 oz.	56 oz.
Ketchup	½ cup	1 cup
Dried mustard (substitute Dijon mustard if need be)	1 ½ tsp.	3 tsp.
Allspice	½ tsp.	1 tsp.
Sharp cheddar cheese (grated)	2 oz. (½ cup)	4 oz. (1 cup)

Equipment

A large frying pan to sauté the onions.
An uncovered lasagna pan or other oven-proof baking dish for the beans.
A cover (or tinfoil) may be used later if not served immediately.

Directions

Brown the onions

Sauté the chopped onions in olive oil, about 20 minutes (or up to 1 hour on low heat to caramelize). Add the crushed red pepper halfway through the sauté. If you added too much oil, drain them in a colander when done.
If you find yourself in a dreadful hurry, you may skip this step and just add some dried onion and crushed red pepper to th0 bean mixture. But you will be sad.

Oven-bake the bacon (extremely optional)

If you happen to have some bacon in your fridge, you can add some! Oven-fry it (see page 14), and cut into pieces.

Prep the beans

Combine in baking dish and mix together: beans, onions, ketchup, grated cheese, dried mustard, and allspice. And bacon, perhaps.
Cut slanted gashes into the sausages every ½ inch or so, on both sides.
Lay the sausages on top of bean mixture. You will be tempted to push the sausages down into the beans. Don't do it! The bean mixture will soften up and the franks will sink into the beans.—I promise. The idea is to let them brown up a bit. Let nature take its course.

Bake

For cooked meats: Bake uncovered at 350° for 50 minutes.
For uncooked meats or larger batch: Increase to 360° for 1 hour and 15 minutes.
Cover (with lid or tin foil) near the end of cooking. Do not leave in warming oven without a cover.
If beans are still soupy (unlikely), let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Just baked beans

For fantastic baked beans (served as a side dish with hamburgers or BBQ), just skip the sausages.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

LAMB

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HERB-CRUSTED RACK OF LAMB

Ingredients	2 servings
The Lamb:	
Frenched rack of lamb (Costco's from New Zealand is excellent.)	1 rack (1.5 to 2.0 lbs.)
Breadcrumb Mixture:	
Fresh breadcrumbs from any good bread (with crust left on)	1 ½ cups
Grey Poupon mustard	¼ cup
Good olive oil ("Tuscan Herb" version from Olivin—a shop in Boise—is a favorite. Wild Groves Herbs de Provence olive oil is fantastic, if you can get it.)	¼ cup
Garlic (minced)	1 Tbsp.
Rosemary (dried)	⅓ Tbsp.
Thyme (dried)	⅓ Tbsp.
Parsley (dried)	1.5 Tbsp.
Paprika	⅓ Tbsp.
Salt	⅛ tsp. (not much!)
Pepper	½ tsp.
Mint Jelly:	
Rosebud Farm mint jelly from Whole foods is extraordinary – it's red! Crosse & Blackwell Mint Flavored Apple Jelly is also quite good – it's green. Gilway Fresh Garden Mint Sauce (from Whole Foods) is interesting, but stronger flavored and more like an Indian chutney. Or, if you want to be all that fancy, get a recipe for home-made. But that's too much trouble for me.	

Equipment

Be sure your oven has a sheet of tinfoil on the lowest rack to catch any drips from overhanging lamb. For browning the lamb, I always use a cast iron frying pan. Heat retention is important. For roasting, I use a broiling pan (or any flat pan with a rim to catch any stray crumbs). Notwithstanding the picture, I now skip the fitted flat "lid" with slots and just put the lamb on the bottom of the pan. There are no "juices" to speak of.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions:

Make breadcrumbs

Perhaps you have saved some breadcrumbs in your freezer. If not, make fresh breadcrumbs (it's remarkably easy): Cut bread into large pieces (leave crust on). Chop in Cuisinart with chopping blade to turn into breadcrumbs (a couple of minutes). Do NOT toast them. Note: If you are using frozen cubes of bread, you must thoroughly thaw them (or microwave them) first. Frozen bread cubes will jam the Cuisinart.

The breadcrumb mixture

Put the breadcrumbs in a bowl. Add all the other ingredients (mustard, olive oil, raw garlic, and spices). Mix together. The breadcrumb mixture may be done in advance by a few hours.

Prep the lamb

Trim any excess fat from lamb, but this is rarely necessary nowadays with the "Frenched" versions available at Costco and elsewhere.

Cut crisscross hash lines into the fat side. Partially slice each rib (between the rib bones) down to and barely into the meaty part. This will make it easier to cut them after roasting.

Brown the lamb

Heat cast iron frying pan. (I preheat for 5 minutes on medium and then crank it up to highest setting on my medium (lower right) burner a couple minutes before adding the lamb.)

Add the lamb, fat side down. Do not add any oil. Oil will collect as you brown the lamb.

Sear for 2 minutes. Turn on the end side and do another 2 minutes. Lean them over at another tilt for up to 2 more minutes. 6 minutes total per rack.

Dress the lamb

Place the browned ribs, boney side down (fat side up) on a broiling pan.

Pick up a small amount of breadcrumb mixture in your hands and gently press it together like you're making a snowball. Not too tight; just enough that it holds together. Carefully press these breadcrumbs onto the top of the lamb.

Roast the lamb

Bake at 375° for about 45 minutes.

The breadcrumbs should be nicely browned.

Watch the meat temperature carefully. For medium-rare: 145°. Take out of oven about 3 degrees before reaching desired temperature!! It will continue to cook.

The presentation

Remove lamb from oven. Cover loosely with tin foil and let rest 5 minutes.

Cut each rack in two—each half rack serves one person. If you do this carefully, the crumb covering will stay intact. Alternatively, cut the ribs into individual chops and arrange on serving platter, with the breadcrumbs (which will fall off) on the side.

Although you will be faulted by the connoisseurs, you may serve it with mint jelly (as we do).

Stuffing

My version has way more breadcrumb topping than a classic recipe for crusted rack of lamb. The beautiful topping will fall off when you slice the lamb. I serve it like stuffing on the side. Cut the crumb quantity substantially if you want a more traditional herb-crusted rack of lamb.

Royal Rack

If you want to make a royal rack of lamb, you will need two racks to form one crown. Partially cut through each rib on the meaty side. This will allow the rack to be "fanned" out to form a crown. Tie with string (two loops, top and bottom). However, if you make a crown, there is no way you will get the herbed bread to stay on. One could pile it up in the middle, I suppose. But I prefer to stick with my bourgeois version.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DAD'S GRILLED LAMB CHOPS

Ingredients	Per person
Lamb chops	3 small chops per person (¾ lb. per person)
McCormick's Grill Mates Montreal steak seasoning	A light shake on each, all over including sides. Not too much!

Before cooking, set the lamb chops on a plate or something, and bring to room temperature.
Remove any gristle or excessive fat. I don't bother to trim the little bit of fat left on by the butcher. It will cook down. But you can trim further, if you are fastidious.
Sprinkle lamb chops on all sides with steak seasoning. But don't go overboard (it's salty and will overwhelm the taste of the chops).

Heat gas BBQ grill to highest setting and close lid: temp should reach 600° or more.
Leave burners on high (but no scorcher burner, unless it is winter). Close lid. Should maintain 550° while cooking.
For medium to medium rare, 7 minutes total (turn after 4). (Chris's fav)
For very well done, 11 minutes total (turn after 6). (Karen's fav)
(These times are for a medium size chop at room temperature. Smaller chops will cook faster. In any event, cooking times will vary.)
Put on plate, tent with tinfoil, and let rest a couple of minutes before serving.
Serve with mint jelly.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MOROCCAN LAMB STEW

Ingredients	8 servings
***Marinade*:**	
Whole leg of lamb (with the bone, if possible)	If using whole leg (on the bone), you will need one leg with bone (5 ½ lbs.). If using boneless, start with about 4 ¼ lbs. This will produce 3+ lbs. cubed meat (after trimming).
Orange juice	4+ cups juice (enough to cover the meat)
Garlic (minced)	⅓ cup minced garlic from jar or about 10 cloves of garlic
Extra virgin olive oil	4 Tbsp. (added to marinade)
***Brown*:**	
Onions (coarsely chopped and browned)	1 onion
***Stew*:**	
Ground ginger (dried in jar is fine). If using fresh ginger, peel the skin, then grate with fine cheese grater.	1 Tbsp. (dried ginger) a whole ginger if using fresh
Saffron	¼ tsp. or so
Nutmeg (preferably whole, grated)	½ Tbsp. or ½ nut
Crushed red chili flakes	1 ¼ Tbsp. (no more! This is plenty of heat)
Turmeric	½ Tbsp.
Salt	½ Tbsp.
Pitted dates	11 oz. (reserving ⅓)
Pitted prunes (sometimes sold as dried plums)	7 oz. (reserving ⅓)
Chicken stock	14 oz. (or less)
Add fruits after 3 hours:	
Pitted prunes	⅓ of the prunes
Pitted dates	⅓ of the dates
Add in last 30 minutes:	
Honey or Lyle's Golden Syrup	2 Tbsp.
Cinnamon	1 ½ Tbsp.
Slivered almonds	About 1 oz. (half of 2.25 oz. package)
Fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped	¼ cup or more (use what you have)
Yogurt topping & sesame seeds:	
Plain Greek yogurt	16 oz.
Fresh mint, finely chopped	1 Tbsp.
Toasted sesame seeds	A nice sprinkle

Equipment: This quantity is too large to fit into my largest tagine, so I use a very large Le Creuset Dutch oven or Romertopf. For a very large crowd, I use one or two cast iron Dutch ovens. I use a couple of cast iron frying pans to brown the lamb—two pans speed things up. (These will be hard to clean up, but non-stick frying pans will produce inferior browning.) Or you may brown them in the same Dutch oven as used for the stew.

Directions:

Marinate the Lamb:

Cut lamb off the bone and cut into large bite-size pieces (1 x 2 inches). You may ask the butcher to do this for you. Optionally, the butcher can cut through the bone with the meat on it, so that some of the pieces will have bone attached. Either now or tomorrow you will need to go through the tedious process of removing the fat and gristle from each piece of lamb. (This is a 25 minute job that will result in nearly 2 lbs. of "waste" meat for a large leg. You may cook that for the dogs, or discard.) Put lamb pieces (and bone), minced garlic, and olive oil in the Dutch oven (or other large non-metallic container). Add enough orange juice to cover the lamb. Cover and let sit in refrigerator overnight.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Spice the Marinade:
Remove the lamb pieces from the marinade. Save the marinade! Add the spices to the marinade and mix well. (This could be done later, but it is hard to blend the spices after the browned lamb has been added back into the crowded pot.)

Brown the Lamb:
If you have not already removed the fat & gristle, do so now. Heat two cast iron frying pans to highest possible temperature. Brown the lamb in small batches (about 6 pieces) with a drizzle of olive oil at extremely high temperature for 60 seconds on one side. Turn once and brown for another 60 seconds (less for very small pieces). Then quickly remove them and go on to the next batch, adding olive oil and letting the pan return to high temp before adding more. Don't try to brown on all sides or you will end up with over-cooked lamb. Key is very hot pan, small batches. Don't cook, just brown. The browned lamb may be returned to the pot with the spiced marinade.

Brown the Onions:
Chop onions into large chunks. Brown in olive oil in frying pan. Get it nice and brown (about 5 minutes). Add them to the pot with lamb and marinade.

Prepare the Stew:
Combine in large Dutch oven or Romertopf: The spiced marinade, the lamb, the lamb bone with any fat removed, the browned onion, ⅔ of the dates, ⅔ of the prunes. Add chicken stock as needed to completely cover the lamb. Cover and cook in oven for 5-7 hours at 250° (very slow oven). (Do not exceed 7 hours. Plan for when dinner will be served, not when guests arrive.) Lamb should be very tender.

After 3 Hours of Cooking:
Add reserved portion of prunes and dates. (This way, some of the prunes and dates are cooked to smithereens; they just blend in and add flavor. The ones added now will still be recognizable.) If stew is too soupy or too spicy, remove lid during last couple hours. Both the water and the heat from the red chili flakes will dissipate.

Last 30 Minutes of Cooking:
Add the cinnamon, honey or Lyle's Golden Syrup, cilantro, and almonds. Before serving, remove the lamb bone (if not attached to the lamb).

Yogurt Topping:
Make topping of Greek yogurt mixed with mint.

Plating:
Serve with couscous on side. After plating, sprinkle stew with toasted sesame seeds. Then top with a dollop of minty yogurt topping.

Source: Ali Baba came to me in a dream and told me to read the recipe in *Wine Spectator* magazine. Over the years, I have manipulated that recipe a great deal. That magazine recipe has been lost, and, at this point, only Allah knows what it said.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHICKEN

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

GRANDPA MEYER'S CHICKEN

At the grill (summer of 1965): **Grandpa Eugene Ferdinand Meyer, Sr. of Springfield, Missouri (Chris's grandfather).** Pictured (left to right): Beth, Rie, Amy (in basket), Joe (by basket), Matt, Chris, Grandpa, Jenny, and Boomer the beagle. My sibling not pictured: Dave. My cousins not pictured: Murray & Mary. My cousins not yet born: Thomas & Alex.

Ingredients	2 servings
Chicken:	
Your choice of chicken: Chicken breasts (bone-in and skin-on) Half chickens (breast and leg) Mixed pieces (thighs, legs, etc.) Boneless, skinless chicken breasts	2.3 lbs. for 2 people (bone-in) 1.7 lbs. for 2 people (boneless)
Lemon pepper marinade (optional)	12 oz. bottle
***Grandpa's BBQ Sauce*:**	This is generous for 2 normal people (and barely adequate for Karen & me)
Butter	3 sticks (12 oz.)
Worcestershire sauce	1 ½ cup (12 oz.)
Pepper	1 ¼ Tbsp. This is a "Karen level" of heat (mild compared to traditional Meyer standards).
***Bread*:**	
Your choice of: Fat slices of French bread Sliced artisan or sourdough bread Croissant loaf (from Costco) Garlic bread	Plenty. (The bread, sopped in sauce, must be eaten with the chicken, or it's not Grandpa Meyer's chicken.)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Equipment

I use a covered gas grill, pre-heated to 600°. An electric thermometer is key to testing doneness. If you don't have a covered grill or an electric thermometer, you'll manage, as my grandfather did.

Directions

Marinate the chicken (optional)

Place chicken in gallon-sized Ziplock bags. Add marinade. Marinate (with occasional flipping over) for at least 30 minutes. Toss the marinade.

Grandpa's BBQ Sauce

Unlike most BBQ'd chickens, this chicken is grilled plain (w/o BBQ sauce). The non-traditional BBQ sauce (which bears no resemblance to other BBQ sauces) is then generously applied after plating. While chicken is cooking, prepare the secret Grandpa sauce. In a small pot, combine the butter and Worcestershire sauce in equal proportions, and add tons of pepper. Don't boil the sauce! Even lowest setting may cause it to boil eventually. Keep warm until dinner.

Grill the Chicken

Traditional version: bone-in, skin on

Total cook time varies widely depending on conditions and size of the chicken, but is about 45 minutes total (longer for half-chickens). A long, slow cook is best. Heat the grill pretty high. Then turn burners under chicken to lowest stetting, leaving other burners on "medium" or "low" as needed to maintain 360°. Place chicken on grill, skin side up (so that the skin doesn't crisp up and get brown too quickly). After 25 minutes, turn flip over (to skin side down) and cook until the skin is nicely browned (perhaps 5 minutes). Then gently turn over the chicken again so as not to rip the browned skin (a spatula helps). Turn burners under chicken "off," and other burners back to low to maintain 360°. Cook until done. Internal temperature should be 160°, which will rise to 165° after plating. Note: the internal temperature will stay stubbornly low until the end, when it skyrockets up.

This batch happened to be made with left-over baguette slices from yesterday's dinner party. Any good bread works!

Cheater version: boneless, skinless

Place boneless, skinless chicken on a high flame or "searing station." Cook both sides until beautifully browned (2-4 minutes per side). Turn off flame below the chicken and continue cooking at 350° until done, which will be soon. Total cook time is about 20-25 minutes.

Oven-start version

If you are making a lot of chicken and have only a small grill, you may start the chicken in an oven at 360° oven and then finish on the grill, but that is not the preferred option.

Plating---with nasty gashes

Remove chicken to a plate, tent it, and let it rest. Pour accumulated juices back on the chicken. Optional, but recommended: After it has rested, cut deep gashes in the chicken before saucing – allowing it to soak up more Grandpa sauce.

Plate the chicken, the bread, and the baked potato. Pour lots and lots of BBQ sauce over all three. You may add a dollop of sour cream to the potato, too. Serve more sauce tableside.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Orange & Banana Salad

By tradition, originating with my grandmother (Helen O'Dowd Meyer), Grandma Meyer's chicken must be served with a "salad" of orange and banana slices (sprinkled with sugar and allowed to macerate) finished with some little marshmallows (prized by the grandchildren). I wish this was allowed on our diet!

My sister Beth Zienty adds other fruits like strawberries.

Alternatively, serve with Jean Carey's fabulous fruit salad (look up "honey lime rainbow fruit salad" on the internet).

Notes

This family recipe dates to the Great Depression. Accordingly, Grandpa Meyer used margarine, not butter. His more observant grandchildren stick with this, as a point of honor and respect.

Grandpa Meyer grilled half chickens. Karen and I prefer breasts halves (skin-on, bone-in).

The bread and sauce is most delicious when eaten in a single bite with some chicken.

My grandfather would never marinate his chicken. In fact, marinating is considered heresy within the extended Meyer family. But I am a friendly heretic. In any event, use a light marinade (my current favorite is lemon pepper marinade) that does not overwhelm the chicken with flavor. Avoid powerful marinades like Mr. Yoshida's marinade.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

WINE-BRAISED CHICKEN WITH OLIVES, ARTICHOKES, AND ORZO

Ingredients	2 servings	8 servings
Brown the chicken		
Chicken thighs (boneless, skinless) or Chicken breast (boneless, skinless) (cut in half lengthwise to make thinner), or Bone-in chicken thighs	1 ⅛ lbs. (boneless thighs) 1 ⅛ lbs. (boneless breast) 2 lbs. (bone-in thighs)	4 ½ lbs. (boneless thighs) 4 ½ lbs. (boneless breast) 6 lbs. (bone-in thighs)
Salt & pepper	Generously	Generously
Avocado or grapeseed oil or substitute olive oil	2 Tbsp. to start—a thin glaze on the pan	2 Tbsp. to start—a thin glaze on the pan
Toast the orzo and garlic		
Butter	2 Tbsp.	8 Tbsp. (1 stick)
Garlic (I use the garlic in a jar)	1 ½ Tbsp.	6 Tbsp.
Orzo (dry)	⅚ cup	3 ⅓ cups
First step for Dutch oven		
Chicken broth	¼ cup	1 cup
Pitted green olives (e.g., Mezzetta brand pitted Castelvetrano Olives) or, if you can get them, Sable & Rosenfeld's Tipsy Lemon Olives in Gin	3 oz. (drained weight) (and use the liquid)	12 oz. (drained weight) (and use the liquid)
Marinated artichoke hearts (in a jar already quartered) (Napoleon brand is good)	6 oz. (drained weight) 9 oz. (net weight) (and use the liquid)	24 oz. (drained weight) 36 oz. (net weight) (and use the liquid)
Zest of fresh lemons	1 ½ lemons	6 lemons
Deglaze with wine		
Good white wine	¼ cup	1 cup
Add to Dutch oven		
Juice of fresh lemons	1 ½ lemons (yielding ⅓ cup juice)	6 lemons (yielding 1 ½ cups juice)
Plate		
Feta cheese (crumbled) (optional)	¼ cup	1 cup

Equipment*:*

I use a cast iron frying pan for browning the chicken and sautéing the garlic and orzo.
I use a large uncovered Dutch oven for the braise.

Directions:

Prep the chicken

Salt and pepper the chicken generously.
(If using boneless chicken breasts, cut them in half lengthwise to make them thinner. Grocery stores sometimes sell them already cut in half.)

Sear the chicken

In batches, brown the chicken on very high heat in just a touch of oil until golden (2 minutes max per side). (I use my medium burner at highest setting.) Drizzle additional oil onto the chicken as needed. Less oil = better browning.
Chicken should be browned a bit, but not cooked through. It will have plenty of time to cook in the oven. Remove chicken to a plate. Don't clean the pan. In order to prep for a dinner party, you may put the cooled chicken and collected juice/drippings into a Ziplock bag and keep in fridge until ready for braise.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Toast the orzo and garlic

Add the butter, garlic, and orzo to the empty browning pan. Sauté 4 to 6 minutes on very high heat until garlic is fragrant and orzo is toasted. (Larger batches take longer.) (I use my medium burner at highest setting). If you like, you may pause here and let this sit in the frying pan for an extended period of time (without heat) until you are ready for the deglaze step.

First step for Dutch oven

In order to prep for a dinner party, you may add the following "non-reactive" ingredients to the Dutch: the chicken broth, the artichoke hearts and their juice, the olives and their juice, the lemon zest (but not the lemon juice). This may sit on the counter for an extended period of time.

Deglaze with wine

Add the wine to the toasted orzo. On medium high heat, stir and scrape to deglaze (scrape up the browned bits) a couple minutes.

Put everything together

Add to the toasted and deglazed orzo and the lemon juice to the Dutch oven (which already has the broth, artichokes, olives, and lemon zest). Bring to a boil, with a little stirring. Add extra chicken stock if you judge there is not enough liquid for the orzo to absorb. Add the chicken and any drippings, and leave on the heat long enough to re-warm the chicken.

Finish in oven – uncovered!

Put the uncovered Dutch oven (with very hot ingredients from the stove) into the oven at 375° or 400°. After about 30 minutes, the liquid should be absorbed into the orzo and the chicken should be completely cooked.

Serve at once, or cover and let rest on the counter for a while.

If need be, it could be covered and put into a warming oven for a while.

Plate

Plate the chicken along with the orzo, olives, and artichokes.

Allow guests to top with a sprinkle of crumbled feta cheese, if they choose.

Serve with a light salad or vegetable dishes of your choice.

Chicken with Olives, Artichokes, Lemon & Orzo, served with Becky's Terribly Complicated Asparagus, Carrots a l'Orange, and Orange Broccoli with Stuff on It.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MOROCCAN CHICKEN WITH APRICOTS, PRUNES, AND ALMONDS

Ingredients	2 generous servings
Season and brown the Chicken	
Chicken thighs (bone-in/skin-on is great, or use boneless/skinless)	2.0 lbs. (4 thighs bone-in) 1.5 lbs. (boneless)
Poultry seasoning (e.g. Kinder's Buttery Poultry Blend) (or Paul Prudhomme's Chicken Magic) (or just salt & pepper)	Generous sprinkle on all sides of chicken
Olive oil	As needed for sauté
Sauté the onion, tomato paste, garlic, and red chili flakes	
Olive oil	As needed for sauté
Onion (chopped fine)	1 large onion
Tomato paste	3 Tbsp.
Garlic (minced) (from jar or fresh)	1 Tbsp. (about 5 cloves)
Crushed red chili flakes	½ Tbsp.
Other spices	
Fresh rosemary (pull leaves off stem and mince fine) (or dried)	4 large sprigs (1 tsp. dried)
Cardamom (dried)	⅔ tsp.
Turmeric (dried)	⅔ tsp.
Ginger (dried)	½ tsp.
Ground cinnamon (or cinnamon sticks)	½ tsp (or four sticks)
Honey	2 Tbsp.
Fruits, nuts, and broth	
Dried apricots	5 oz.
Dried prunes	5 oz.
Whole dried almonds	⅔ cup
Chicken broth	14.5 oz. (more as needed)
Thicken the sauce – probably unnecessary	
Butter	2 Tbsp.
Flour	2 Tbsp.
Plate it	
Couscous (see recipe on page 198)	
Fresh cilantro (fine chop)	A good handful

Equipment

I prefer to brown the chicken and the onions mixture in a large copper frying pan or cast iron pan. (Better browning; easier clean-up.) I then transfer everything to the tagine, Dutch oven, or Romertopf.

Traditionally, this is prepared in a tagine on the stove top (both the browning and the cooking). I find it much more manageable to braise the chicken (after browning) in the oven using a Le Creuset Dutch oven, a glazed ceramic tagine, or a Romertopf. If using either of the latter, start in a cold oven to avoid cracking the clay.

Prep the chicken

Thighs are definitely better for this dish. I prefer bone-in, skin-on, but boneless thighs are good, too. If using boneless, cut any really large pieces in half. Sprinkle poultry seasoning (or just salt and pepper) onto all sides of the chicken pieces.

Brown the chicken

Brown the chicken on very high heat in a thin layer of olive oil, turning 3 or 4 times for bone-in or a couple of times for boneless (8 minutes total for bone-in, less for boneless). This will not cook the chicken, just brown it. Remove the chicken and set aside. (Note to self: on my Thermador stove, my wok burner at half level is plenty hot.)

Sauté the onion, garlic, and red chile flakes

In the same frying pan, sauté the onions in olive oil gently for at least 10 minutes until soft and translucent (deglazing some or all of the browned bits off the bottom of the frying pan). If you

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

have time, do the onions very slowly (a half hour or so), to achieve caramelization. Then add the garlic and red chile flakes, and continue cooking at high heat another few minutes until garlic is cooked. Blend in the tomato paste and honey. Finally, add the remaining dry spices to the mixture, and let them blend in under low heat.

Combine everything in Tagine or Dutch oven

Pour half of the chicken broth into the Dutch oven or tagine. Add the onion/spice mixture and blend together.

Place the browned chicken (including any accumulated juices) in the Dutch oven or tagine. Add the apricots, prunes, and almonds. Add additional chicken broth as needed to not-quite-cover the chicken.

If you're using a tagine, this is traditionally cooked on the stove over a very low flame. However, I prefer to place the tagine in the oven (which requires less tending). If using a tagine, start in a cold oven to avoid cracking the clay.

Bake in a tightly covered Dutch oven or tagine in a 285º oven for 3.5 hours. (Remember to start cold if using a tagine.) Remove from oven and let rest for 10 minutes (allowing liquids to settle down and thicken).

Note: Yes, this is a very long cooking time. After all, we all know that a chicken can be cooked in 45 minutes. This gentle, low-temperature, multi-hour slow-cook is aimed at getting things extremely tender, transforming those fruits, and letting the remarkable braising sauce emerge.

If something goes wrong—Remove the broth and thicken it

When braising is done and the pot has rested had 10 minutes, the sauce will still be on the thin side, but just thick enough to qualify as a gravy. In the unlikely event the sauce is too soupy, here's the fix: I make a roux in the same frying pan I used before, with all the tasty bits. (A roux is melted butter with flour stirred in, that is cooked for a few minutes to remove the flour taste.) Then pour most of the liquid from the Dutch oven into the frying pan with the remaining roux. (Getting the braising liquid out without messing up the chicken is tricky—pour it into the frying pan while holding the lid to keep the chicken and stuff in the Dutch oven.) Bring the sauce to a strong simmer and stir gently until it thickens (five minutes or so). Then return the sauce to the Dutch oven or Tagine and mix it in.

Serve over couscous

Plate the chicken, fruits & nuts (and delicious sauce), with couscous on the side. Sprinkle with chopped cilantro.

Source:

I read about 14 recipes and then made this up. It continues to be re-worked.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

POLLO EN PEPITORIA (SPANISH BRAISED CHICKEN)

Ingredients	2 generous servings	6 generous servings
Brown the chicken:		
Bone-on, skin-on chicken thighs	2 ⅓ lbs. = 4 thighs (2 thighs per person	7 lbs. = 12 thighs (2 thighs per person)
Freshly grated salt & pepper	generously	generously
Extra virgin olive oil	2 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
The braising sauce		
Onion (chopped fine)	1 onion	3 onions
Red chile flakes	½ tsp.	1 ½ tsp.
Fresh garlic (chopped)	½ head (2 Tbsp.)	1 ½ heads (6 Tbsp.)
Ground cinnamon	½ tsp.	1 ½ tsp.
Bay leaf	1 leaf	3 leaves
Dry sherry (or white wine)	¾ cup	1 ¼ cup
Canned crushed or diced tomatoes with the liquid (San Marzano are great; also love Bianco Dinapoli crushed tomatoes from California)	10 oz.	28 oz. can
Chicken broth	½ cup	1 ½ cup
The pepitoria (after braise):		
Hard-boiled egg yolks (reserve whites after boiling)	yolks of 3 eggs	yolks of 8 eggs
Almond slivers (toasted in oven)	⅓ cup (1 ⅓ oz.)	1 cup (4 oz.)
Saffron threads	1 large pinch	3 large pinches
Fresh parsley (chopped)	A little handful	A big handful
Lemon juice	1 lemon	3 lemons
Presentation:		
Egg whites (hard boiled, chopped)	reserved whites	reserved whites
Fresh parsley (chopped)	Generous sprinkles	The rest of the bunch.

Equipment:

Use a large frying pan to brown the chicken, onion, and garlic. Use a very large covered Le Creuset or cast iron Dutch oven for the braise. In theory, you could do the whole thing in the Dutch oven, but it will be a bit awkward to do the sautéing.

Oven:

300° (to toast almonds). 300° (to braise chicken).

Directions:

Boil the eggs

Boil and peel the eggs. (See "How to boil an egg" on page 15.)
When they cool thoroughly, remove the shells. Separate the white from the yolk. Chop the white. Place yolks and the chopped whites in separate bowls. Refrigerate if done ahead of time.

Toast the almonds

Place the almond slivers in a jelly roll pan or whatever. Toast them in a 300° oven for 30 minutes. They should just begin to turn a bit darker and taste wonderful. Set them aside. And don't eat them, though you will be sorely tempted.

Chop chop

Chop the onion. Mince the parsley.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Brown the chicken

Heat a small amount of olive oil in frying pan over high heat. (I use my middle super burner at about ⅔ max.) Add chicken pieces. Grate some salt & pepper on them. Brown them (in batches) for 4 to 6 minutes per side until nicely browned. The chicken will produce grease, so you won't need to add more olive oil. Transfer chicken to a clean plate. If the empty frying pan has a lot of oil/grease, remove most of it (reserving enough to sauté the onions).

Sauté onion and garlic

Add chopped onion, a sprinkle of red pepper flakes, and some salt to the empty frying pan. Sauté on medium high heat stirring frequently until softened (3 minutes—longer for big batch). Add the garlic and continue cooking for another couple minutes. Add the cinnamon and cook another minute until fragrant. Deglaze with the sherry, scraping up any bits, until sherry reduces by half (about 3 minutes).

Build the tomato braising sauce

Move the onion/garlic mixture to a Dutch oven. Add the bay leaf, the chicken broth, and the diced tomatoes. Bring to simmer. This will yield a very thin tomato sauce, which is good for braising.

Braise

Add the chicken (and any wonderful juice that accumulated in the plate), pushing the chicken part way into the sauce, but not submerging them.

Cover and bake at 300° until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 195°. This may take 50 minutes (or substantially longer). This slow, low-heat cook is key. Chicken is safe to eat at 165° and thighs are traditionally cooked to 175°. But we cook it longer and slowly in this recipe to 195° in order to maximize tenderness.

Remove the chicken to a plate, remove & discard skin, and cover the chicken with tin foil. Discard the bay leaves.

Transform braising sauce to Pepitoria sauce (boat motor)

Add hard-boiled egg yolks, almonds, saffron, lemon juice, and some parsley to the pot with the braising sauce.

If you have a boat motor (an electric immersion blender), use it to chop and blend everything together (about 2 minutes). Otherwise, you will need to transfer the braising sauce to a blender or a Cuisinart with chopping blade.

The sauce will be quite thin. Put the Dutch oven on the stove, bring to a vigorous simmer, and stir occasionally until thickened and reduced to a velvety sauce. This might take 15 minutes or longer. (This is the Arabic/Spanish way of thickening a sauce. It contrasts with the French, roux-based approach using flour, butter, and milk.)

Plate

Begin each plate with whatever starch you are using (traditionally, Patatas Panaderas). Place the chicken pieces over the potatoes or other starch. Pour the Pepitoria sauce over everything, and be generous! Sprinkle on some of the reserved chopped egg whites. Top with a nice sprinkle of chopped parsley. If you have extra sauce (which you will), bring it to the table so that guests may add more as desired.

Serve with:

Traditionally, this is served over Patatas Panaderas. It may also be served with plain white rice, Karen's Onion Rice, couscous, orzo, risotto, or pasta.

Traditionally, it would be followed by Ensalada Mixta (I omit the tuna to keep it light) or other light salad. Or you may serve it accompanied by a simple vegetable side dish.

Dark vs. white meat:

You could use boneless, skinless thighs, but this is not recommended due to loss of deep flavor ingredients. Worse yet, you could substitute chicken breast (cut down to "thigh size" pieces). According to *Cook's Magazine*: "Unlike white meat, which dries out and toughens when overcooked, dark meat actually benefits from being cooked well beyond its doneness temperature (175 degrees). That's because dark meat contains twice as much collagen as white meat, and the longer the meat cooks, the more that collagen breaks down into gelatin, which coats the meat's protein fibers and makes it more moist and tender. (Dark meat also contains roughly twice as much fat, which coats the meat's proteins, and has a higher pH, which helps it retain moisture

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

more effectively.) But it's also important to cook thighs low and slow so that they spend as much time as possible between 140 and 195 degrees—the temperature range in which collagen breaks down."

Etymology:

Pollo is Spanish for chicken. En pepitoria refers to a specific culinary style or sauce thickened with a paste (majado) of crushed toasted almonds, saffron, garlic, fried bread, and cooked egg yolks. In colloquial Spanish, en pepitoria can also mean "a jumble" or a messy combination of diverse things without order, which perfectly describes this sauce.

A picada is a ground nut-based thickener (often including fried bread as well) used in Spanish stews and sauces. It dates to Moorish-ruled Spain in the Middle Ages. The foundation of this dish is a picada, but the term pepitoria refers to the completed sauce, which includes other ingredients, notably egg yolks and saffron.

Source & Notes:

Cook's Illustrated (Sept. 2015). The *Cook's* version omits the fried bread, which is a standard ingredient in Spanish vpicada and pepitoria, while adding some non-standard ingredients, such as tomatoes and lemon juice. And it adds tomato to the braising sauce. A very clever idea. Perhaps this moves the dish in the direction of an Arabic/Spanish version of Chicken Cacciatore. Whatever, it works.

I have made further adjustments. Most notably, *Cook's* calls for discarding most of the tomato-based braising sauce used to cook the chicken. A crime! My version yields a vast quantity of sauce compared to *Cook's* version.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PAPRIKÁS CSIRKE (CHICKEN PAPRIKASH)

Ingredients	2 servings
Brown the chicken:	
Chicken thighs (boneless, skinless)	1 ⅓ lbs.
Olive oil	Just a bit, for sautéing
Sauté the vegetables:	
Onion (large chop)	1 medium onion or ½ large onion
Red pepper (or any color) (large chop)	½ pepper
Mushrooms (sliced)	8 oz.
Garlic (minced)	2 Tbsp.
Crushed red pepper	1 Tbsp.
The roux:	
Butter	3 Tbsp.
Flour	3 Tbsp.
Hungarian Paprika	3 Tbsp.
Chicken broth	1 cup
The sauce:	
Can of crushed tomatoes (Mutti brand is good)	14 oz.
Paul Prudhomme's poultry magic (or other seasoning)	⅔ Tbsp.
Salt	1 tsp.
Pepper	1 ½ tsp.
Last minute:	
Sour cream	8 oz.
The starch:	
Serve over egg noodles, fettuccini or other pasta, onion rice, or spätzle.	½ lb. (8 oz.) dry pasta

Equipment: One could do whole thing in a large Dutch oven (including browning of chicken and sauteing vegetables). But they are hard to clean after browning. So I do the browning in a large frying pan. I prefer copper, but any will do. Then use the large Dutch oven for the oven. Alternatively, use a Romertopf. Everything in a Romertopf tastes better (as Don Anderson will tell you, see page 9), but they are also harder to clean. If using a Romertopf, follow the instructions for pre-soaking and starting in a cold oven.

Chicken: You may substitute boneless skinless chicken breast, in which case, cut in half lengthwise to make it thinner. Or substitute bone-in chicken thighs (in which case, increase weight).

Brown the chicken

Brown the chicken in olive oil on high heat (approx. 3 minutes per side). Set aside on a plate and tent with tinfoil.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Sauté the vegetables

In the Dutch oven (with chicken removed), sauté the mushrooms, onions & peppers together in olive oil, but give the mushrooms a one-minute head start. Then add the garlic and red chili flakes. Sauté the vegetables on high heat until nicely done (15 minutes or so) adding a splash of olive oil as needed. Remove the vegetables to a plate.

The roux

Using the now empty Dutch oven, combine butter and flour. Stir for a couple of minutes to remove the "floury" taste. Gradually add chicken broth to the roux to make a brown sauce (same idea as a white sauce made with milk).

The paprika sauce

Then add the paprika, poultry seasoning, and crushed tomatoes to the roux.

Bake the casserole

Return the vegetables and the chicken (with any accumulated juices) to the sauce in the Dutch oven. Cover and bake at 350° for one hour.

And add sour cream

Remove from oven and add the sour cream. Stir it in gently without unduly molesting the chicken. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Plate

Serve over pasta, rice, or other starch. The dish is traditionally served with a short and stubby Hungarian spätzle known as nokedli.

Culture Note:

In Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker (the English solicitor and main protagonist) dines on this dish on his journey to Dracula's castle in Transylvania, where he barely escapes becoming a tasty meal himself. The handsome Harker soon finds himself the Count's prisoner, about to be fed to the Brides of Dracula. He manages to escape. But Harker finds all this quite unsettling, and suffers a nervous breakdown while recuperating in a convent. Upon recovering, the young attorney vows to destroy Dracula and send "his soul forever and ever to burning hell." The only thing good to happen in this tragedy was the Chicken Paprikash.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FRAN'S PARMESAN-CRUSTED CHICKEN

Ingredients	4 servings
The chicken:	
Boneless, skinless chicken breasts (cut lengthwise to make thinner) Or use pre-thin-sliced "chicken cutlets" from butcher section.	2 large breasts halves (producing 4 pieces when cut in half) (1.7 lbs. or so total)
Butter (melted)	3 sticks (12 oz.) (yes, this much)
Garlic (minced)	3 Tbsp.
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (grated)	1 ⅓ cup
Panko breadcrumbs	1 ⅓ cup
The pasta:	
Tagliatelle or fettuccine (dried, rolled balls) Or substitute egg noodles, if need be	10 oz. (dry weight)
More Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (grated)	A sprinkle
Before plating:	
Lemon wedges (to squeeze on chicken)	1 lemon (or more)

Equipment:

A medium-sized skillet for the garlic butter sauce. (Chicken is dredged individually in this pan, so no need for a large frying pan unless cooking for a crowd. There is no sautéing of the chicken.)

To bake the chicken: A large uncovered lasagna pan (for this size recipe). It needs to be large enough to lay out each chicken breast in one layer, with some room left over for extra breadcrumbs. It will be used later to mix the "dirty pasta."

A pot large enough to boil the pasta. The pot will not be used for anything else, unless you are cooking for a crowd, in which case you may use it to mix the "dirty pasta."

Preheat oven to 410°.

Directions:

Prep the chicken

Trim any fat or gristle from chicken pieces. Slice each chicken breast in half lengthwise to make them thinner. Then cut them in half again to make them smaller servings—yielding two per person. This way some people can take more and others take less.

Mix panko and parmesan

Mix equal parts of parmesan cheese and Panko crumbs in a mixing bowl large enough to allow tossing.

Garlic butter sauce

Melt butter in frying pan. Add garlic and sauté 7 minutes on moderate heat. It's not really a sauté. You are just infusing the butter with this marvelous garlic. Don't continue this too long (or else the garlic will darken).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Prep the chicken

Move skillet with garlic butter to the counter. Put some of the parmesan crumb mixture onto an empty plate. One at a time, dredge the chicken pieces in the garlic butter. Then press the chicken into the parmesan crumb mixture to completely cover with as much crumbs as possible on both sides. Add more "clean" crumb mixture to the plate as needed.

Place each breaded chicken breast into the lasagna pan, side by side (using more pans if needed for a large batch).

Sprinkle the leftover breadcrumbs (from the breading plate and bowl) on top of and around the chicken in the lasagna pan. (No need to press them on; they will brown, fall off, and end up in the dirty pasta.) This will look like too much crumb mixture on the chicken, but it will be good in the end.

Drizzle all of the remaining garlic butter (scraping up all the garlic in the frying pan) over the breadcrumbs between the chicken with only a little on top of the chicken. If you put too much on the chicken itself, it will not brown as nicely.

Pause

These steps may be done an hour or two in advance. Put casserole in fridge. If you don't remove in time to bring to room temperature, extend cooking time by 10 minutes.

Roast the chicken

Bake uncovered at 410° for 25 minutes (10 minutes longer if casserole is cold from fridge) (should be nicely browned). Don't overcook. There is no need to turn the chicken over.

Boil the pasta

While the chicken is baking, boil the pasta in tons of roaring salted water until *al dente*. Drain pasta in a colander.

Remove the chicken

Remove the roasted chicken to a serving platter (or plate it), leaving the butter & crumbs in the lasagna pan. Squeeze a lemon wedge onto each chicken breast.

The dirty pasta

After the chicken is removed, move the drained pasta into the empty lasagna pan with remaining the butter & crumbs. Add a sprinkle of parmesan cheese. Mix together.

For picnic

If the dinner will be transported (e.g., to Shakespeare picnic), you may return the chicken to the lasagna pan, putting it on top of the dirty pasta. Perhaps you will find room to squeeze in some broccoli or something. Cover and go.

For serving at home

Plate the chicken with the pasta on the side.

Serve with a salad, Becky's Very Complicated Asparagus, sautéed spinach, stir-fried broccoli, or other vegetables.

Source & notes:

Fran is Karen's mom (Fran Adams). Fran called her dish "chicken parmesan," as does everyone in Karen's family. But I changed the name to "parmesan-crusted chicken" in this cookbook to avoid confusion with the Italian red-sauce dish known as "chicken parmesan."

Fran served the chicken with mashed potatoes. I switched to pasta and made up the part about the "dirty pasta" covered with the garlic butter and crumbs. (Why "dirty"? Think of "dirty rice" in Louisiana cooking.)

Fran used whole chicken breasts halves (without cutting in half). I've modified by cutting in half to make thinner breasts halves. When I say breast half, I'm referring to the pieces of breast you find in a grocery store. A whole chicken breast is composed of two halves that are divided before packaging.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHICKEN STROGANOFF

Ingredients	2 servings
The chicken:	
Chicken breast (boneless, skinless) (cut in half lengthwise to make thinner)	1 breast (14 oz. / 0.85 lbs. total)
Salt & pepper (freshly ground)	Generously
Flour	In a pile on a plate
Good olive oil (EEOV)	A generous splash, more as needed
Flour for dredge:	
Mushrooms (wash, cut off stems, slice thick)	8 to 12 oz.
Crushed red chili flakes	1 Tbsp.
Onions (sliced into thin rings)	1 large onion
Minced garlic (from jar is OK)	2 Tbsp.
Dry white wine	½ cup
More flour (use leftover from plate)	2 Tbsp.
Paprika	1 tsp.
Chicken broth	10 to 12 oz.
Crème fraîche	8 oz.
Butter (preferably unsalted)	3 Tbsp.
Worchester sauce	1 Tbsp. (3 generous dashes)
Dijon mustard	1 Tbsp.
The noodles:	
Instead of the traditional egg noodles I use pappardelle or fettuccini nests. Great options are: De Cecco Pappardelle no. 101; Rustichella D'Abruzzo fettuccine nests from the Co-op; Delverde tagliatelle nests. I do <u>not</u> recommend "fresh" pasta for stroganoff. If all else fails, use egg noodles.	5 oz. (dry weight)
Plate:	
Chopped parsley (fresh or dried)	Sprinkle on top

Equipment

If cooking for 4 or fewer, everything may be cooked in one very large frying pan. I prefer a copper pan. For a large batch, you may use a large Dutch oven (e.g., Le Creuset) for the final combination. Everything cooks on the stove.

Directions

Prep the chicken

Trim any fat from chicken breasts. Slice each breast in half lengthwise to make them thinner. Generously salt and pepper each side.

Dredge the chicken:

Put a small mound of flour on a plate. Dredge the chicken pieces in the flour.

Pan-fry the chicken:

Add a thin layer of olive oil to the frying pan (less than ⅛ inch deep). Heat the oil to medium high temperature. Goldilocks' goal (not to hot, not too cold): The chicken should be beautifully browned when it is nearly cooked through. Brown the dusted chicken breasts (in batches). About 5 minutes on the first side. Flip the chicken over (adding more oil if needed) and brown the other side until the chicken is nearly cooked (2 minutes or so). Set aside. Don't put them in the warming oven, or they will be too well done.

Mushrooms and red chile flakes:

Sauté the mushrooms in olive oil until golden (10 to 15 minutes), adding a generous sprinkle of red chile flakes halfway through. Set aside.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Onions and garlic:

Sauté the sliced onions in olive oil until golden (5 to 10 minutes), adding the garlic halfway through.

The sauce:

Add wine to the pan with the sautéed onions & garlic. Deglaze and simmer until the wine is nearly evaporated (about 2 minutes). Stir in the flour and paprika, and cook for a couple minutes. Gradually pour in the chicken broth, stirring constantly. Continue to simmer until it thickens enough to coat a spoon (about 3 minutes). Reduce heat and add the crème fraîche, butter, mustard, and Worcestershire sauce. Mix and season with salt & pepper. Sauce should now be nearly as thick as a gravy. Add the sautéed mushrooms and mix into sauce. Add the chicken to warm, but only partially submerge. (For aesthetic reasons, I don't submerge the chicken entirely, so that one side remains "clean" of the sauce displaying its golden browning.)

Boil the noodles:

Meanwhile, the noodles should have been cooked and drained. Save some pasta water just in case you need to moisten the noodles later.

Plate:

For aesthetic reasons, I put the noodles on one side of the plate and the chicken (with the "clean" side up) on the other side. Then I put a generous amount of the mushroom/onion stroganoff sauce in between (down the middle of the plate). Top with a sprinkle of chopped parsley (for show).

Notes

We prefer noodles, but some prefer this dish to be accompanied by rice or mashed potatoes.

Acknowledgement to *Bon Appétit* (Winter 2026) for laying the foundation of this recipe, which I have modified.

History

Classic beef stroganoff has been around since 19th century Tsarist Russia. (See recipe on page 49.) The Russian diaspora (fleeing after the 1917 revolution) brought the recipe with them. The chicken variation was well established in the United States by the 1950s. In 1959, it appeared on the Continental menu of the famous Trincas restaurant, which was founded in 1929 in British Calcutta, India (now Kolkata). The chicken version (served on parsley buttered rice) is still featured on the upscale restaurant's eclectic menu today, along with Chicken a la Kiev, Spaghetti Carbonara, and Shepherd's Pie!

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHICKEN FRANCESE WITH SPICY WHITE BEANS AND SPINACH

Ingredients	2 servings
Chicken cutlets:	
Boneless skinless chicken breasts – cut & pounded	1 breast half (¾ lb.)
Flour	½ cup
Kosher salt	Generously
Freshly ground pepper	Generously
Olive oil	As required for sauté
Beans & Spinach:	
Onion – diced coarsely (Vidalia or other sweet onion is lovely)	½ onion
Fresh rosemary (or substitute dried)	2 Tbsp. after trimming (¼ of a box of fresh rosemary), or ⅔ tsp. (dried)
Flour	1 Tbsp.
Low sodium chicken broth	½ cup
Cannellini beans (canned, with juice)	15 oz. can
Fresh spinach	4 oz.
Fly by Jing Sichuan Chili Crisp (from Whole Foods) or Vietnamese chili garlic sauce	⅔ Tbsp. (more if you like it hot)
Serve with:	
Karen's Onion Rice	See recipe.
Lemon wedges (cut in wedges)	1 lemon. Optional, but highly recommended to squeeze onto chicken.

Equipment: This whole meal is made stove-top in one very large frying pan. Takes over an hour with all the prep, but goes straight from pan to plate.

Chop chop:
Coarsely dice the onion. Set aside (sauté comes later).
Pull the stalks off the rosemary, leaving just the leaves and tender stems. Chop the rosemary.

Rice prep:
If doing Karen's onion rice, chop and sauté the onions; set aside. Start the rice 20 minutes before everything else will be ready to serve.

Pound the cutlets:
Carefully cut each breast in half lengthwise—to make them thinner. One at a time, place chicken in a Ziploc bag and pound with the flat side of a meat tenderizer to ⅛ inch thick. (This is traditionally done with waxed paper, but the bag is easier.)

Dredge the cutlets:
In a large plate, combine flour, salt & pepper. Dredge cutlets in flour mixture and set aside. Quickly dredge one more time before frying.

Brown the cutlets:
Sauté cutlets in just a generous splash of olive oil (barely enough to slosh around the pan) on very high heat 1 ½ minutes or so per side. Drizzle more olive oil as needed. Do just two at a time; don't crowd. Should be golden brown and barely white inside. If heat is too low, they will not get past yellow before they're done, but they will still be delicious. Don't overcook them trying to achieve golden status. Remove to a plate and cover with tin foil; keep warm in 170 degree oven (or reheat later if oven is occupied).

Beans & Spinach:
After removing chicken, add more olive oil to frying pan. Sauté the diced onion on high heat about 5 minutes until a dark golden color. Add rosemary and flour to the pan with the onion; cook 3 minutes to form a sort of roux. (It won't look like a roux, but it will work!) Gradually add chicken

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

broth to deglaze the pan and create a sort of oniony rosemary gravy. Add beans and chili sauce and cook for a few minutes to bring to heat. Add the chopped spinach and cook a couple more minutes to completely wilt.

Rice:

Meanwhile cook the rice (see recipe for Karen's Onion Rice on page 193).

Presentation:

Plate the chicken next to (or over) the bean/spinach mixture, with the rice separately on the side. Serve with lemon slices. (We love a generous squeeze of lemon juice on the chicken, but this is optional.)

Note: This may be made with kale instead of spinach.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EMERIL'S ROASTED CHICKEN

Ingredients	1 chicken (3 servings)	2 chickens (6 servings)
The secret paste		
Sun dried tomatoes (in jar)	2 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.
Fresh basil	½ Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.
Fresh parsley +	½ Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.
Minced garlic (in jar)	1 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil (w/ rosemary if possible)	1/6 cup	⅓ cup
Black pepper	½ tsp.	1 tsp.
Salt	½ tsp.	1 tsp.
The chicken		
Whole roasting chickens	1 chicken (3 to 4 lbs.)	2 chickens (6 to 8 lbs. total)

Equipment*:*

You need a contraption to prop up the chicken vertically. I have pans designed for that, with a grease catcher. Or you may improvise with a jelly roll pan and those metal chicken holders (to prop up chicken while cooking).

Note:*:*

This is a sufficient about of paste. Not much more will stick to the outside of the chicken. But you could increase the amount that gets stuffed into the cavity. It doesn't get eaten. It is just for flavoring the chicken.

If you plan to serve this with Chermoula sauce: Rather than making two different but similar sauces, you may just make more of the Chermoula sauce and use that to season the chicken.

Directions:

The paste

Blend all the paste ingredients in Cuisinart.

The chicken

Smear the paste on the inside and out of the chickens. Stand chickens upright on those little metal chicken holders. Place on a jelly roll pan or other dish that can catch the juices that come out. Tie a string around the chickens to hold down the wings (so they don't burn). Roast in 375° oven for an hour or so until chicken reaches 180 degrees internally. (Those vertical cookers speed things along.)

The trick

Let the chicken rest for 20 minutes or so. Carve it up like a turkey and arrange on a serving platter. Now, for the pièce de résistance, you will observe that a lot of juice has accumulated in the pan. Pour this nectar over the sliced chicken before serving.

Serve with:

The chicken may be served with rice (Karen's onion rice is very nice), orzo, or mashed potatoes. An excellent option is to provide Chermoula sauce for people to put on the chicken.
May be served in various ways, including with Chermoula sauce over rice.

Origin:

Emeril Lagasse recipe found online. The online recipe says calls it "Cold Roasted Chicken." Says to chill it 2 hours before serving. But we just let it rest, slice it, and serve. Or bring it to Shakespeare.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S ROASTED CHICKEN WITH GRAVY

Ingredients	2-4 servings
Whole chicken (remove giblets and neck)	Chickens measure between 3 to 5 lbs. (5-pounder will serve 4 people generously.)
Dry seasonings	
Paprika	generously
Lawry's Seasoned Salt	generously
Paul Prudhomme's Chicken Magic	generously
or anything that suits you	
Wet seasonings	
Olive oil (any will do, but the best is Olivin's Tuscan Spice)	generously
Kikkoman soy sauce	generously
Into the cavity	
Whole lemon, cut in half	1 lemon
Bay leaf	2-3 leaves

Equipment

A Romertopf (German clay pot) is ideal; it releases water to steam the chicken while cooking. You may also a Dutch oven, or just a roasting pan with tinfoil over the chicken. If using a Romertopf, you must take steps to ensure that it does not crack while cooking. Submerge both the top and bottom in water (if not completely submerged, at least put them on the counter and fill them with water) for 20 minutes or more before cooking. Then begin cooking in a COLD oven.

Wash the chicken

Remove the giblets and neck from the cavity of the chicken. Toss them. (Then again, they make a great stock. If you're of a certain age, the giblets go in the gravy. If you don't eat them, you may roast the giblets and feed them to the dogs.)

Wash the chicken thoroughly in the sink (including the cavity). Dry the chicken with paper towels (so that the seasonings stick).

Season the chicken

(This part is easier with two people.)

Place the chicken in the Romertopf or other roasting dish.

Very generously season the interior cavity of the chicken with the dry seasonings.

Very generously pour the wet seasonings over the exterior of the chicken and smear all over. Flip the chicken and repeat.

Add the lemon halves to the cavity.

Finally, rather generously sprinkle with the dry seasonings on both exterior sides (finishing with the breast side up in the pan). Smear them around nicely (this will make the final browning look nicer).

Roast the chicken

Roast at 400º for a total of about 1 ½ hour, depending on size. But remove the lid (or tin foil) after 45 minutes or an hour, to let the chicken brown. That browning step might take 20-30 minutes. If not yet done, cover again and keep cooking. Cooking times will vary. The internal temperature is what's important: 165º. It will approach this temperature very slowly, and then suddenly jump up. Note that temperature will continue to rise 5º or so after removed from oven.

Remove and tent with tin foil for 10 minutes before carving.

Save the juices that collect in the bottom of the roaster. Use them to make gravy.

Serve

Serve however you like, but we carve it like a turkey, and serve with mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, and cranberry sauce. Just like Thanksgiving.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S TEX-MEX CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Ingredients	***4 servings***
Chicken or Turkey	
Cooked chicken or turkey breast (or boneless, skinless chicken breast)	1.8 lbs. (yielding 4 cups)
Kinder's Buttery Poultry Blend (or spices of your choice)	Generously
Olive oil	Generously
Other stuff	
Canned black beans	One 15 oz. can
Salsa	½ cup
Cream of chicken soup	Two
Milk (whole or skim)	¾ cup
Cheddar cheese	1 ¼ cup
Fresh corn tortillas (cut into strips)	11 oz. (10 or 12 tortillas depending on size)

Equipment

If cooking chicken, use a broiling pan with tinfoil (for easy clean-up). Use a small lasagna pan (uncovered) for the casserole.

The chicken

If you have leftover chicken or turkey, lucky you. Cut it up into cubes.
For fresh chicken breast (boneless, skinless), you may cut it in half (lengthwise to make it thinner) for quicker cooking and better seasoning. Place it on a broiler pan with tinfoil. Sprinkle each side generously with seasoning. Then generously drizzle olive oil. Put in 410º oven for 25 minutes. Don't overcook—it will be in the oven much longer in the casserole.
Remove from oven and cut into cubes.

Prepare the casserole

Spread the left-over chickeny olive oil from broiling pan into the lasagna pan and swirl around with a paper towel. Or just use olive oil.
Combine the cubed chicken or turkey, black beans, and half of the cheese in a bowl. Mix and place into the lasagna pan.
Place the tortilla strips on top.
Combine the liquids (milk, salsa, and chicken soup) in the same (now empty) bowl. Pour the liquid mixture over the casserole.
Bake uncovered at 350º for 30 minutes.
Remove from oven and sprinkle the reserved cheese on top.
Return to over for another 15 or 20 minutes. Should be bubbly with melted cheese on the verge of browning.
Remove and let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Source

This recipe is affectionately consistent with our down-home upbringings (midwestern and Pennsylvania Dutch) which elevated the casserole to the high status it deserves. Yet we must give credit to Idaho Power whose recipe in our November 2024 electric bill inspired the version above, after some tweaks.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Chicken Schnitzel (see Weiner Schnitzel on page 52)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SEAFOOD

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SOLE MEUNIÈRE

Ingredients	2 servings (generous)
Dredge:	
Fillet of Dover sole or Petrale sole	1 lb. (½ lb. per person)
Flour	1 cup
Salt & pepper	A generous sprinkle
Sauté:	
Canola or vegetable oil	2 Tbsp. (a generous splash)
Butter	2 Tbsp.
Sauce:	
Butter	⅔ stick
Lemon juice (fresh squeezed)	2 lemons
Lemon slices	1 lemon (1 or 2 slices per serving)
Plate:	
Fresh Italian parsley (chopped)	1 tsp. per serving

Equipment

A large frying pan (I prefer copper). The sauce will be made in the same pan used to sauté the sole. If cooking for a crowd (more than four), use two frying pans. But, after cooking the fish, combine the remaining butter, etc. into one pan for making the sauce.

Directions

Wash & dry the sole

Rinse the sole and remove any stray bones. Pat dry with paper towels. (This will go through a lot of paper towels.) Spread out the sole out (no overlapping) on a large cutting board or something; let it dry further.

Prep the lemon & parsley

Prepare lemon slices and lemon juice. Chop the parsley.

Dredge the sole

Lightly score the fillets with a sharp knife – not too deep, just enough to let in the goodness during the cooking process.
Mix together flour with salt and pepper on a plate.
Dredge sole in flour. If you dried them well, just the right amount of flour will adhere (not much).
After dredging, spread them out separately on a clean plate or something (not overlapping). They can sit for no more than 30 minutes. If they sit longer, they'll get soggy, you'll need to add more flour, and the end result will be a disappointment.

Sauté the sole

Heat a couple tablespoons of cooking oil in frying pan until hot and shimmering. Then add an equal amount of butter. Use quite a bit of oil/butter, but not don't go overboard. You are sautéing, not deep fat frying.
When foaming of butter subsides, use tongs to add the sole (cooking in batches). Add more oil & butter, as needed.
Fry at high temperature for a minute or two per side (more for first side, less for second) until beautifully golden (or at least beige) outside and opaque on the inside. Use a spatula to turn them over—they are quite delicate. Getting the right temperature is key. In order to achieve some browning without over-cooking the fish, you want it quite hot, but not screaming hot. (I use the highest setting on my medium burner—bottom right.) In any event, don't overcook the fish trying to achieve the perfect golden color!

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Place the cooked fish on clean plates and tent with aluminum foil. Make the sauce promptly before they get too cold.

Prepare the sauce

For God's sake, don't clean the pan after cooking the fish; all that stuff goes into the sauce. The sauce will be prepared at the last minute in the same pan used to sauté the fish. After the fish is removed, add a lot more butter to frying pan and heat it until almost brown. To aid in thickening, toss in a generous pinch of flour, but no more. (The flour that dropped off the fish will also serve as a thickening agent.) Then add the lemon juice. It will boil like crazy! Let the sauce simmer for a couple of minutes (with some stirring). It will thicken just a bit to produce a nice lemon butter sauce. The sauce will still be quite thin—we're not making gravy. Don't overdo the reduction, or you will end up with a sauce that is too intensely flavored.

Near the end, place the lemon slices in the sauce and let them "wilt."

Plating

After plating the fish, drizzle on the heavenly lemon butter sauce. If serving Karen, add a lot. Just a drizzle for normal people.

If you wish, top each serving with a slice or two of wilted lemon. (The lemon slices are entirely for show, but they do show nicely!)

Finish with a sprinkle of chopped parsely.

Serve with

The sole may be paired with a starch such as Orzo di Giovani, Risotto alla Milanese, Karen's Onion Rice, Potatoes Southcombe, Smashed Greek Potatoes, or mashed potatoes. It goes with any green vegetable, but I especially like it with Spinaci all'aglio e olio (All in this *Lockdown Cookbook*.)

Notes

Julia

Sole meunière was the first meal Julia Child ate upon her arrival in France and has been credited as inspiring the chef, who called it "the most exciting meal of my life" in her memoir, *My Life in France*. (Wikipedia.)

Etymology

"Sole Meunière" is sometime written as "Sole à la Meunière" (or more precisely, "Sole à la Manière Meunière) Whatever, the French name means "sole prepared in the manner of a miller's wife" (because it is dredged in flour). BTW, the word "fillet" (both noun and verb) is spelled with two l's in English ("fillet"). The French word "filet"(with one "l") is reserved for classic French dishes such as filet mignon. There is no agreement as to whether to write "fillet of sole" for filet of sole."

Dover vs. petrale

Sole meunière is classically made with Dover sole, but Petrale sole is an excellent upgrade. Dover sole is a smaller fish and more readily available. Petrale sole is larger, more expensive, and considered by some to be better. To quote Russ Parsons writing for the L.A. Times: "It may be true that in the eyes of God, all soles are equal. But on the California dinner plate, petrale is king."

Bone-in

At a fancy restaurant, this sole would be prepared bone-in and then dexterously filleted tableside. I wish I could do that. But the pre-filleted version will taste just as good, and will save you the cost of quitting your job and going to cooking school.

Capers

You will encounter recipes calling for capers. Adding capers converts the dish to sole piccata. If you want that, see my separate recipe in the *Lockdown Cookbook*.

Source

Based loosely on a recipe in the *French Country Table* (Xmas gift from Andy), also influenced by Julia Child's book, "*How To Cook.*"

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SOLE PICCATA (SEE PICCATA ON PAGE 143)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BLUE CHEESE SOLE

Ingredients	2 servings
Fillet of Dover sole or flounder	1 lb. (generous, but it's so good you'll eat it)
Butter (melted)	1 stick
White wine	¼ cup
Blue cheese (crumbled)	4 oz.
Parsley	A smidgeon

Equipment: A "jelly roll" pan or other flat baking pan, big enough to spread all the fish out. Invest in one of those "floppy" fish spatulas. Perfect for serving this very delicate fish without messing up the gorgeous browned tops of the fish.

Pre-heat oven to 400°.
Melt butter.
Lay the fish out in the pan. Pour on some of the melted butter. Flip the fish, and drizzle on the rest of the butter. Pour the wine into the pan around the fish. Sprinkle the fish with blue cheese crumbles. (Yes, it's a lot.)
Turn oven to high broil. When piping hot, pop in the fish.
Broil until cheese just begins to brown deeply and everything is bubbly (6-7 minutes).

Garnish with parsley.

Serve immediately. With Karen's "onion rice" and vegetable of choice.

Source:
Old standby from Fran Adams.

Note:
If other things need to be baked, instead of broiling you may bake at 375° or 400° for about 18 minutes.

Etymology:
Is it blue cheese or bleu cheese? Both are correct. Bleu is the French spelling of blue.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HAZELNUT-CRUSTED SOLE

Ingredients	2 servings
Prep the sole	
Dover sole fillets	0.8 lbs.
Chopped hazelnuts (coarsely ground—finer than chopped)	3.5 oz. (⅔ cup)
Fresh rosemary (remove leaves, chop very fine)	2+ tsp. (approx. 3 twigs)
Eggs (beaten)	2 eggs
Cook the sole	
Butter	½ stick = 4 Tbsp. (to start, adding more for each batch)
Plate and serve	
Lemon (in wedges)	1 lemon

Equipment:
All you need is a large frying pan. Copper gives the best heat control.

Directions:

Prep the sole

Put the chopped hazelnuts in a mini-chopper. Grind briefly (perhaps 20 seconds) to a course grind.
Take the leaves off the fresh rosemary (run your fingers in the down the stem in the "wrong" direction so the leaves get mad and fall off). Chop very fine. Combine the hazelnuts and rosemary on a plate. Beat eggs in a separate bowl (use the whole egg).
Spread out the sole, and salt them on both sides. Dredge sole in the egg on one side only (or brush it on). Place the eggy side of the sole in the hazelnut/rosemary and press down gently to create a crust on one side only. Set aside the soles, crusty side up.

Prep the sole

Melt 2 or 3 tablespoons of butter in frying pan. In batches, place the sole in the sizzling butter, crusty side down. Cook without disturbing over medium heat—just enough heat for a good sizzle—for about three minutes until nicely browned. Flip them over and cook another minute. Remove to a clean plate.

Plate

Plate and serve at once with lemon wedges. Goes nicely with Karen's Onion Rice and a grilled or stir-fried vegetable.

Source:
This recipe appeared in *Food & Wine* magazine (11/2019). As the article points out, rosemary is not a classic pairing with delicate fish, but it works here with the hazelnut crust offset by lemon wedges. I have added detail and explanation, but have not fundamentally changed the recipe. The recipe comes from chef Jacque Thorel, who runs L'Auberge Bretonne in Brittany, France—an important destination for food lovers. He has published several cookbooks, including *Loving Breton Cuisine*.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SEA SCALLOPS WITH ANGEL HAIR PASTA

Ingredients	2 servings (very generous)
The Scallops:	
Sea scallops (preferably dry-packed) (size U15 or larger size) (frozen is fine)	12 oz. (¾ lb.)
Avocado, grapeseed, or olive oil	A very thin layer (less than ⅛ inch) covering the pan.
The Shallots:	
Shallot (fine chop) Or: onion (fine chop) Or: scallions	2 or 3 large shallots (4 oz. before prep.) or: ¾ medium onion or ½ large onion or: ¾ bunch of scallions (the white part)
Butter	3 Tbsp.
The Broiled Tomatoes:	
Cherry tomatoes	10 oz.
Salt & pepper	moderately
Olive oil	generously
The Sauce:	
White wine	¾ cup
Heavy cream	1 ¼ cup
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese	1 Tbsp.
Pasta water	Reserve 1 cup, use as needed.
The Pasta:	
Angel hair pasta	5 oz. (don't increase or else other measurements will be off)
No salt	Don't salt the water. Salt on tomatoes are enough
Plate:	
Parsley (fresh or dried)	Just a tiny bit for color

Alternatives to Scallops:

King crab leg meat	Up to 4 legs or claws (1.5 lbs.)
Lobster tails	Up to 4 tails (2 per person)

Notes on scallops

See notes under "Scallops (types and sizes)" on page 17.

Don't forget the pasta water!

Remember to reserve pasta water before draining the pasta. This dish depends on it.

Equipment

Any jelly roll pan or broiling pan (no need for the slots) will work for the cherry tomatoes.
A cast iron skillet is best for searing the scallops. A copper frying pan is second best. Heat retention/control is important for browning the scallops quickly, but not too quickly.
If making just for two people, you may combine everything (including the cooked pasta) in the skillet.
You will need a medium size pot for boiling the pasta. Not too much water—you want starchy pasta water.
If making a large batch, the pasta pot may be used for the final combination.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions

Prep the scallops

"Fresh" scallops (well, they were probably previously frozen in shipment and thawed at the store) require little attention. Pat them dry and set them on a plate to bring to room temperature.
If using frozen scallops, thaw them well in advance (over an hour). Set them on a plate with a paper towel to let them dry. Replace damp paper towels, pat dry, and repeat as necessary. Drying is important. We want to fry them, not steam them.
If necessary (probably not), remove and discard small tough side muscle (known as the "foot").

Prep the cherry tomatoes

Cut the cherry tomatoes in half, and place on broiling pan. Drizzle them with olive oil. Sprinkle the tomatoes with salt and pepper.

Prep everything else

Why? Things go fast, and the ingredients should be at room temperature.
Finely chop the shallots.
Grate the parmesan cheese.
Measure out the wine and the cream.
Heat water for the pasta.
Pre-heat the oven (which will later be set to broil).

Sauté the scallops

Heat the skillet to pretty darned high heat, but not crazy hot. (On my Thermador stove, high heat on the lower right burner.) Add a generous splash of avocado or other oil (2 Tbsp.) and swirl it around with a paper towel. Getting just the right amount of oil is critical. You want a thin layer (less than ⅛ inch) that covers the pan. Too little is as bad as too much. Add a tiny bit more during cooking if needed to maintain a thin layer.
Sauté the scallops for a total of 6 or 7 minutes, turning once after about 3 minutes. Do not touch them until they are ready to be turned. They will stick to the frying pan, so use a spatula to "cut them loose" and preserve the beautiful brown part before flipping. Do not overcook them! How they taste is more important than how they look. If cooking for more than 3 people, sauté them in batches.
Set them aside on a plate without a paper towel, and let them rest. They will yield a "scallop water" that you will add back to the sauce. If need be, they can sit for a half hour or so.

Sauté the shallots

After the scallops are removed from the skillet, don't clean it. Sauté the shallots in butter for 1 or 2 minutes (until translucent).

Add the wine

Then add the wine to the skillet and deglaze the burned bits gently stirring with a spatula. This will turn the wine a bit brown. Don't worry. That is a good thing. Continue to boil the wine fairly vigorously for 2 or 3 minutes until wine is reduced by about half.

Add the cream

Turn down heat and add cream to the wine and shallots in the frying pan.
Simmer the cream sauce gently for about 9 minutes to reduce by a third.

Broil the cherry tomatoes

Pre-heat the oven broiler to high heat. While the cream simmers, broil the cherry tomatoes for 5 minutes MAX. (Do not be tempted to go further to get a nice brown; you will end up with mushy red pieces in your sauce.)

The pasta

Boil the pasta. Angel hair takes only 4 minutes or so. Before draining the water, reserve at least 1 cup (for two servings) of pasta water. Drain the pasta in a colander.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Combine the cream sauce, tomatoes, pasta, parmesan, pasta water

For a small batch, everything may be combined in the frying pan. For a large batch move the cream sauce to the empty pasta pot.

Add the parmesan cheese and the broiled tomatoes to the cream/wine sauce. Keep it on a low heat, just enough to keep a simmer.

Add some of the reserved pasta water (about ½ cup for two people). Stir at let sit. In a couple of minutes, the pasta will absorb the pasta water creating an unbelievable creamy texture.

Add the scallops

Finally, add the scallops and the "scallop water" (accumulated on the plate). Stir into the pasta and bring them back to temperature.

Add more pasta water

Consider adding more pasta water. By the time this is plated, it will thicken further. You don't want a thick sauce. Err on the side of being sloppy wet.

Plate

Place the pasta, tomatoes & seafood onto individual plates.

Sprinkle with chopped parsley (purely for show).

Serving suggestion

Goes well with sautéed spinach or zucchini, or grilled asparagus.

Or a simple salad of lettuce and tomato with oil and vinegar.

Or Caprese salad.

Alternatives to scallops

Crab legs

If doing crab instead: Steam them in covered pot for 5 minutes. Don't go a minute over. Remove and let cool. Remove crabmeat and chop into bite-size pieces.

Broiled lobster tails

If doing lobster instead: Preheat oven to 350°. Bring the lobsters to room temp. Cut the shells (on top) to expose the lobster. Drizzle very generously with melted butter. Season with paprika, salt & pepper. Put lobster tails in oven at least 12 inches from boiler. Switch oven to "low" broil. Broil them for about 8 minutes until meat is translucent. (If the lobsters are a bit frozen, this could take twice as long! And they won't taste as good.) Remove from oven and let cool. Cut each tail entirely through the shell. Then gently rip the lobster meat out. Cut into pieces.

Source

I woke up dreaming about this recipe. Then I found it on the internet. I have modified it, of course. And continue to tinker with it. Versions of this are served at Cottonwood Grille and the Tavern in Boise. They are very good, but not the same at all as my version. And not as good.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SEA SCALLOPS WITH BROWNED BUTTER, CAPERS & LEMON

Ingredients	4 servings
Prep the scallops	
Sea scallops (preferably dry-packed scallops) (size U15 or larger size) (smaller number = larger scallop)	1.5 lbs.
Salt	a sprinkle
Brown the scallops	
Avocado or grapeseed oil	1 tsp.
Butter	4 Tbsp.
Scallions (cut, white part only) (save the green part)	2 scallions
Capers (drained)	¼ cup
Add lemon to sauce	
Lemon juice (freshly squeezed)	1 lemon
Lemon zest (from the same lemon)	
Salt and pepper	to taste
Plate	
Scallion greens (chopped)	(from the same scallions)
Lemon wedges	1 lemon (a second lemon)

Equipment*:*

I prefer a copper skillet. A cast iron frying pan is also excellent. The goal is plenty of heat.

Directions:

Salt and dry the scallops

Fresh (well, they're probably previously frozen) scallops require little attention. Pat them dry and set them on a plate to bring to room temperature. If necessary (probably not), remove and discard side tendons.

If frozen, thaw the scallops well in advance (over an hour). Set them on a plate with a paper towel to let them dry. Replace damp paper towels, pat dry, and repeat as necessary. (Drying is important. We want to fry them, not steam them.)

Prep the lemons

Zest one of the lemons. Set aside the zest. Make lemon juice from the zested lemon. Cut the other lemon into wedges for serving.

Sauté the scallops

Add a tiny bit of avocado or grapeseed oil to frying pan and heat until the oil is barely smoking. It must be very hot in order to brown them. But not crazy hot, or they will get scorched.

Place scallops in hot pan. Don't molest them until they are golden brown (2 to 4 minutes). Flip them and let them barely brown on the other side (about 2 minutes) but still under-done. Don't turn them, just leave them in the pan and add the butter, scallion whites, and capers. Sauté everything for a minute, swirling the pan and spooning the butter sauce over the scallops. When done, the butter sauce should begin to brown and smell nutty; the scallops should be opaque.

Add lemon and zest

Remove the scallops. Add the lemon juice and lemon zest to the sauce. Add salt and pepper to taste. Keep warm until ready to serve. If necessary, warm the scallops by putting them back in the sauce just before serving.

Plate

Plate the scallops, topped with a sprinkle of chopped scallions. Serve lemon wedges for people to squeeze extra juice as desired. Serve with Orzo di Giovanni (p. 196) on the side, ladling the sauce over the scallops and the orzo.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Source:

Christopher Kimball's Milk Street Cookbook: *The World in a Skillet* (2022), which Andy Meyer gave me for Father's Day 2022.

Notes:

This recipe is basically an Italian piccata. Kimball's recipe calls for olive oil; I use grapeseed oil because of its higher smoke point. It browns the scallops nicely. See notes under "Scallops (types and sizes)" on page 29.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

COQUILLES ST. JACQUES AU GRATIN (SCALLOPS)

Ingredients	4 servings (large appetizer)
Breadcrumb mixture	
Fresh breadcrumbs (chopped in Cuisinart)	⅔ cup
Butter (melted)	3 Tbsp.
Minced parsley (fresh or dried)	1 Tbsp.
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	⅓ tsp.
Greyère cheese (grated) –put ⅔ into the breadcrumbs, reserve the rest	5 oz.
Or substitute Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (finely grated)	¾ cup
Shallots, mushrooms, wine, cream & scallops	
Butter	2 Tbsp.
Shallots (minced) (or substitute onions)	4 large shallots
Garlic (minced) (optional)	½ tsp. (just a touch)
Fresh mushrooms (cleaned and sliced)	8 oz.
Salt	A nice sprinkle
Crushed red pepper or cayenne	a generous sprinkle
Dry white wine	⅔ cup
Sea scallops (feel free to substitute bay scallops)	1 lb. (12-15 scallops, 3+ per person)
Heavy cream	1 cup
Egg yolk (optional)	1 egg
Scallop water (collected after the poached scallops have rested)	all of it
Paprika or cayenne	A tiny shake
Salt and pepper	To taste
Whole fresh tarragon leaves (two in a "cross" for each serving)	Two per serving

Recipe variations:

This dish is traditionally prepared in individual scallop shells, with the scallops placed on a bed of sautéed mushrooms in a wine/cream sauce. Alternatively, it can be served surrounded by piped mashed potatoes (see alternative recipe below). Either may be topped with breadcrumbs and cheese (or just cheese)—"au Gratin." If you wish to break the rules (as I have done), you may go overboard by doing all three. Feel free to pick and choose.

Scallop notes:

See notes under "Scallops (types and sizes)" on page 17.

Equipment:

You will need a good, large frying pan to prepare the food. I prefer copper, but that is hardly necessary.

This is classically served in individual portions in a clean shell of the scallop—which you may purchase and reuse. Porcelain shell-shaped dishes are also available. Or they may be served in individual "gratin" dishes or ramekins. Alternatively, they may be combined in a larger serving dish, to be divided and distributed to plates after cooking.

Directions:

Breadcrumb mixture

Combine breadcrumbs, melted butter, ⅔ of the cheese (reserving the rest), and the spices in a bowl. Mix together and set aside.

Sauté the shallots, garlic, and mushrooms

Sauté the shallots in butter for a minute. Add the garlic (optional) and continue sautéing a couple more minutes until shallots are softened but yet golden. Add the mushrooms and continue sautéing until they are nicely done, just beginning to brown—perhaps 7 minutes, but this will vary. During the sauté, season with salt, and crushed red pepper.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Add wine and sauté the scallops

Add the wine, bring to a light boil, and let it reduce for a couple of minutes. Add the shallots and simmer them in the wine sauce with the mushrooms. (If making a large amount, do this in batches.) Turn them and let them cook until they are no longer translucent and are beginning to firm up, about four minutes total depending on their size (much less for bay scallops).

Set aside scallops, and add cream

Remove the scallops to a plate or bowl, and let them sit. Strain out and reserve the mushrooms and shallots; return the wine sauce to the frying pan. Add the cream to the mushroom sauce and cook to reduce by half or more. Add all of the "scallop water" that has collected in the bowl holding the poached scallops. When the cream has reduced, remove from heat and quickly whisk in an egg yolk. Season with cayenne, tarragon, lemon juice and zest. Taste the sauce, and add salt and pepper as required.

Assemble the dish

Very optional and non-traditional: Do as below (with the mushrooms), but start each shell with a thin layer of mashed potatoes (separate recipe). Or finish them up by piping some mashed potatoes in a circle around the scallops at the end.

Place the mushrooms and shallots on the bottom of each shell or dish. Top each shell with 3 or 4 large sea scallops (or more bay scallops). Spoon the cream sauce over the scallops. Top with a sprinkle of the breadcrumb mixture (optional). Top with a sprinkle of cheese. Finally, top with a tiny sprinkle of paprika or cayenne.

If you are making ahead, you may refrigerate them until ready for broiling.

Broiling

If using shells (which are tippy), first place a layer of scrunched up tinfoil on a sheet pan. Otherwise, place gratin dishes on a flat layer of tinfoil on a sheet pan.

If broiling right away, broil on high (10 inches or more away from the broiler) for 5-8 minutes until hot and bubbly and caramelized. Serve immediately.

If the scallops were refrigerated, first place in a 350° oven for about 15 to warm them up. Then finish them off under the broiler.

Alternative recipe – with piped mashed potatoes:

Skip the mushrooms. Sauté the shallot. Add wine and reduce. Sauté the scallops in the wine sauce, then remove them. Add a béchamel sauce (without seasonings) to the wine sauce. Stir in and melt the gruyère. Then add the scallops back into the creamy sauce. Place scallops and sauce on the shells. Surround by a piping of mashed potatoes. Sprinkle on more gruyère cheese. Sprinkle with chopped parsley (or tarragon) and a touch of paprika or cayenne. Broil until golden brown (5-8 minutes).

Etymology:

For some reason, the French put a hyphen in "Coquilles St.-Jacques." I omit it.

"Coquilles St. Jacques" simply means "scallops" in French. In other words, the name of the main ingredient is also the name of the dish. (Similarly, "scampi" means shrimp in Italian and also refers to a dish of pasta and shrimp. The American chain restaurant habit of calling this dish "Shrimp Scampi" amounts to ignorant redundancy.)

To break it down, "coquille" means shell (which in which this dish is traditionally served). St. Jacques, of course, is a saint (see below). But here it refers to the variety of big scallops from the northeast Atlantic (aka great scallop or king scallop; the Latin name for the species is pecten maximus). Oddly, the French don't typically use the smaller Mediterranean scallop for this recipe despite the fact that the Latin species name refers to the Saint (pecten jacobeaus). In any event, the U.S. equivalent (harvested on our side of the Atlantic) is the sea scallop (Latin species name, placopecten magellanicus). The American alternative to sea scallop is the smaller, sweeter, and more tender bay scallop).

If topped with broiled breadcrumbs and/or cheese, the dish becomes "au Gratin." Julia Child, prefers "gratinéed." This is simply French for "by grating"—as in grating cheese. However, the "au Gratin" or "gratinéed" term is often omitted from modern American recipes.

So what does this have to do with St. Jacques? The saint in question is not just any saint, but James the Great, one of the first Apostles to join Jesus and the first to be martyred. He is now the patron saint of Spain. Santiago is Spanish for St. James, and the city's cathedral is believed to house his relics. The Apostle James had preached in Spain before returning to the Holy Land,

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

where he was martyred in 44 AD at the hands of Herod Agrippa. According to legend, his disciples managed to return his headless body to his beloved Galicia (in Spain) with the assistance of a marvelous, rudderless stone ship navigated by angels. There, St. James was buried at a secret location and forgotten. Forgotten, that is, until a 9th century hermit was guided by a star to the gravesite. Shortly thereafter, the saint—now dead then for several hundred years—miraculously joined in the Battle of Clavijo pitting outnumbered Christians against the invading Muslims. This, in turn, inspired Christians to march in the Crusades.

Since the Middle Ages, pilgrims have walked *The Way* (Camino de Santiago) for penance and enlightenment. The scallop shell, found on the shores of Galicia, is their symbol. The connection is unclear. One version is that as the boat carrying the Saint's body back to Spain approached the land, a wedding was taking place ashore. The groom, on horseback, fell into the sea when his horse was spooked. He emerged miraculously (with the help of the deceased saint), covered in scallop shells. In any event, ever since, pilgrims have worn a scallop shell attached to their clothing. Originally, it was collected in Galicia, to prove they had made the journey. Later, the shells were handed out to the pilgrims at the beginning of the journey.

When employed in the context of St. James, the shell always is displayed with its outer convex surface showing. In contrast, when the shell refers to the Goddess Venus, the same scallop shell is shown with its concave interior surface showing. Think of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (aka *Venus on the Half Shell*) on display at the Uffizi in Florence.

According to the 1931 version of *The Joy of Cooking*, the term "scalloped" may be traced to this recipe for Coquilles St. Jacques. It derives from the fact that this French recipe for scallops was made with cream. Over time, any creamy thing came to be referred to as scalloped (as in scalloped potatoes or scalloped oysters), which, of course, has nothing to do with scallops.

The Shell Oil Company (technically Royal Dutch Shell) takes its logo from this shell.

Sources:

Irma Rombauer, et al, *Joy of Cooking* (1997); Julia Child, *The Way To Cook,* Julia Child, et al., *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*; Ina Garten's NYT recipe; foodwishes.blogspot.com (Chef John); clubfoody.com (Chef Frankie); thespruceeats.com.

Notes:

One recipe (thespruceeats.com) calls for curry powder. I tried this, and it was good. But I left it out because it is so non-traditional.

One classic recipe called for mincing the mushrooms, so that you end up with more of a mushroom sauce.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DAD'S FROM SCRATCH CRAB CAKES

Ingredients	6 very large crab cakes (3 people as main course)
Chop the breadcrumbs (in Cuisinart):	
Homemade breadcrumbs from French bread (or any white bread) (chopped super fine)	1 ½ cup (total): ½ cup for crab mixture & 1 cup outside of the crab cakes
Combine ingredients:	
Egg (beaten)	1 egg
Some of the homemade breadcrumbs	¾ cup
Green onions (finely chopped – use white part & a little of the green stem) or substitute shallots	2 small green onions (2 Tbsp.) or 1-2 shallots (2 Tbsp.)
Melted butter	2 Tbsp.
Mayonnaise	½ cup
Worcestershire sauce	½ tsp.
Fresh lemon zest	zest of 1 lemon
Fresh lemon juice	juice of ½ lemon (save the rest for the remoulade)
Grey Poupon Dijon mustard	1 tsp.
Parsley flakes (dry)	1 tsp.
Old Bay seasoning	½ tsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	½ tsp.
Salt	¼ tsp.
Add the crab last:	
Phillips brand fresh lump crab meat from Costco is very good ($23/lb.—jumped to $37/lb. in 2022). Can also use fresh blue swimming crab or Dungeness crab from grocery store.	1 lb. (16 oz.)
Final step:	
More homemade breadcrumbs (to coat crab cakes)	1 cup
Melted butter	1 stick
Remoulade sauce: (see recipe on page 21)	

Equipment

An electric griddle is best. It can maintain a steady, precise temperature. Use a large mixing bowl to combine the crab ingredients.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions

Breadcrumbs

See recipe for breadcrumbs. Basically, put bread cubes in a Cuisinart with chopping blade. Don't toast them.

Combine in mixing bowl

First, add the egg to empty mixing bowl and beat it. Then add all other ingredients EXCEPT THE CRAB. Mix together. Finally, gently fold the crab into the mixture.

Form the patties

Measure out the crab mixture into balls. Press them into patties, squeezing out any "juice." For main course, make them the size of a hamburger. For appetizers, they can be as small as you like.

Chill out

Chill in refrigerator for at least ½ hour, up to 24 hours. This chilling will solidify the crab cakes somewhat, but they will still be very mushy and will require delicate handling on the griddle. Bring them out of the fridge 30 minutes or so before frying, to bring them to room temperature.

Fry 'em up

When ready to fry, sprinkle on additional raw breadcrumbs (on both sides) and gently press them in.

Heat electric skillet to 285˚. This slow cooking temperature is essential to heat them all the way through before they brown—especially for larger crab cakes. You could get away with a higher temperature for small crab cakes.

Place each crab cake on top of a little melted butter on the electric skillet.

Brown well – This may take 8-12 minutes per side for large crab cakes, but keep an eye on them. Drizzle some more butter on top of each cake before turning. These cakes are quite fragile and will tend to fall apart. So flip them gently and carefully.

All done

Keep cakes warm in oven until ready to serve.

Serve with lemon wedges and remoulade sauce (or, if you're in a rush, substitute a Midwestern homemade tartar sauce of mayonnaise and sweet pickle relish).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EASY FISH FRY

Ingredients	2 servings
Neptune Brand Pub Style Halibut (from Costco)	4-5 halibut pieces (½ of 32 oz. box.)
Vegetable oil	½ to 1 gallon
Serve with:	
Lemon wedges	1 lemon
Remoulade sauce or	(separate recipe)
Tartar sauce	(separate recipe)

Equipment:
For retrieving the fish, try the following:
A Chinese wire & wood wok thingy.
Super long metal tongs with wood handle.
You can use an electric fryer. But they are a fuss to clean up.
I use a large, heavy Calphalon pot. It needs to be at least 8 inches tall, because things may "boil" up like mad when first put in (if even a tiny bit wet). (More of an issue for French fries.)
If you're only doing the fish (and no fries), you can get by with less oil.
If you don't have a stove with high BTUs, it can be hard to achieve and maintain the cooking temperature needed. So plan ahead and keep heating that oil pot (with a lid on) while other things happen. And don't turn it off between stages, or you'll waste 15 minutes bringing it back to temp. I've tried adding a lot of oil, but that is very hard to re-heat on a stove w/o massive BTUs. It is best to do this in multiple batches if making for more than two people.

Directions:

Fry them

Thaw the halibut pieces in advance of frying.
Heat oil (which may have been used for French fries first). You want to cook them at 350°, but temperature will drop. So start at 360°, but not higher (to avoid browning them before they are done inside). You want them to cook through before they get brown. This may take 3-4 minutes. If necessary, keep in a warming oven (not a hot oven) for a few minutes until fries are completed. Serve as soon as possible.

Serve

Serve with lemon wedges and remoulade sauce or tartar sauce (separate recipe).
And homemade French fries (separate recipe).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SALMON ON THE TRAEGER

Ingredients	2 servings
Salmon fillet (Alaska sockeye is great)	1 lb.
Olive oil (Olivin is best)	½ cup
White Balsamic vinegar	¼ cup
Fresh squeezed lemon juice	½ lemon
Your choice of seasoning: Traeger Salmon Shake seasoning (even chicken will do), or Cajun's Choice Blackened Seasoning	

Prepare marinade: olive oil, white vinegar, and lemon juice.

Place the salmon fillets flesh up on a large jelly roll or other pan. Drizzle with all of the marinade. After a while, flip them over. Marinate for 30 to 60 minutes.

When ready to cook, shake on the seasoning on both sides (liberally on the skin side, moderately on the other).

Place the salmon (skin side down) directly on the grill of the Traeger smoker (preheated to 350°). Close lid and don't peek for: 18 minutes (very thin fillets), 20 minutes (medium fillets), 25 minutes (huge, thick salmon). Adjustments may be required, but be cautious about going longer. They may rest a short while, but serve soon.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CRAB LEGS

Ingredients	2 servings
King crab legs	3 lbs. (generous: three large legs per person) 2 lbs. (adequate if served with lots of appetizers and sides)
or Snow crab	4 lbs.
Parchment paper	
Butter (melted) (preferably unsalted)	¾ stick per person
Lemon wedges (optional)	½ lemon per person

Shopping:
King crabs come in a variety of sizes. The biggest and most tender come from Costco. Indeed, their snow crab legs are nearly as big as the King crab legs (and nearly as expensive).
If you buy snow crab, buy a little more (ratio of meat to shell is not as high).

Storing:
You may buy the crabs the day before. Put the bag of crabs on a jelly roll pan to catch melting ice and crab juice. Store in fridge.

Directions:
The crabs are fully cooked and flash frozen (at sea or soon after). All you need to do is thaw them (if they are still frozen) and get them piping hot.
Place parchment paper on a giant "jelly roll" pan (with a rim). (The parchment paper is not essential, but it aids cleanup and provides a heat barrier for more even cooking without burning.)
Lay crabs on top. Be sure to remove any ice clinging to them. You don't want them sitting in hot water in the oven. Place in 350º oven. 15-20 minutes for king crabs (longer for a huge batch). 10-15 minutes for snow crabs. Check at the beginning of this time range. As soon as they are very hot to the touch, they're done. Don't overcook!!!

Serve at once:
Serve with melted butter (preferably individual bowls heated by a tea candle for each guest or two). Lemon wedges are also a traditional accompaniment, though not in our family.
We serve the crabs in their shells. We provide escargot forks (with long, sturdy, pointy tines), which are a marvelous tool for cracking open the shells (use like a letter opener).
Put an empty "discard bowl" on the table for the empty crab shells.
If the crabs get a bit cool during dinner, don't worry. They will still be delicious.

Serve with:
The crabs go well with parmesan roasted red potatoes and a simple salad, vegetable, or even homemade coleslaw. We serve crabs on Christmas Eve as a second course after Swiss fondue. But you'll want a long break in between courses to recover your appetite!

Notes on drawn butter (aka clarified butter):
Some people go to the fuss of making drawn butter. This involves gently boiling the butter after it is melted. This causes the water in the butter to boil out as steam. The resulting foam will then sink to the bottom. The butter is then strained through cheesecloth (or a coffee filter) to remove the browned bits. You now have something more stable that can withstand higher cooking temperatures, and a bit prettier—at the cost of being less flavorful than simple melted butter. So why bother?

Notes on steaming:
I used to steam them. That works great, if you have a GIANT covered pot. You may skip the vegetable steamer contraption. Steam them for 5-7 minutes. Longer than that, and they'll turn rubbery. But the oven works even better. This avoids the problem of the crab shells getting soft.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PASTA & ITALIAN

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EARTHQUAKE SPAGHETTI

Ingredients	4 servings (or 3 huge servings)
Choice of sauce:	
Spaghetti sauce from jar, such as: • Williams Sonoma Organic Creamy Vodka Sauce (the best!) • Rao's or Carbone's (brand) Vodka Sauce • Rao's or Carbone's (brand) Arrabbiata • Michael's of Brooklyn Arrabbiata sauce. • Michael's of Brooklyn Home Style Gravy • Lucini Rustic tomato vodka sauce (Co-op) • DeLallo Pomodoro Fresco - Creamy Vodka	32 oz. jar
Choice of meat (or some of each!):	
Store-bought raw meatballs, such as: • Carando brand Sicilian meatballs —spicy or regular • Mozzarella Rustica—from Albertsons are good	16 oz.
Kielbasa (chopped into fat slices (just over ½ inch), then cut each slice in half, and then again into quarters)	14 or 16 oz. (depends on package)
Linguica Portuguese sausage	11 oz.
Zatarain's Andouille Smoked Sausage	14 oz.
Or make your own homemade meatballs	14 oz.
If using vodka sauce (add in last 10 minutes):	
Vodka	2 oz.
Cream	½ cup
Sautéed vegetables:	
Mushrooms (quartered or cut into sixths)	8 oz.
Green, red, or yellow pepper (medium chop)	1 pepper
Onions (medium chop)	1 medium onion
Avocado oil or olive oil	as needed for sauté
Crushed red chili flakes	1 tsp.
Pasta:	
your choice of penne or any other pasta Rummo brand dried fettuccini (imported from Italy) is great!	13 oz. (dry weight)
***Cheese*:**	
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (grated)	Sprinkle to taste

Equipment

I use a large copper frying pan for sauté. The sauce goes into a Dutch oven (or any oven-proof covered pot). Finally, use a separate pot to boil the pasta.

Prep time

50 minutes to chop and sauté everything, with opera playing. (I have no idea how long it would take without opera playing.) Another hour of happy relaxing time in the oven.

Directions

Pre-warm the sauce:

Put the spaghetti sauce in a Dutch oven or other large oven-proof pot. Cover and place in oven at 250º while everything is sautéed.

Chop the kielbasa:

If using kielbasa or other raw sausage, cut them into thick slices. Then cut each slice into quarters to make bite-size pieces. The quartering (rather than slices) will greatly simplify the browning, allowing you to toss randomly w/o burning.

Brown the kielbasa:

Brown the kielbasa in a touch of olive oil on medium-high heat for 8 minutes or so. Remove kielbasa to colander, leaving any grease & oil it in the pan to be used for sautéing the vegetables.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Sauté the vegetables:

Sauté onions, mushrooms, and green peppers (together) in avocado oil or other oil on high heat. They may be cooked together, but give the onions and mushrooms a 4-minute head-start; then add the green peppers. Toss in the chile flakes. Add additional splashes of oil as needed. Total cook time is 20 minutes or so (longer for a big batch). This seemingly huge amount of vegetables will reduce a lot. This is all about flavor.

Drain the vegetables:

After sauté, move everything to a single colander over a plate to drain the grease and oil.

Combine & put in the oven:

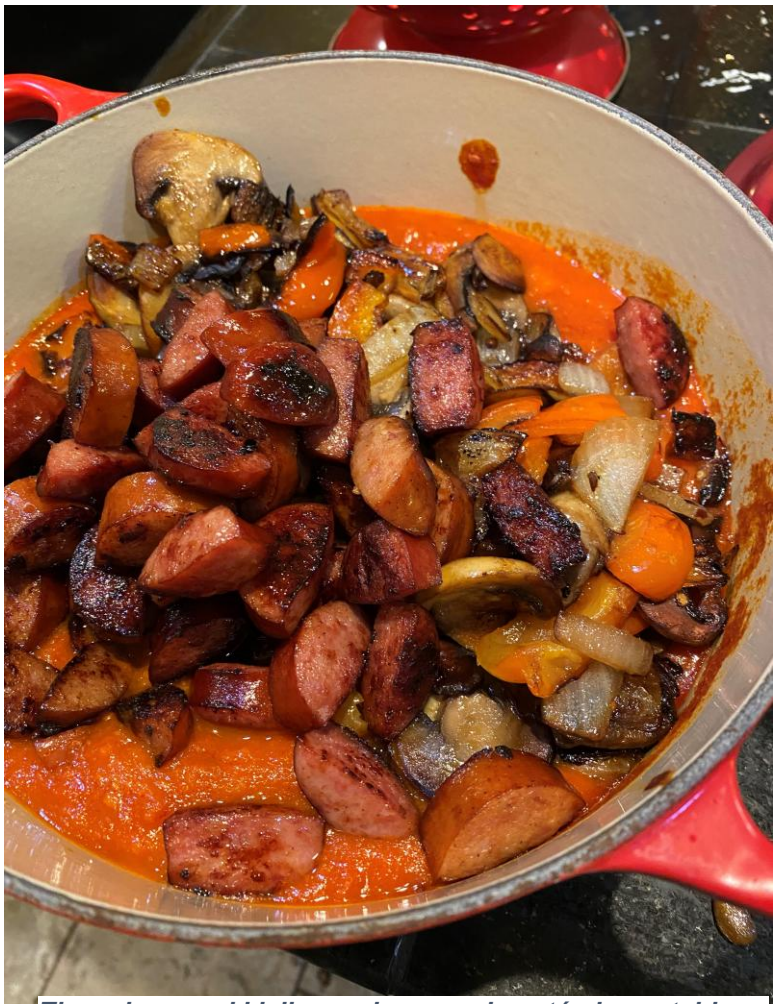
Add the sautéed vegetables to the spaghetti sauce that has been warming in the oven. Add the meat. Cover and return to oven: For raw meatballs: 350°. For kielbasa or other cooked sausage: 275°. If both raw and cooked are mixed: 350°. Bake for 1 hour. (Raw meatballs should reach internal temperature of 170°.) If you are not ready to serve, you make keep the sauce in the oven even longer at a lower temperature.

If using vodka sauce:

If using vodka sauce, when only 15 minutes are left, add vodka and cream to make it even more creamy and vodka-y. Cover and return to oven.

Drain and plate:

Drain the pasta, add it to the sauce in the pot, toss. Serve with grated Parmesan or Romano.



These browned kielbasa pieces and sautéed vegetables are sitting on top of the sauce before being stirred and placed in the oven.

Recipe name

For years, we called this Tuesday Night Spaghetti, because it's so easy to make on a school night (and we make it a lot). On 3/31/2020, while I was making this spaghetti (and Karen was at home attending a Zoom writing class during Lockdown), a 6.5 magnitude earthquake hit near Stanley, which rattled everyone in Boise for a couple of minutes! We then renamed this dish Earthquake Spaghetti.

Source

Loosely based on a meatball recipe in Food and Wine (11/2015).

Notes

Sounds crazy to put raw meatballs in the sauce, but it works very nicely. So long as you cook it an hour. Surprisingly, they release very little grease.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PASTA ALLA VODKA

Ingredients	3-4 servings
The sauce:	
Prosciutto (comes thinly sliced, then cut into smallish pieces) or Pancetta (chopped into cubes)	4 oz. (or double this, it's a matter of taste)
Butter (only if using prosciutto)	3 Tbsp.
Red pepper flakes	½ tsp.
Garlic	1 Tbsp.
Tomato paste	2 ½ Tbsp.
Vodka	½ cup (8 Tbsp.)
Passata (uncooked tomato puree) (Mutti brand is good)	2 cups (24.5 oz. jar)
Heavy cream	⅔ cup
Salt	¾ tsp.
Pepper	½ tsp.
Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano cheese (finely grated) or substitute Pecorino Romano (finely graded)	¼ cup
More vodka	1 Tbsp.
Pasta water (reserve 1 ½ cup)	as needed (¼ cup or more)
The pasta:	
Rigatoni or penne pasta	13 oz. (dry weight)
The plate:	
Fresh basil leaves (whole or chopped) or fresh parsley (finely chopped)	Add a little as a garnish, if you like (mostly for show)
More cheese	Sprinkle to taste

Equipment: I use a large copper frying pan to brown the meat and prepare the vodka sauce. For a large batch, I use a Le Creuset Dutch oven. Use a separate pot or Dutch oven to boil the pasta.

Timing: This is a quick meal. Get the salads done and the pasta water boiling early. Put in the pasta so that it finishes at same time as sauce.

Directions:

Brown the pork

If using prosciutto, melt butter on medium heat; no butter needed for cubed pancetta (which is like bacon). Sauté the pork with the red pepper flakes on medium heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown and fond begins to form. (Fond is the flavor-packed browned bits of goodness in bottom of pan.) About 5 minutes for pancetta. Prosciutto takes less time and does not produce a fond.

Add garlic, tomato paste

Add the garlic and cook for another minute. Add tomato paste, stir, and cook for another 30 seconds.

Add vodka

Add vodka. Stir, scraping up the fond, until vodka has mostly evaporated and the meat begins to sizzle (3-4 minutes).

Add passata, cream, salt & pepper

Add the passata, cream, salt & pepper. Adjust heat to a gentle simmer. Cook uncovered for 15 minutes or so.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Add cheese (optional)

When the pasta is nearly done, add finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or Pecorino Romano to the sauce, and allow it to melt in. (2 minutes) Cover and keep on super-low burner to keep it warm until pasta is ready.

Cook the pasta, reserve pasta water

Meanwhile, cook the pasta in vigorously boiling, salted water. RESERVE PASTA WATER before draining.

Combine pasta and vodka sauce

At the last minute, add another generous splash of vodka to the sauce, and mix it in. Add the drained pasta to the pot or pan with the sauce. Add reserved pasta water as necessary (probably ¼ cup or more). You want it a on the soupy side, because it will thicken after plating.
This should be served at once. If need be, you may keep the finished pasta (covered) in a warming oven at 230º; this is not ideal and will require extra pasta water.

Plate it

Optional (to show off): Garnish with fresh basil leaves or fresh parsley.
Serve with additional grated Parmesan or Romano for guests to sprinkle on.

***Source*:**

This recipe is largely based on one in *Cook's Illustrated* (Sept./Oct. 2024).

Passata:

The distinguishing feature and genius of the *Cook's Illustrated* recipe is the use of passata, an uncooked tomato puree (aka raw strained tomatoes) rather than a traditional Italian tomato sauce. Passata is available in some US grocery stores and on Amazon.com.

Vodka:

This dish does not taste like vodka. It is added early, and the alcohol burns off. (The splash of vodka near the end adds complexity with only a whisper of vodka flavor.) Vodka is a critical flavor enhancer that also keeps the cream from separating. According to the NYT: "The alcohol is said to help fat disperse more evenly, keeping the sauce emulsion glossy and creamy." According to *Cook's Illustrated*: "The flavor compounds in the tomato, pancetta, and garlic are primarily fat-soluble, but they're also soluble in alcohol. When those flavor compounds dissolve in alcohol, they're more volatile than if dissolved in fat—meaning they can disperse in the air and thus into our noses, allowing us to taste them more fully."

***Variations*:**

Most recipes for pasta alla vodka do not include meat. Those that do, usually call for pancetta. A fun alternative is thinly shaved prosciutto, which almost seems to disappear into the sauce, infusing it with goodness. You may add skip the pork, add just a bit (to flavor the sauce without being noticeably meaty), or quite a bit. This is a matter of taste. There is debate over butter vs. EVOO for the sauté. Butter wins. But no butter is needed with cubed pancetta, which is fatty like bacon.
Recipes vary over whether to add cheese to the sauce itself. If you do, Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano cheese are traditional. Or you may substitute Pecorino Romano, which is creamier.
Some recipes, including some by famous chefs, call for sautéed minced onion. *Cook's Illustrated* gave the onions an unambiguous thumbs down. I agree.

***Arrabbiata*:**

Arrabbiata sauce bears some resemblance a vodka sauce, with amped up red chili peppers and no vodka. Tognazzi called his pasta all vodka dish "furious penne." Another word for "angry sauce" is sugo all'arrabbiata. This is a Roman dish dating to the 1950s and 60s, when hot food was in vogue in the Lazio region of Italy. Pasta all'arrabbiata appears in Fellini's *Roma* (1972). The best Arrabbiata I ever tasted was prepared by Mario Batali at his restaurant in Las Vegas.

Origin:

Penne alla vodka is not an ancient recipe. Its origin is unclear, but it became popular in 1980s in both Italy and the US. In both countries, it was associated with the raging

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

discotheque scene. In fact, it was referred to at the time as “disco sauce.” The idea of enhancing the flavor of tomato sauce with vodka was first recorded just a half century ago in the 1974 memoir, *L’abbuffone* (the gluttony), by the Italian comedic actor Ugo Tognazzi. He described his recipe for *penne all’infuriata* (furious pasta) which included a full glass of Polish chile-infused vodka. Tognazzi is best remembered on this side of the Atlantic for his role in the 1978 French comedy *La Cage aux Folles* which became the highest grossing foreign film ever released in the U.S.

SNL:

Penne alla Vodka was lampooned in a sketch on *Saturday Night Live* (5/4/2024), in which it was depicted as an uninspired but affectionately tolerated dish universally served in a “big ass aluminum tray” at weddings, funerals, anniversaries, and graduations.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SPAGHETTI ALLA CARBONARA

Ingredients	2 servings (generous)
***Pork*:**	
Choice of: • Guanciale (pork cheek) (chopped into slender elongated cubes shaped like little sticks). • Cubed pancetta. • Thin-sliced pancetta, cut into strips. • Thick sliced bacon.	4 oz. (¼ lb.) is adequate for guanciale or pancetta 8 oz. (½ lb.) (5 thick strips) for bacon
Reserved grease (after sautéing)	A generous splash.
Vegetables (all optional—these are non-traditional add-ons for Karen's pleasure):	
Shallot (finely chopped) Or substitute: onion	½ very large, 1 large, or 2 very small shallots.
Frozen peas (warmed in oven)	¼ cup (½ cup if are married to Karen)
Butter	1 pat (for warming the peas).
Egg, pepper & cheese mixture:	
Eggs (room temperature)	3 eggs (2 yolks and 1 whole egg)
Freshly ground pepper	A few generous turns of the grinder
Choice of: • Pecorino Romano • Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano Cheese (finely grated, use micro blade of Cuisinart)	⅔ cup (adding more later when serving) Use in any combination. I do 50/50 Romano and Parmesan. Traditionally, it is just Romano.
The pasta:	
Bucatini, spaghetti, linguini, or narrow fettuccini	6 oz.
Water (very lightly salted)	Not a ton. You want the pasta water to be starchy.
Pasta water (reserve before draining the pasta)	Reserve 1 cup (per 2 people). Use as needed.
Plate it:	
Top each serving with a turn of freshly ground pepper and a sprinkle of Pecorino Romano.	

Equipment

Put the serving plates into a warming oven.
Use a mixing bowl for the eggs and cheese.
Use a large Dutch oven or other pot to boil the spaghetti.
Use a large frying pan (I prefer copper) to sauté the pork and shallots. If cooking for 3 or fewer, the pasta may be finished in the frying pan.
If cooking for more than 3 people, use another pot (or the empty pasta pot) for the final combination. See "Steaming notes" below.

Directions

Break the eggs; mix with pepper

Set out eggs early to bring to room temperature. For egg yolks, gently crack each egg in half over the sink. Hold the yolk in one of the half-shells, then move it to the other empty half-shell, so that the white part runs out of the half-shell into the sink. Drop the precious yolk into bowl. Add the additional whole egg(s) to the same bowl. Add a generous grind of pepper. Scramble with a fork.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Warm the peas

Place frozen peas and some butter in a bowl or measuring cup. Cover with tin foil and place in warming oven.

Sauté the pancetta or guanciale

If using guanciale or pancetta, congratulations on your wealth and success.
Sauté guanciale or cubed pancetta in a frying pan over medium heat for about 5 minutes. They require no olive oil. Remove finished pork and set aside, leaving the grease in the frying pan. Sliced pancetta needs a bit of olive oil or butter. It takes just a couple of minutes to heat.

Or: *Oven-fry the bacon*

If using bacon, I prefer to oven-fry it. (See "How to oven-fry bacon" on page 14.) Place whole strips of bacon in a single layer in a large broiling pan. Cooking time varies—about 35 minutes at 350º. The goal is just past chewy but not crispy. This will mimic the taste of guanciale (which is the classic ingredient). Move to cutting board, and slice into thins strips.

Sauté the shallots

Sauté the shallots in a frying pan with leftover grease (adding a touch of olive oil if needed). If time permits, do this very gently for 30 minutes or longer in order to caramelize. You may leave them unattended for a long time if you set temperature so low as to produce barely detectible simmering bubbles. If cooked gently, the shallots will not blacken but only turn tan.

Keep it warm

It is critical to keep the pork, shallots, and peas warm (so they don't cool the pasta when added later). Combine them in a measuring cup or bowl. Cover with tinfoil and place in a warming oven.

Boil the pasta

Meanwhile, boil the pasta in lightly salted water. Don't use a ton of water; you want a starchy pasta water. For this dish, the pasta should be cooked a tiny bit softer than al dente. (e.g., 11 minutes for bucatini.) Before draining, reserve pasta water. Drain the pasta in a colander.
(Or remove the pasta from the pot, leaving the water. See "Steaming notes.")

Combine cheese & eggs

While the pasta boils, add the cheese to the beaten eggs & pepper. Stir together with fork until blended. Set aside. (Do not add the cheese to the eggs more than 10 minutes in advance.)

Make the carbonara

If cooking for 1 to 3 people, put the drained pasta into the frying pan with reserved grease (to get the flavors of the sautéed pork and shallots). For a larger batch, put the drained pasta back into the empty pasta pot (adding the reserved grease).

Add a splash of pasta water to the pasta (¼ cup for two people). Re-heat the pasta gently for just a minute. Drop the stove temperature to the lowest possible setting. If you have anything more than the gentlest heat, you will end up with scrambled eggs. (See "Steaming notes.")

Stir in the egg/pepper/cheese mixture. Add more pasta water as necessary. Keep it on just enough heat to keep everything quite warm. Remove the pork, peas, and shallots from the warming oven, and mix them into the pasta. (Some chefs reserve a third of the fried guanciale and sprinkle it on top after plating—so that it adds a crunchy texture. But I don't like it crunchy.)

Let the pasta continue to absorb additional splashes of pasta water, with occasional stirring. You are done when it is no longer soupy, but silky wet.

If you pause before serving, you will need to add another splash of pasta water. It must be served quite moist; because it may thicken a bit after being served. Err on the side of wet.

Plate

Serve at once onto plates pre-warmed in the oven. Top each serving with a turn of freshly ground pepper (except for Karen's plate). And a sprinkle of Pecorino Romano or parmesan cheese (or let guests do their own).

Steaming notes

When combining the cooked pasta and egg mixture, you need a very gentle heat to cook the raw egg without scrambling them. There are various ways of achieving this.

- If you own a high-end stove that has a very low burner setting (aiming at the temperature of steam), you may do everything on the stovetop in the frying pan or Dutch oven. This is the easiest approach.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

- You may concoct a double boiler by perching the frying pan (or other pot) on top of the larger pot used for boiling the pasta—with the pasta water still in it. Instead of a frying pan, you may use a medium pot that fits into the larger pot, but the medium pot must have handles that rest on the rim of the larger pot (so it doesn't fall in). You don't need an airtight fit. Turn up the heat to create steam, which is the perfect temperature for combining the cooked pasta and egg mixture.
- You may use a large double boiler.
- Famous chef Luciano Monosilio (Luciano Cucina Italiana in Rome) uses a built-in bain-marie (double boiler) to combine the pasta and egg/cheese mixture. That stove looks like it costs about $50,000.

Cream

Most American restaurants add cream to their so-called carbonara (because that is easier to make and tastes more Americanized--familiar). Authentic carbonara has no cream. The creamy texture is accomplished solely with raw eggs, cheese & pasta water—heated very gently, which is tricky to get right.

Occasionally, you will see a recipe with sautéed garlic. But that is rare in Italy.

If you forget to reserve pasta water, substitute cream or half & half (which will extend the time you must spend in purgatory).

Vegetables

The shallots and peas are my add-ons for Karen-worship purposes. They have no place in a classic carbonara, but Karen and I love them. Feel free to leave them out. Or go all-the-way-in and add sautéed mushrooms and green peppers, too! That is even more inauthentic, but a tasty switch-up on occasion. Warning: You will be criticized by some. In his cookbook, *Your Pasta Sucks*, comedian and accomplished amateur chef Matteo Lane has these words about my departure from tradition. "Why you see carbonara with peas or onions, however, I cannot tell you."

Source

My mother first made this dish for the Meyer family when we lived in Florence in 1969. I have loved it ever since, and eat it nonstop when in Rome (or anywhere else I can get the real thing). My mother's recipe is long gone. This recipe is influenced by Luciano Monosilio, known as the King of Carbonara (who earned his first Michelin Star at age 27 and whose restaurant in Rome is Luciano Cucina Italiana).

Etymology

The word "carbonari" refers to "charcoal men" who slowly burning wood to make charcoal, which they sold to blacksmiths, glassmakers, and others. They lived in huts in the forests where they tended their kilns 24-hours a day to prevent their precious wood from turning to ash. Some say that this pasta dish was the staple of these hard-working souls, who made quick, rustic meals with the few ingredients on hand. Another theory is that the dish was named after a secret society that adopted the name of the charcoal men. These carbonari played a pivotal role in resisting rule by foreign monarchies during Napoleon's reign, ultimately leading to the reunification of Italy. The lawyers, military officers, students, and merchants who led this rebellion masqueraded as charcoal men, often fleeing to the forests to escape capture and hold secret meetings (at which they served this pasta dish). (cont'd)

Alas, these origin stories appear to be romantic legends. In fact, there is no reference to this dish in any cookbook or other documentation prior to World War II. The best guess is that American forces liberating Italy had ample rations of bacon and powdered eggs, which they brought into Roman taverns. There, the Italians cleverly concocted this simple pasta dish. The flecks of pepper which topped the dish may have reminded some of coal dust—likely giving the dish its name.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Contrary to my dear, dear mother's impression (who taught me this when she made Carbonara when we lived in Florence), it has nothing to do with feeding the omni-present Carabinieri (the national police).

The name is often shortened to spaghetti carbonara. But the correct term is spaghetti alla carbonara—meaning, "in the style of the charcoal men." If you wonder why it shouldn't be "spaghetti alla carbonari" (ending in "i"), there is a reason. It's the invisible word. The full name of the dish is "spaghetti alla maniera carbonara" (spaghetti in the manner of the carbonari). The invisible word (maniera, meaning "manner") is feminine, so carbonari (masculine plural) changes to carbonara (feminine singular).

Compare: Sole meunière also relies on a hidden word. The real name is sole à la manière meunière (sole in the manner of the miller's wife). Ditto: Patatas Panaderas (potatoes in the style of the bakery).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

RAVIOLI WITH BURNT BUTTER, LEMON, AND SAGE

Ingredients	2 servings
Rana brand lobster ravioli (from Costco) or Ferranti brand butternut squash ravioli (from the Co-op) Artisola brand cacio e pepe (from Whole foods) Giovanni Rana brand, Maine lobster	13 oz. package 12 oz. package 8 oz. package (one too small; two = leftovers)
Salted butter (unsalted butter seems to explode more)	1 ⅓ sticks
Fresh sage (tear off leaves, no stems)	1 ⅓ oz. (2 packages—⅔ oz. each) Yes, this is double what other recipes call for.
Fresh lemon juice	2 lemons
Lemon zest	
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (or Romano and asiago)	Sprinkle very lightly on top, when plated

Equipment:

If cooking for four or fewer, a medium size frying pan is adequate for the butter/sage/lemon sauce.
You must have a good lemon zester.

Timing:

Aim to have the sauce and pasta finish at the same time.
Put on the pasta soon after starting the sauce.

Directions:

Prep

Put the butter out to warm (critical for bringing quickly to heat when making browned butter).
Put on the pasta water to boil.
Zest the lemons (with a lemon zester) before cutting them, and save the zest. Then cut each bare-naked lemon in half and press it for its juice, like it were a Salem witch.
Tear off the sage leaves from the stems.

Burnt butter and sage

Put room temperature butter in frying pan Turn heat to high until butter has melted and foamed (about 3 minutes). (I don't know why, but if you melt butter too slowly or pause after melting it, it will not foam properly. As a result, the sage leaves will not crisp up properly.) After foaming the butter, reduce heat to medium-high.
Dump whole sage leaves into the browned butter. It will foam again.
Promptly remove the sage leaves to a separate plate before they get too crispy.

Add lemon zest and juice

Add the lemon zest to the browned butter – it will foam again.
Finally, add the lemon juice. It will go crazy. Then stop. It's done.

Ravioli

Meanwhile, boil ravioli in lots of water, plenty of salt, and a splash of olive oil. Follow package directions (probably 4 minutes).

Put it together

Use a slotted spoon to gently remove the ravioli from the water and onto a spare plate. Tilt the plate to pour off excess water. Then carefully move and artistically arrange them onto individual plates. Artistically place the sage leaves over the ravioli. Pour the lemon-butter sauce over the ravioli. Allow guests, if they choose, to sprinkle with grated parmesan, Romano, or asiago cheese.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

LOBSTER RAVIOLI WITH LEMON CREAM SAUCE

Ingredients	2 servings
Cream Sauce	(this is generous)
Limoncello (or just use more lemon juice)	⅓ cup
Lemon juice	⅓ lemon
Lemon zest	⅓ lemon (or more, use what you have)
Butter	1 ½ sticks
Heavy cream	⅓ cup
Crab meat (entirely optional)	whatever is on hand (perhaps ½ cup)
Lobster ravioli	
Lobster ravioli (fresh, pre-made) from Costco (Rana brand)	
Plate and serve	
Parsley (finely chopped)	A tiny sprinkle
Parmigiano Reggiano (fresh, finely grated)	As desired

Equipment*:*

Use a medium frying pan or small pot for the sauce. A giant pot for the ravioli.

Timing:

This is a quick dinner. Start the sauce cooking about the time you put in the ravioli.

Directions:

The cream sauce

Zest the lemon. Combine Limoncello, lemon juice, lemon zest in a pan and bring to heat over medium heat. Stir in the butter cubes until melted. Finally add the cream and whisk to mix. Turn off heat.

Optional: If you happen to have some cooked crab meat on hand (which I sometimes keep in the freezer), you may add that to the cream sauce in time to warm it.

Boil the ravioli

Get everything ready and prepped for the sauce. Cook the ravioli in tons of salted, vigorously boiling water for about 4 minutes. They should float.

Plate and serve

Plate the raviolis. Drizzle the lemon cream on top. Garnish with parsley and serve with parmesan cheese.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FETTUCCINI ALFREDO

Ingredients	2 servings (way generous!) 4 servings (side dish)
Alfredo sauce:	
Unsalted butter	½ stick butter
Heavy whipping cream (or half and half)	1 ½ cups
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (finely grated) Optional: Also include some Gruyere or Asiago cheese (grated)	8 oz. (total for all cheeses)
Pasta water (reserved after cooking pasta)	Reserve 1 cup; use as needed (perhaps ⅓ cup)
Optional add-ins:	
Frozen peas (thawed) or fresh asparagus tips (cooked)	1 cup
Mushrooms (sliced)	8 oz.
Prosciutto de Parma (fresh), pancetta (fried & chopped), ham (finely diced), bacon (fried & crumbled), or blackened chicken (finely chopped)	¼ lb. (prosciutto or pancetta) ⅓ lb. (ham, bacon, or chicken)
Pasta:	
Fettuccine, bow ties, tortellini, or other pasta	8 oz. (dry pasta); 12 oz. (fresh tortellini)
Salt	good sprinkle added to the pasta water (not too much, the cheese is salty)

Equipment: A large frying pan for the alfredo sauce (big enough to add the pasta later). Another frying pan to sauté the mushrooms & ham. A giant pot for the pasta.

Remember:
Reserve the pasta water!

Directions:

Alfredo sauce:
Melt the butter in large frying pan. Add cream and bring to gentle boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 30 to 40 minutes to reduce, stirring frequently. After the cream is reduced, slowly stir in the cheese.

Add-ins (optional):
While the cream is reducing, sauté mushrooms until nicely browned. Add in ham. Brown the bacon. Boil the asparagus.
When alfredo sauce is ready, stir any vegetables & meat.

Pasta:
Cook pasta in tons of water, lightly salted. RESERVE SOME PASTA WATER. Drain. Add the drained pasta to the pan with the alfredo sauce (so as not to waste the heavenly sauce).
The alfredo sauce will have thickened. Add pasta water as necessary to bring it back to a fairly thin, velvety consistency.

Plate:
Plate and serve at once (within 5 minutes—this does not keep well).
Offer guests more grated Parmigiano-Reggiano . . . but you really don't need any.

Notes:
Classic Alfredo uses only Parmigiano-Reggiano and butter. Italian versions rarely include cream. Cheeses (other than parmesan) and the add-ins are non-traditional, but tasty modifications.

If you order Fettuccini Alfredo in any American chain restaurant, you will get a creamy roux-based version (made with butter and flour) that does a great job of hiding the taste of the low-quality

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

cheese they use. In short, you've got macaroni and cheese, which is fine. But it is not Fettuccini Alfredo.

The recipe above employs a flourless cream reduction. It corresponds closely to the one in *The Essential Pasta Cookbook* (published by Borders). Others, such as Jane & Michael Stern's *Carbone's Cookbook* (recipes from the incredible Italian restaurant in Hartford, Connecticut), don't bother to reduce the sauce (which I'm convinced is a mistake). The cream reduction used here produces a velvety sauce that doesn't mask the flavor of the cheese, like a white sauce does.

Mixing in some Asiago cheese is heretical, but quite good for a change.
The Gruyere/Parmesan/peas/prosciutto combination comes from a recipe in *Cook's Illustrated* (4/2015). It is divine. That recipe calls for sautéing some diced shallots at the beginning and adding a bit of the prosciutto (minced) to the sauté (the rest added uncooked later).

This recipe is all about the cheese. The pre-grated stuff you can buy at the grocery store is dreadful (even the fresh "gourmet" version in the cheese aisle). Use real Italian Parmigiano-Reggiano and grate it yourself. This is most easily done in the Cuisinart with a special very fine slicer made just for this purpose. But I've seen this done on a cooking show with the chopping blade, too. (Don't use the regular-size cheese grater. It is way too thick!) Or you can get equally good results (and a good workout) using a microplane zester/grater. If you use Asiago or Gruyere, those are soft cheeses that may be grated with a regular cheese grater.

The person who first taught me to cook this is my dear friend, Judge Cheri Copsey, who spontaneously whipped up a batch for a hungry cocktail party guest, much to my amazement. I am still in awe. Hers is still the best.

History:

Most sources agree that the original recipe was developed by Alfredo Di Lelio[1] in 1914 at his restaurant in Rome, Alfredo alla Scrofa. (Mario Batali disputes this, contending that the origin is uncertain.) Anyway, according to legend, the dish became internationally popular when silent movie stars Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. and his wife, Mary Pickford had the dish on their honeymoon in 1927 and spread the word upon their return to Hollywood. In gratitude, Chef di Lelio sent them a gold fork and spoon, and began serving the dish with gold utensils to other stars of the day. Alfredo di Lelio retired in 1938 and sold his restaurant intact to Mario Mozzetti's grandfather.

The original restaurant (which still operates in Rome) opened branches at Rockefeller Center in New York and at Epcot Center. Both are now closed. Karen and I have eaten at both, and both were insanely delicious—far more intense in flavor that the subtler, creamier version presented in this recipe.

But the real story is that Karen ate at the original Alfredo's in Rome when she lived there as a student in 1980. She dined with her brother and father. The pasta was prepared at the table, and, according to tradition, the prima donna (Karen in this case) is served her pasta in the coveted bowl in which the pasta for the table was mixed (because it has the most wonderful taste).

The authentic original recipe is built with just butter and parmesan cheese with a splash of pasta water. This approach is reflected in Mario Batali's *Moto Italiano* and Michele Scicolone's *1,000 Italian Recipes*. Batali just dices the butter and adds it with the cheese to the cooked pasta, with pasta water as needed.

This differs somewhat from Alfredo's original (according to Wikipedia), in which Alfredo added butter to the bowl both before and after the pasta—indeed, tripling the butter for his pregnant wife. Scicolone (who claims to be the grandson of Alfredo) says that the recipe in his book is the same as

[1] According to Jane & Michael Stern's *Carbone's Cookbook*, the last name is di Lello, but this appears to be in error.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

that used in Alfredo's restaurant in New York (now closed): "Let the butter soften at room temperature for 30 minutes, then mix it with the grated Parmigiano-Reggiano with an electric mixer before adding to the cooked, drained pasta, along with a splash of cooking water as needed."

Although Fettuccini Alfredo is a household word in America, the dish is not known by that name in Italy. In Italy, you must order it as "pasta al burro" in the south or "pasta in bianco" in the north. And it has none of the popularity that the dish continues to have in the U.S.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

LASAGNA ALLA BOLOGNESE

Ingredients	8 servings (small pan)
The soffritto (plus pancetta):	
Pancetta (whole (not sliced) from deli at Boise Co-op, then dice)	5 oz. (almost ⅓ lb.)
Onions (cut then chop in Cuisinart)	1 large or 1 ½ small
Celery (cut then chop in Cuisinart)	2 stalks
Carrots (cut then chop in Cuisinart)	1 carrot
Garlic (I cheat and use chopped garlic in a jar)	1 Tbsp. from jar or 4 large cloves
Unsalted butter	approx. ¾ stick (6 oz.) (as needed)
Olive oil	approx. 6 oz. (as needed)
Gently cook the raw meat:	
Ground veal (or ground beef—80% lean)	1 lbs.
Ground pork (preferably Duroc, a high quality breed) Or substitute hot Italian sausage (raw)	½ lb.
Salt & pepper	½ tsp. each
Add milk, seasonings, tomatoes & broth to the ragù:	
Whole milk	1 ½ cups
Red wine (or use white wine, which is more traditional)	½ cup
Tomato paste	12 oz. (two small cans)
Nutmeg	a pinch
Bay leaves	2 leaves
Fresh thyme (tied in a bunch) Or dried thyme	5 oz. plastic box 2 tsp. (if dried)
Dried oregano	2 tsp.
Red pepper flakes	2 tsp.
Salt & pepper	1 tsp. each
Canned crushed tomatoes	42 oz. (1 ½ 28 oz. cans)
Beef bone broth (may substitute chicken or beef stock)	1 cup (8 oz.)
Besciamella with Ricotta & Parmigiano:	
Butter	¾ stick
All-purpose flour	⅓ cup
Half & half or whole milk (I use half of each)	about 2 cups (as needed)
Nutmeg (preferably grated from the nut)	¼ tsp
Ricotta cheese	⅔ lb. (11 oz.)
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese	⅓ cup
Salt & pepper	½ tsp. each (to taste)
The sheet noodles:	
First choice: Ferranti fresh lasagna sheets are fabulous (the green noodles—with spinach to color them—are exceptional) (from Boise Co-Op).	2 packages (8 oz. each)
Excellent second choice: Fresh roll of sheet pasta by "Pasta etc. of Sonoma County" (vegan—no eggs) (available at Whole Foods)	1 package (12. oz.)
Distant third choice: Dried lasagna noodles	1 lb. box
Cheese for the lasagna:	
Fresh mozzarella cheese (cut into small cubes)	12 oz. (¾ lb.)
Fresh mozzarella cheese (grated)	4 oz. (¼ lb.)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Equipment:

The lasagna needs a small, uncovered lasagna pan (9 x 12 ¾" for this recipe). If you use a large lasagna pan (10 x 14¼"), double the recipe! Really, it goes from 2 quarts to 4 quarts.

For this quantity of *ragù*, you need a very large pot. I use my giant Dutch oven or largest Calphalon pot.

The entire sauce, including the sauté of soffritto and meat, may be done in the same pot. But I prefer to do the sauté in a separate, very large frying pan and then transfer the soffritto and meat mixture to the large pot before adding the tomato, milk, etc.

I use my largest frying pan for the besciamella (any pan would work).

Timing:

This is a full day of work. Better yet, make the ragù the evening before. Resting the sauce overnight improves it. The simmer time on the Bolognese sauce is a minimum of 2 hours, and it appreciates longer. Another thing: This lasagna keeps well. It may be better the next day. It even freezes well, if it is vacuum-sealed. Leftover sauce may be refrigerated for 1 day or frozen for 1 month.

Recipe::

The soffritto (plus pancetta):

Cut the onions, celery, carrots in to big pieces. Then chop them – separately – with chopping blade in the Cuisinart into a fine chop (or mince by hand). Combine the chopped vegetables with the minced garlic and diced pancetta in large pan. Sauté in butter and olive oil. Give them a head start, the add the garlic and pancetta and continue sautéing until tender, but not browned – perhaps 30 minutes for this large quantity. If you have time, you can turn this down to very low heat and cook up to an hour to caramelize things.

Gently cook the meat:

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Add the raw meat (veal and pork or whatever) to the pan with the soffritto. Mash the meats and vegetables together. Season with salt and pepper. Cook until the meat loses its pink color (about 10 minutes). Do not brown (if you want tender meat). If using a frying pan, when finished, move the mixture from the frying pan to the large pot.

Add milk, wine, broth, tomatoes & seasonings to the ragù:

Add the milk to the meat and soffritto mixture. Simmer until most of the milk evaporates (about 15 minutes). Then add the wine and simmer again until nearly evaporated (about 5 minutes).

Add the tomato paste, canned tomatoes, broth, and seasonings (nutmeg, bay leaves, thyme, oregano, red pepper, salt & pepper). Stir to mix. Once heated, reduce heat and let it simmer for another two hours or longer. Start uncovered; add lid partially or completely as needed to achieve correct thickness. Low and slow is the key. It should not boil rapidly, but just bubble or "blip." If you are sure you have the temperature adjusted correctly, you may leave the sauce unattended for an hour or longer without stirring.

Adjust seasoning with salt & pepper, if needed.

Overnight pause (strongly recommended):

If you are doing the sauce the day before, put it in a covered pot that fits in your refrigerator. Reheat the next day on the stove. Adjust if the sauce if too thin by heating without the lid (or add more broth if too thick). Carefully find and remove the thyme and bay leaves. The re-heated sauce may continue to simmer quietly for another hour or longer.

Besciamella with ricotta & parmesan:

Melt butter. Stir in flour and cook the roux for three minutes. Slowly add half & half or milk until proper consistency (on the thin side). Cook gently about 10 minutes altogether. Season with nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Near the end, blend in the ricotta and parmesan cheese. Adjust seasoning. Add more milk if necessary. It will continue to thicken.

Cut and wet the noodles:

Cut the sheets of fresh pasta into pieces that will fit fill the lasagna tray.

Put hot water in a very large bowl or pan. Soak each piece of noodle in the warm water for just a minute before putting into the lasagna.

Build the lasagna:

Layer as follows: Begin with a thin layer the ragù on the bottom of the lasagna pan.

Then build the layers: noodles, besciamella, ragù, mozzarella. Repeat until done (probably 5 layers). But for last layer, SKIP the cheese.

Go light the sauce, especially the besciamella. If you have extra besciamella, don't use it; just throw it away.

Reserve extra Bolognese sauce for plating (to serve on top).

Bake:

Bake uncovered 35 minutes at 350°.

Remove from oven and increase temperature to 390°.

Sprinkle the grated mozzarella on the top. Return to 390° oven for another 15 minutes. This should create a nice glaze of mozzarella on top. The edges of the lasagna should be browned and sauce bubbling.

Remove from oven and let it rest for 20 minutes before serving. Serve with additional Bolognese sauce and a sprinkle of Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Notes on Soffritto vs. Sofrito:

Sofrito is a sautéed vegetable sauce used as a base in Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American cooking. Ingredients vary, but it is typically focused on garlic, tomatoes, peppers, onion, and olive oil. The Italian version, spelled soffritto, tends to be more focused on onions, carrots, celery. A soffritto (or sofrito) is usually chopped finely. This recipe uses a Cuisinart to chop even finer, almost a paste. This recipe adds the pancetta (or prosciutto) into the soffritto before it is sautéed, rather than adding it to the sauce later. Nod to Emilie Raffa for this suggestion.

Notes on Ragù alla Bolognese:

Ragù is a generic term for meat sauce. The word "ragù" is most commonly associated with Southern Italian "red sauces," e.g., ragù alla Napolitano, which are heavy on tomatoes and garlic and made with red wine.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

American restaurants often misapply the term Bolognese sauce to what is really ragù alla Napolitano.
Ragù alla Bolognese is the typical sauce of Bologna, Italy. Its traditional function is to dress tagliatelle, pappardelle, or fettuccine and to make lasagna alla Bolognese. Its distinguishing ingredients are milk and a soffritto that includes carrots, milk, and white wine. A Bolognese sauce typically has little or no garlic. Its focus is on the milky meat texture, with much less tomato. The meat may be veal, beef, or pork (often a combination) with some minced pancetta incorporated. My version of Bolognese is pretty authentic, but includes a tilt toward a Southern red sauce by using red wine, more tomatoes, and more Southern Italian spices.

Notes on Besciamella (Béchamel sauce):

To me, it's not lasagna if it doesn't have a béchamel sauce. The Italians call it *besciamella.* It is just a fancy word for a white sauce (the mother sauce of French cuisine) made of butter, flour, and milk. It is named after Louis de Béchamel, Marquis de Nointel, who held the honorary post of chief steward to King Louis XIV of France. Originally, it was a more complicated sauce involving veal and root vegetables.
The idea of mixing in Ricotta with the Béchamel sauce comes from the Kitchen Bible cookbook. I've never seen that elsewhere, but it works nicely. Then I added the parmesan, because that simplifies the building of the lasagna.
For making the white sauce, all the cookbooks tell you to slowly add all of the milk, then let it thicken. I have better luck approaching it my way: I add the milk to the roux gradually, adding more as soon as the roux absorbs each new dose of milk. This allows me to continue thinning the roux until right consistency is achieved, and then stop. I get a nice, thick sauce this way, without the guesswork.

Noodle options

If you're brave, make your own fresh noodles! They are the best, of course.
If you can't find fresh noodles in the store, you may use dried noodles, which must be boiled first (obviously). But they won't be the same.
Under no circumstances should you buy dry "no boil" cheater noodles.

Source of my recipe and variations thereon:

Derives from an amalgam of cookbooks by Mario Batali, Joyce Goldstein, Michele Scicolone, Borders, and *The Illustrated Kitchen Bible* (Lasagna al Forno). Also influenced by recipe for Lasagna all'Emiliana (Chef Massimiliano "Max" Bartoli of Miss Williamsburg Italian Restaurant in Brooklyn, NY.) An excellent online recipe is available from www.thecleverarrot.com (by Emilie Raffa). The tip on the final glaze comes from Mama La Forge.
The Illustrated Kitchen Bible says just beef, Batali uses veal and pork.
Some cookbooks call for milk only, others for beef stock, some both. Some call for adding the milk during the long simmer, others at end. I compromised and added it during last hour.
Batali uses white wine, with milk and no stock.
White wine is, indeed, more traditional than red.
Batali uses 3 oz. tomato paste instead of tomatoes!; *Kitchen Bible* calls for 14.5 oz. tomatoes; Lasagna all'Emiliana calls for 56 oz. of tomatoes.
I added the mozzarella "by mistake" on 5/3/2020 when I discovered that I had only half the needed ricotta. Now I'm sold; gives it more texture.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BURNT BUTTER AND MIZITHRA WITH ANGEL HAIR

Ingredients	2 servings
Mizithra (a hard Greek cheese) (buy solid, in a block, then grate super fine) (available ungrated at the Co-op).	⅓ lb. or so
Butter	1 stick
Angel hair pasta (Capellini)	⅓ lb. (dried) (don't exceed)
Salt	lots (about 4 Tbsp. dumped into boiling water for pasta)
Pasta water	reserve more than a cup for 2 people

Remember:

Reserve the pasta water! Don't dare to forget. This pasta is more about the pasta water than it is about the burnt butter.

Equipment:

The burnt butter requires a medium frying pan or sauce pan for 2 people, a large one for 4 or more.
The pasta is most easily prepared in a very large Dutch oven or other substantial pot.
Use a fine strainer to add the burnt butter to the pasta.

Directions:

Grate the cheese:

Grate the Mizithra cheese in super-fine cheese grater in a Cuisinart (the same one you would use for parmesan cheese). Set aside.

Burnt butter:

Phase 1: Melt butter in medium-sized frying pan. Heat over medium heat about 4 minutes.
Phase 2: Turn heat to high and cook for another 4 minutes or so. During this 2nd phase, butter will foam up and rise to fill pan. Monitor constantly during this phase and stir as needed to keep from overtopping pan. Foaming will then subside and butter will turn to a dark amber color. It should have a pleasant caramel aroma.
Phase 3: Take butter off heat and let rest a couple of minutes so that burned bits settle to bottom.

Pasta:

Meanwhile, cook pasta in tons of water with lots of salt. Reserve lots of pasta water. Drain pasta and quickly return pasta to pot while pasta is still hot and wet.

Combine:

Add the Mizithra to the pot with the cooked pasta. Then pour on the browned butter through a strainer to catch the burned bits. Toss thoroughly. Add the pasta water bit by bit and stir. Let it absorb that, rest, and then add some more. Let it rest again, add more pasta water as needed. You will be stunned by how much pasta water is required, and by how it seems perfect, and then, two minutes later, needs more again. The pasta water is what makes this work! Oh, so creamy tasting, with no cream!

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SPAGHETTI AGLIO E OLIO

This could may be a stand-alone dish, but is often served as a side to accompany another dish such as eggplant or veal parmigiana.

Ingredients	2 servings (side dish)
Spaghetti, linguini, or angel hair pasta	⅓ to ½ lb.
Salt (for boiling the pasta)	Generously (about 3 Tbsp.)
Chopped garlic (fresh or from jar)	1 ½ Tbsp. (about 8 large cloves)
Crushed red pepper flakes	½ Tbsp.
Olive oil	⅓ cup
Reserved pasta water	1 cup
Parmesan cheese	Generously (about ½ cup)
Optional: fresh parsley (minced)	⅓ cup

Equipment:
Use a large frying pan for the garlic and oil sauté. Use a very large Dutch oven or large pot to boil the pasta. If your frying pan is large enough (e.g., a large risotto pan), you may put the drained pasta into the frying pan with the sautéed garlic and oil. Otherwise, return the drained pasta to the pot and pour in the sautéed garlic and oil.

Directions:
Boil the pasta in large pot of salted water. Reserve plenty of pasta water. Drain the pasta.

While pasta is boiling, sauté the garlic in olive oil over medium heat in pan large enough to hold the spaghetti (copper risotto pan is good). After a couple of minutes (don't overcook the garlic), add the red pepper flakes and cook another 30 seconds. Add the reserved pasta water. Let it simmer vigorously (uncovered) about 5 minutes until reduced by ⅓. Remove from heat.
Combine the drained pasta and the garlic, oil, and pasta water. Add cheese and parsley, and toss.
Let it rest five minutes (stirring occasionally) until it absorbs the sauce. Serve with additional parmesan cheese on the side.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PICCATA (CHICKEN, VEAL, SOLE, OR PORK) WITH PENNE PASTA

Ingredients	2 servings
Prep the cutlets	
Boneless, skinless chicken breasts (or substitute veal or pork cutlets, or fillet of sole)	1 half breast (.7 lbs.) (⅓ lb. per person) (this is a modest size, increase for healthy appetites)
Egg white (lightly beaten)	1 ½ egg
Flour	½ cup
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	½ tsp.
Sauté the cutlets:	
Extra virgin olive oil	¼ cup
Butter	½ stick (4 Tbsp.)
Piccata sauce:	
Shallot, minced (may substitute onion)	1 whole shallot (or ⅓ onion)
Juice of fresh lemon	1 lemon
Chicken broth	⅓ cup
Dry white wine	⅓ cup
Heavy cream	⅓ cup
Capers	¼ cup (half of 4 oz. jar)
Flat leaf parsley, finely chopped	¼ cup (save extra to sprinkle at end)
Flour	1 tsp. or so, if needed to thicken
Lemon slices (with skin on, sliced thick)	¾ lemon
Pasta (or other starch)	
Penne pasta	⅓ lb. dried pasta
Water	Tons of water
Salt	Generously
Some of the reserved butter/olive mix	A nice splash
Plate	
Flat leaf parsley, finely chopped	Just a sprinkle
Parmigiano Reggiano (finely grated)	Let guests apply as desired

Equipment:
Use a huge pot to boil the pasta. Everything else is done in done in a large frying pan. I prefer copper. Cast iron is also good.

Directions:

Prep work

Mince the shallots, set aside.
Mince the parsley, set aside.
Squeeze the lemons, set aside.
Slice more lemons, set aside.
Combine broth and wine in a stovetop pot, set aside. (Don't add the lemon juice just yet, it's acidic and might interact if this sits too long.)
Combine flour, salt & pepper in a mixing bowl, set aside.
Separate egg whites into bowl, beat them with a fork to fluff, and set aside.
Combine butter and olive oil in a large measuring cup with pour spout, and place in warming oven to melt the butter and combine with the oil.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Pound the cutlets

(This step is for chicken only. No need to pound if using veal or pork cutlets or filet of sole, which are already thin.)

Cut chicken breasts in half crosswise. Place each half on cutting board with cut side down. Then cut them in half again lengthwise (to make them thinner). One at a time, place them in plastic bag and pound them to within an inch of their lives (¼ inch, to be precise).

Flour the cutlets

Dip each cutlet in egg whites. Dredge the cutlets in the seasoned flour, shaking off excess. Set them aside on clean plates (a little overlap is okay). Put them in fridge for an hour or so, if doing this early.

Reduce the broth/wine/lemon

The sauce takes quite a while to reduce. I suggest giving it a head start while browning the cutlets. Combine the broth, wine, and lemon juice in a pan, and bring to a vigorous simmer. The goal is to reduce by half.

Brown the cutlets

Pour some of the oil/butter mixture in large frying pan, ⅓ inch deep, and heat to high temperature. Brown the cutlets barely 3 minutes on one side then 2 minute on the other side until nicely browned and barely cooked through. (Less time for sole.) If they brown more quickly than that, the temperature is too high; if not browned by then, the temperature is too low. Add more butter and oil as necessary to maintain ⅓ inch deep. As each is done, plate them (spread out, with not much overlapping) and set them in a warm oven (170°) to keep warm. Do not clean the frying pan. Those flavors will be used for the sauce.

The piccata sauce

Using the same frying pan, sauté the shallots over high heat for nearly 3 minutes using the same oil/butter mixture. When shallots are soft, add the reduced lemon juice, wine, and chicken broth. (If not previously reduced, simmer vigorously until reduced by half.) Add the cream, the capers, parsley, and the lemon slices. Continue simmering several more minutes, stirring occasionally, to reduce the cream. Note: Even when reduced, this is a thin sauce. Do not expect a gravy. But if too thin, you may add a bit of flour to thicken.

Pasta

Meanwhile, boil the pasta in tons of water, liberally salted, at a vigorous boil. Drain in a colander and return to the empty pot. Add a little of the left-over butter & olive oil to the pasta to moisten it.

Serve

Plate the chicken. Place the pasta on the side (or serve with risotto or mashed potatoes). Drizzle the piccata sauce generously over the cutlets and the pasta. Arrange the lemon slices on the plate, as well, for presentation purposes. Top with a sprinkle of minced parsley. Finally, allow guests to add parmesan cheese to the pasta and/or chicken.

Notes:

This is traditionally a veal recipe. Chicken is popular substitute. Pork cutlets are pretty rare. It also works very well with Dover sole, tilapia, or turbot.

Some recipes think you need to finish cooking the chicken (or whatever) in the sauce at the end. My experience is that the chicken (if thin) will be cooked through during the browning process. And I prefer to serve it crispy looking, with the sauce drizzled very generously on top.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MELANZANE ALLA PARMIGIANA (EGGPLANT PARMESAN)

Ingredients	6 servings (two large slices each)
Salt the eggplants:	
Eggplant (skin on, sliced fairly thin: ⅜ inch)	1 ½ lbs. (should yield 12 large slices, more small slices) (1 to 3 eggplants, depending on size)
Kosher salt	Very generously applied
The marinara:	
Onion (finely chopped)	1 onion
Green, red, or yellow pepper (finely chopped)	1 pepper
Good olive oil	As needed for sauté (a few Tbsp.)
Michael's of Brooklyn Home Style Gravy (or other high quality jarred marinara sauce)	Two 32 oz. jars (64 oz. total) (this will yield some extra to serve on side of pasta)
The crumb mixture:	
Homemade breadcrumbs	1 ½ cups
Panko	1 ½ cups
Parmigiano Reggiano cheese (freshly grated)	¾ cup
Salt	1 tsp.
Pepper	1 tsp.
Prep the eggplants:	
Flour	1 cup
Eggs (beaten)	6 eggs
Fry the eggplants:	
Olive oil	enough to cover pan about ¼ inch deep (replenish for each batch)
Butter	2 pats per batch
Build the casserole:	
Fresh basil (coarsely chopped) (or: Italian parsley or basil)	small container or ¾ of a small "live plant" container: about 20 leaves, depending on size
Mozzarella (best is the little pearls, otherwise grated or small dice)	1 lb.
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (freshly grated)	a generous sprinkle for each layer (perhaps ⅓ cup total)

Equipment:
For breadcrumbs: Cuisinart with the slicing blade.
Use a large colander for salting the eggplant.
For the sauté: a large frying pan
For the marinara: a covered Dutch oven (or anything oven-proof)
For the eggplant casserole: a lasagna pan, sized to hold 2 or 3 layers of eggplant. A smallish (13" x 9") lasagna pan is sufficient for 4 people.

Directions:

The breadcrumbs:
Coarsely chop good French bread (with crust on) into cubes. Pulse it in the Cuisinart with the slicing blade long enough to get very fine crumbs. There is no need to dry them. (These freeze well for future use! But don't freeze cubed bread; crumb them before freezing.)

Salt, wash, and dry the eggplants:
Slice the eggplants somewhat thin. Just how thin is a matter of taste. The thicker they are, the longer they will need to fry. (Older Italian cookbooks say to peel the eggplants, but that seems a pointless effort.) Follow the salting instruction under the "Basics" section of this cookbook.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Sauté the vegetables:

Sauté the finely diced green pepper and onions on medium heat for a total of 15-20 minutes until they are quite done but not browned. I do them separately, but they could probably be combined.

The Marinara:

Put the marinara sauce in a Dutch oven and add the sautéed vegetables. Cover and place in 340° oven for an hour.

(Note: Eggplant parmigiana is traditionally made with a quicker and lighter marinara sauce made with canned tomatoes, sautéed garlic, crushed red pepper, basil, and salt, cooked just 20 minutes. Do that if you want to be authentic. I like this deeper, more robust sauce.)

Set up the crumb mixture, flour, and eggs:

In a small mixing bowl, combine the fresh breadcrumbs, the panko, salt and pepper. Pour some of the crumb mixture onto a plate.

Put flour on another plate, and add salt and pepper to it, too. Finally, beat the eggs in another bowl.

Use a clean plate for the breading process. And more clean plates to hold the finished ones.

Bread the eggplants:

Put a small amount of the crumb mixture on a separate plate. Use tongs (so you don't have to constantly wash eggy flour goo off your hands). Dredge each eggplant slice in flour. Then submerge the eggplant in the eggs long enough to become fully coated. Let the egg mixture drain off before laying them in the crumb mixture on the plate. Flip them back and forth in the crumbs, gently pressing in the crumbs. Don't stack the finished slices; spread them out on plates or a jelly roll pan. Use the bowl of fresh crumb mixture to replenish the plate as needed. This avoids getting the crumb mixture goopy with egg during the breading process.

Fry the eggplants:

Fry the breaded eggplant in batches in olive oil and butter over medium heat until nicely browned. Carefully adjust the heat in order to brown them slowly, in order to cook the eggplant: 3-4 minutes per side. If you have very thin slices, you could do this faster at a higher temperature. Set aside the fried eggplants (don't stack).

Build the casserole:

Spread a thin layer of marinara sauce on the bottom of the lasagna pan. Add a layer of fried eggplants. Sprinkle on the chopped basil. (Use all of it, if you are only doing two layers of eggplant.) Top with a generous sprinkle Parmigiano-Reggiano, marinara, and mozzarella in that order. Repeat for one or two more layers, stacking the slices into towers. This allows each tower to be easily served to one person.

Cover with tinfoil and bake at 350°. Remove cover after 20 minutes. Continue baking for a total of 45 minutes until bubbly. Let rest 10 minutes before serving. Serve with more grated parmesan cheese.

Serve with a side of pasta, topped with more of the marinara, or serve with spaghetti or linguini *aglio e olio* (sautéed garlic and olive oil)—and don't mispronounce it: the "g" is silent.

Source:

Made up from amalgam of various cookbooks, notably *Rao's Recipes from the Neighborhood*.

Notes:

If you want to go the extra mile (as some recipe books say you must), place another sheet pan on top of the salted eggplants, and weigh it down with a few cans. I've done it both ways, and can't tell the difference.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SALTIMBOCCA ALLA ROMANA

Ingredients	2 servings
Veal, chicken, or pork scallops:	
Veal scaloppini Or: Boneless, skinless chicken breast Or: Pork cutlets	0.6 lbs. (6 veal or pork scallops) Or: 1 large breast (really a half breast) up to 1 lb. – will produce 4 scallops
Prosciutto (If from deli, ask butcher to slice paper-thin.)	2.5 oz.(one slice for each scallop)
Fresh sage leaves	0.66 oz. plastic box is twice what you need: up to 5 leaves per scallop
Flour	¾ cup (more than enough)
Salt	1 tsp. (don't go overboard, the prosciutto is salty)
Pepper	1 tsp.
Frying:	
Butter	3 Tbsp.
Olive oil	¼ cup
Sauce:	
Butter	Only if needed
Flour	1 ¼ Tbsp.
Dry white wine	½ cup
Chicken stock	½ cup
Juice of fresh lemon	1 lemon
Lemon zest	½ lemon
Top with (optional):	
Top quality provolone cheese (imported if possible)	

Equipment: All you need in a large frying pan.

Pound the cutlets
If using chicken, use cut breast in half, then cut again the long way (horizontally) to make them thinner. Remove any gristle or tendons.
Put veal or chicken into large freezer bag and pound until as thin as possible, about ¼ inch thick.
These thin slices of meat are called "scallops," not to be confused with bivalve marine mollusks.
Prepare the cutlets
Place sage leaves on each scallop (as many as 5 leaves on a large scallop).
Then cover with a piece of the prosciutto, and press down. It should cling without toothpicks.
Combine flour with salt and pepper on a plate.
Dredge the scallops in the flour mixture. Set aside on a separate plate.
Fry the cutlets
Bring butter and olive oil to a pretty high heat in a large frying pan. Brown the scallops with the prosciutto side up about 2 minutes. Turn over and brown the prosciutto side for another 1 ½ minutes. You want them to be nicely browned if possible, but don't overcook. Transfer cooked pieces to plate or serving platter and repeat until all pieces are done.
Optional: Cover each scallop with a little cheese and put in oven briefly to melt.
Make the sauce
Don't clean the skillet. There should be plenty of oil & butter left over. If not, add some more butter. Add some flour to make a roux. (Not too much; we're not making Thanksgiving gravy.) Then the wine (to deglaze). Add the lemon zest. Continue gradually adding the chicken stock and lemon juice to achieve a very thin sauce. Note: You'll end up with more sauce than you need. Don't feel compelled to use it all.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Presentation
Remove scallops from oven and drizzle with a little sauce (or allow guests to do their own). Goes nicely with creamy polenta.

Entomology:
Saltimbocca derives from the Italian “Mi salta in bocca” (it jumps into my mouth). This means that the dish is so appetizing, it figuratively jumps from the plate into your mouth.

History:
The dish is believed to have originated in Brescia, Italy, but was adopted by the Romans in the 1800s, who claimed it as their own. It is popular throughout Italy, as well as in Switzerland and Greece.

Prosciutto:
I think it’s best to get it in the deli. Black Forest brand with juniper berries is very good; Prosciutto di Parma is excellent; Boars head is good; Fiorucci brand from Co-op is excellent.

Notes:
Although this dish is traditionally made with veal, chicken and pork are authentic substitutes used in Italy. Recipe books vary a bit on making the sauce. You can skip chicken stock and use just wine. Or vice versa. Don’t go beyond this amount of lemon. This is not sole meunière.

Source:
Karen found this recipe in Food & Wine (using chicken or quail!). I modified slightly after reading about a dozen recipes from various Italian cookbooks.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SEA SCALLOPS WITH ANGEL HAIR PASTA (SEE PAGE 109)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MACARONI

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DAD'S MACARONI & CHEESE

Ingredients	4 servings
The white sauce:	
Butter	3 tsp.
Flour	¼ cup
Whole milk	1 cup
Heavy cream	1 cup
Paprika	¼ tsp.
Crystal hot sauce	½ Tbsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	½ tsp.
Worcestershire sauce	½ Tbsp.
Salt	Little
Pepper	Lots
The cheese:	
A mixture of: Sharp Cheddar (grated) Velveeta cheese (or mild cheddar) Camembert, or Gouda	12 oz.
More milk as necessary	could be as much as 1 cup
The pasta:	
Penne pasta, macaroni, or other pasta (Garofalo Gemilli from Costco is very good!)	12 oz. (1 ½ cups)
Tons of salted water	
More cheese (broiling or baking):	
Sharp cheddar (grated)	4 oz. (or more)
Paprika	a tiny sprinkle
Pasta water	
Optional topping:	
Panko (or other bread crumbs)	A sprinkle

Directions:

White sauce:

Melt butter in small sauce pan. Stir in flour to make a roux. Cook 3 minutes. On low heat, slowly add the milk & cream to the roux a little at a time so that each splash warms up before adding the next. (If you do this, you can skip pre-heating the milk.) Keep adding milk until you achieve a creamy consistency – on the thin side. Indeed, it should be very thin—it will thicken up.

Cheese sauce:

Add the various cheeses to the roux in small bunches; mix in to melt.
If necessary, add more milk to achieve creamy texture.

Pasta:

Meanwhile, boil the pasta in tons of water and some salt until al dente.
Reserve some pasta water. Drain pasta in a colander and let it cool for a couple of minutes.
Put the pasta back into the empty pot with a splash of pasta water to keep it from sticking.

Macaroni & cheese:

Add the cheese sauce to the pasta in the big pot.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

It is acceptable to serve just like this, at once. But the broiling/baking is what takes it to the level.

Move to lasagna pan(s):

Spread the cheesy pasta into a lasagna pan. If the cheese mixture is looking too thick, pour some pasta water on top.
Sprinkle generously with additional grated cheese.
Top with a tiny sprinkle of paprika.
Optional: Sprinkle with panko.
(You could skip this step and leave it in the Dutch oven. The purpose of this step is to increase the surface area so that you end up with a nice layer of bubbly cheese on top.)

Bake:

Bake uncovered for 25 - 40 minutes at 400º (depending on size, how cold it was, etc.) (or 300º for longer time). Turn on high broiler for last 10 minutes to just barely brown the top of the cheese. Take out of oven and let rest 10 minutes before serving.

Source & notes:
Recipes and experiments over the years. Including: Recipe in Idaho Statesman 1/25/2019 by Eduardo Jordan (JuneBaby restaurant in Seattle). He uses macaroni. His trick is Camembert (rather than Gouda) plus sharp cheddar, mild cheddar and parmesan. He insists on very thinly spreading it out in individual pans or one large cast iron pan, before adding more grated cheese cheddar and parmesan. He then broils it until the cheese is brown, rather than baking it. I bake it and then broil. He also says to cool it down before combining pasta and cheese. Otherwise his roux-based recipe is virtually identical to mine (using fewer spices, only paprika). The Velveeta comes from some other famous chef (seriously), I forget whom.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MEXICAN

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S ROMANTIC TACOS

Serve with Karen's frijoles refritos (see recipe on page 156).

Ingredients	2+ servings (10 small tacos)
Sauté the onion	
Onion (fine chop)	1 onion or ½ very large onion
Avocado oil or grapeseed oil (or whatever you like)	A generous drizzle, but don't drown them
Crushed red chili flakes	½ tsp. (or more if not married to Karen)
Sugar (if caramelizing the onions)	Tiny pinch (1/16 tsp.)
Brown the beef	
Ground beef (80% lean, or Wagyu if you can get it)	1 lb.
Chipotle chile powder	1 Tbsp.
Good salsa (e.g., Mateo's Gourmet Salsa, El Pinto Hatch Valley Chile) (medium heat) (mild if married to Karen)	1 ½ cups (12 oz.)
Prep and bake the tacos	
Taco shells (store bought)	1 box
Sharp cheddar cheese (grated)	generously (about 6 oz.)
Present at table	
Lettuce (chopped)	Generously
Tomato (chopped small)	2 large tomatoes
More salsa	Generously

Equipment

Use a large skillet for the onions (which are used for both the tacos and the frijoles). It may be used again to brown the beef.
We use these marvelous metal wire taco holders to hold the tacos upright in the oven. If you don't have this contraption, buy the flat-bottomed taco shells that will stand up on their own. Either way, place the tacos on a cookie sheet or jelly roll pan before placing in oven. A sheet of parchment paper will speed clean-up.
Pre-heat oven to 350°.

Directions

Sauté the onion

Note: If making frijoles refritos, sauté the onion for both dishes at the same time.
Sauté the onion in oil on fairly high heat for about 4 minutes until just beginning to brown. Add the hot chili flakes. If in a hurry, you may continue to sauté them on high heat until golden brown (total of 8 to 10 minutes). Better yet, add a pinch of sugar (along with the red chili flakes), turn down the heat to achieve a very gentle simmer, and continue to sauté for another 30 to 90 minutes to caramelize. Either way, be sure to add the red chili flakes early enough in the sautéing process to allow the heat to dissipate. You want flavor, not heat.

Brown the beef

Brown the ground beef. When barely cooked, add the sautéed onion, the Chipoltle chile powder, and the salsa. Stir and continue browning until the meat if fully cooked.

Colander

Put the beef mixture in a colander (sitting on a big plate). Give it several minutes to drain off all the grease. If you are pausing before making the tacos, put the colander & plate in a warming oven.

Prep and bake the tacos

Optional: Place parchment paper on cookie sheet to speed cleanup.
Place taco holders onto cooking sheets. Place empty taco shells into taco holders.
Or use flat-bottomed taco shells, standing upright.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Add beef (generously) to each shell. Top with grated cheddar. Place in 350° oven for about 5 minutes to melt the cheese.
Optional: Make some of the tacos with Karen's frijoles refritos (see recipe on page 156) with or without the beef.

Final prep and serving

Chop the lettuce and tomato.
Serve the tacos at the table with lettuce, tomato, salsa, and hot sauce on the side, for people to dress the tacos as they like.

Origin

This was the first meal Karen made for me at her new apartment in Boulder, Colorado when we were dating all so many years ago (in the 1980s). Hence the name: "romantic tacos."

Source

Authentic tacos are not supposed to be put in the oven to melt the cheese. But Karen's brain came up with this delicious idea somehow.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S FRIJOLES REFRITOS (REFRIED BEANS)

Ingredients	2 servings
The onion:	
Onion (fine chop)	1 onion or ½ very large onion
Avocado oil or grapeseed oil (or whatever you like)	A generous drizzle, but don't drown them
Crushed red chili flakes	½ tsp. (or more if not married to Karen)
Sugar (if caramelizing the onions)	Tiny pinch (1/16 tsp.)
The beans:	
Canned pinto beans (use all the liquid) E.g., El Mexicano (30 oz. from WinCo), S&W Chipotle Pinto Beans, 365 brand pinto beans from Whole Foods, or Bush's White Chili Beans (Great Northern Beans)	15 oz. can
Ground cumin	½ tsp.
Water (fill the empty pinto bean can with water)	As needed (a can or more!)

Equipment

A large frying pan.

Directions

Sauté the onion

Sauté the onion in oil on fairly high heat for about 4 minutes until just beginning to brown. Add the hot chili flakes. If in a hurry, you may continue to sauté them on high heat until golden brown (total of 8 to 10 minutes). Better yet, add a pinch of sugar (along with the red chili flakes), turn down the heat to achieve a very gentle simmer, and continue to sauté for another 30 to 90 minutes to caramelize. Either way, be sure to add the red chili flakes early enough in the sautéing process to allow the heat to dissipate. You want flavor, not heat.

Fry the beans

Add the beans and "bean juice" (liquid from can) to the frying pan with the sautéed onion. (Or add the onions if they were cooked separately.) Add the cumin. Using a potato masher, smash beans into the onion, and fry. (Don't pulverize the beans; smash them just enough so that you can still tell they were a bean once.)

Add a lot of water and stir it in, then let sit on low heat or a long time (20 minutes or so, as you do other things), attending as necessary. Frankly, the longer the better. You can make it very watery. The water will steam off during the long simmer. Add more water, as needed to keep it creamy.

Etymology

In Spanish name, frijoles means beans and refritos means well-fried. It does not mean "fried again." But in English, people take "refritos" to mean "refried." Hence, this is referred to incorrectly as refried beans.

Source

Made it up. Then, years later (2014), found a recipe in the *Statesman* for the exact same thing! Except the recipe used cumin, chili powder, and cayenne pepper instead of hot sauce.

Notes

S&W Chipotle Pinto Beans are very good. As are Bush's White Chili Beans (Great Northern Beans).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ENCHILADAS DE MOLE CON POLLO

Ingredients	4 servings (perhaps 14 small enchiladas)
Chicken:	
One whole rotisserie chicken (from store)	approx. 30 oz. (typically 1 lb. 14 oz.)
Mole Sauce:	
Doña Maria brand mole sauce	1 jar (8.25 oz.)
Chicken broth	29 oz. or more
Dark chocolate (Green & Black's is good)	3 oz. (to taste)
Olive oil (I like Olivin's Tuscan)	1 Tbsp.
Tortillas:	
Corn tortillas	1 package
Cooking oil	⅓ to ½ cup, depending on size of frying pan
Queso Fresco cheese (substitute Monterey Jack if you absolutely have to)	12 oz.

Equipment: A small frying pan will do for wilting the tortillas (you'll be doing them one at a time). Use a large lasagna pan to hold the enchiladas.

Chicken

Buy a rotisserie chicken and pull off all the meat. You may buy the chicken the day before and keep in fridge. But if you do, warm the chicken meat in the oven before building the enchiladas. You want everything to be warm when it goes in. If it is in the oven too long, it turns into a delicious "lasagna."

Mole Sauce

Getting the lid off the Mexican mole jar is a challenge. Find some tool that will allow you to pry the lid at three points successively. Combine mole ingredients except the chicken broth in medium pot over medium/low heat. Start with ⅔ of the chicken broth, then add more as needed. Stir and mash as necessary to get the hard mole sauce from the jar to meld in. This will take 10-20 minutes of attention. Keep adding chicken broth (or water) as necessary. Don't skimp on the liquid. You want a thin, pourable sauce (not hot fudge for a Sundae). It will continue to thicken, so, let me repeat, err on the side of being runny.

Tortillas

Heat a little cooking oil in small frying pan. Heat should be pretty high, so you'll need to keep moving. Cook tortillas one at a time, flipping them back and forth three or four times, no more than 9 seconds total. Just enough to "wilt" them. Don't be tempted to cook them longer. As they are cooked, stack them on a plate, separated by paper towels. (The towels are important. Otherwise the mole sauce won't stick quite as well.)

Enchiladas

Build the enchiladas: Dredge a tortilla in the mole sauce to coat one side. Not too much! Lay on a plate. (As sauce builds up on plate, just dredge on the plate.) Put in a little chicken. Roll up. Place each one in a lasagna pan.

Pour remaining mole sauce on top. Sprinkle shredded Mexican cheese on top. Pop in 350 degree oven for 20 minutes to melt the cheese and warm everything up nicely.

Alternatively, warm the enchiladas for just 10 minutes without the sauce or cheese. Then plate and pour the sauce on top (make sure it's thin), followed by a sprinkle of cheese (unmelted).

Serve with homemade refried beans and/or Mexican rice.

Alternatively:

Instead of using a rotisserie chicken, you may simmer 1 ⅓ lbs. boneless chicken breast in 29 oz. of chicken broth with garlic, onion powder, red chili flakes, and salt. Doing so would be closer to authentic. But why bother?

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Chicken:

Instead of using a rotisserie chicken, you may simmer 1 ⅓ lbs. boneless chicken breast in 29 oz. of chicken broth with garlic, onion powder, red chili flakes, and salt. Doing so would be closer to authentic. But why bother?

Notes:

Most recipes call for adding toasted slivered almonds to the mole sauce when cooking it. I've never done that. If you use almonds, chop them first.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

TAMALES

Ingredients	2 servings
Fresh tamales from store or farmers market (wrapped in corn husks)	4 tamales
Green or red enchilada sauce in can (we prefer "medium" hot) or Mark Schlereth's Stinking Good chili from Costco or Nanita's Finest New Mexico Style Green Chili Sauce (in jar, from Whole Foods, for a small fortune)	28 oz. (yes, that's a lot!)

Equipment: A large covered pot and steamer for the tamales. Another covered pot for the enchilada sauce.

Put enchilada sauce in a pot. Cover and put in oven at 290 degrees for up to an hour. If dinner is not ready after an hour, reduce heat to 200 degrees.

Put a steamer in a large pot with a little water. Add the tamales (with corn husks left on) and cover. Steam the tamales for 15 minutes if they are at room temperature, 20 minutes if frozen.

IMPORTANT: Let them rest for 2 minutes or so before removing corn husks. They will be less likely to fall apart.

Remove corn husks, plate them, and serve with lots and lots of sauce.

Excellent with Karen's frijoles refritos (on page 156) and Mexican rice (on page 193).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PRETTY AUTHENTIC MEXICAN RICE (SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 194)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

POLISH

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PIEROGI & KIELBASA

Ingredients	2 servings
Cook the onions	
Onions (cut into thick rings, then halved)	4 medium or 3 large onions
Butter	2 sticks
Hot chile flakes	½ tsp.
Sauté the kielbasa	
Kielbasa or other good sausage (sliced, then halved)	6 oz.
Olive oil	A touch (for the kielbasa)
Boil the pierogi	
Fresh pierogi from Whole Foods (Pappardelle's) or frozen Mrs. T's from Albertsons or Fred Meyer	16 oz. (12 pieces)
Serve:	
Good mustard	(to serve with kielbasa)

Equipment: Use a big frying pan for 2-4 people. More than that will require a Dutch oven. Use another big frying pan for sauteing the pierogi. Use any big pot for boiling the pierogi.

Directions:

Brown the onions:
Cut onions in half, then cut each half into thick slices. Sauté in butter over medium heat for 40 minutes or longer to brown and caramelize. (A large batch will require high heat at the start.)

Chop the kielbasa:
Cut the kielbasa into very thick slices, then cut each slice in half. This second cut will simplify the browning, allowing you to toss randomly w/o burning.

Brown the kielbasa:
Brown the sausage in a touch of olive oil on high heat for 5 to 8 minutes. This requires attention to avoid burning.

Boil the pierogi:
Meanwhile, thaw the pierogi, if frozen. Bring large pot of water to vigorous boil. Boil the pierogi 3 minutes (after water returns to boil).

Plate:
Plate the pierogi, putting butter and onions on top. Serve with kielbasa and mustard on the side.

Etymology:

Everyone in America says "pierogies" when referring to more than one, but that is not incorrect. In Polish, the word for a single dumpling is Pierog. "Pierogi" is plural.

Polish version:

This recipe is for the easy, store-bought version. There is also an all-day, from-scratch version for Polish friends and relatives, which involves lots of aprons, flour, yakking, and love. It is a marvelous way to spend the day.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Origin:

Chris first tasted pierogi and kielbasa when visiting Karen's family in Connecticut, before they were married. Karen's Polish grandmother, Momu, was the master chef, working with assistance from everyone at hand. Karen, of course, grew up with homemade pierogi. We have made them from scratch for many family gatherings and, on one fine occasion, for Barbara and Tom Haines, the owners of Tres Bonne Cuisine on Overland Road. Oh how we miss Tres Bonne.

Wrong way:

Some cookbooks say that, after boiling the pierogi, one should briefly sauté them in butter to brown them up. We never to this, and it contradicts Karen Adams's family tradition.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ASIAN

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KIMMY'S SWEET AND SOUR MEATBALLS

Ingredients	*2 servings*	*3 servings*
The main event:		
Red, yellow, or green pepper (very coarse chop)	⅔ pepper	1 pepper
Vidalia onion (very coarse chop)	½ of large onion	¾ of large onion
Aidells Teriyaki & Pineapple Meatballs (from Costco)	about ¾ lb.	about 1 lb.
Pineapple chunks (with the juice)	8 oz. (small can)	8 oz. (small can)
Tsang brand stir-fry oil (or substitute any cooking oil)	generous splashes as needed for stir fry	generous splashes as needed for stir fry
Sesame oil (we keep in fridge, not sure if that is necessary)	¾ tsp.	1 tsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	¾ tsp.	1 tsp.
Sweet and sour sauce (e.g., Sun Luck Restaurant Style or P.F. Chang's Mango Sweet & Sour Sauce)	½ cup	⅔ cup
The rice:		
White rice (basmati or jasmine)	5 oz. (almost ⅔ cup)	1 cup
Water	10 oz. (1 ¼ cup)	2 cups
Salt	¼ oz. (just a pinch)	⅓ oz. (just a pinch)

Equipment:
For 2 or 3 people, this will fit in a large skillet. For more people, use a wok.

Note:
Aidells meatballs are fully cooked. The sauté here gives them a nice browning. They come in a 46 oz. package (almost 3 lbs.) containing 2 pouches. I open them both and divide into 3 vacuum-sealed bags of almost 1 lb. each (for 3-person servings). Or you could divide them into 4 bags of about ¾ lb. (for 2-person servings).

Timing:
This dish should be served as soon as it is ready.

Directions:

Prep:
If you have frozen the meatballs, thaw them in advance. Chop the onion and green pepper. If you have a warming oven, use it to warm the plates.

Rice:
When the vegetables are chopped, start the rice. When rice is ready, let it rest, fluff with a fork, cover and let rest again. (See "How to cook rice" on page 15.)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Sauté & simmer everything:
Sauté the pepper and onions together (with red chili flakes) in stir fry oil and sesame oil for 3 minutes on rather high heat (to give them a head start). Then add the meatballs, and continue sautéing on fairly high heat for another 6 minutes until everything is nice and browned.
Finally, add the pineapple chunks and juice. Simmer another 3 minutes to reduce.
Finally, add the sweet and sour sauce and go another 2 minutes.

Plate:
Serve the meatballs etc. over the rice.
This goes nicely with spinach sautéed in garlic as shown here.

Completely different options:
The Aidells package suggests these alternatives.:
Wrap meatballs in lettuce leaves with bean sprouts, shredded carrots, and cilantro. Drizzle with hoisin sauce.
Simmer meatballs in chicken stock with ginger and garlic. Add udon noodles, sliced bok choy. Drizzle with soy sauce and sesame oil.

Chef Aidells
Chef Bruce Aidells is a real chef, cookbook writer, restauranteur (founder of Poulet in Berkely), and owner of his namesake sausage company. But he has no formal training in cooking. He earned his a Ph.D. in biology from the University of California Santa Cruz, and has described his politics as “left-wing hippie radical capitalist.” As of this writing, he is 79 years old.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SWISS ALPS

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S CLASSIC SWISS FONDUE

Ingredients	3-5 servings (as appetizer) 2 servings (as main course)
Grate the cheese:	
Emmentaler (coarsely grated)	6 oz.
Gruyere (coarsely grated)	6 oz.
Cornstarch or flour	3 Tbsp.
Season the pot:	
Garlic clove (peeled and cut in half)	1 clove
Melt the cheese:	
Dry white wine (I like a dry Alsatian Gewürztraminer)	1 cup (add more if needed)
Lemon juice (freshly squeezed)	1 Tbsp.
Nutmeg (grated from the nut)	No more than ¼ of a nut
Pepper (freshly grated) (white pepper is nice, black is fine)	A good shake
Kirsch (a type of cherry brandy)	6 Tbsp. (3 oz.)
Serve with:	
Baguette or other French white bread (cut into medium-large cubes) (day-old is traditional)	⅔ baguette
Apples (green is nice) (sliced, then cut in half)	1 apple
Green, yellow and/or red peppers (julienned, then cut in half)	1 pepper
More Kirsch	Served in dipping bowl for the bread (or a glass to drink with the fondue!)

Equipment:
An electric fondue pot is the easiest way to do this. However, in Switzerland, the fondue is prepared in a heavy glazed enameled pan (such as Le Creuset) on low heat, and then transferred to a traditional fondue pot over a flame for serving.
If your fondue pot is non-stick, use a wooden or other non-metal spoon to stir the cheese.
Provide fondue forks (one for each guest).

Grate the cheese:
Grate the two cheeses. If using a Cuisinart, use the regular grating blade, not the fine one.
Dredge the grated cheese in cornstarch or flour, and set aside in a bowl.

Season the pot:
Rub the inside of the fondue pot with a clove of garlic cut in half. Discard the clove.

Melt the cheese:
Add wine to fondue pot and bring to a bare simmer. Add the grated cheese (dredged in cornstarch or flour) to the pot in handfuls, to melt. Stir in a zigzag fashion (not circular) to avoid the cheese balling up. Add the lemon juice, nutmeg, and pepper. Continue stirring on low heat until the flour has a chance to thicken the cheese sauce. Don't let it boil. If it gets too thick, add more wine. This melting process will take at least 5-8 minutes. Don't overcook, or it will get stringy. Add the Kirsch at the end. Serve at once.

Serve:
Keep on a medium/low heat while people eat the fondue. It should be hot enough that you need to let the cheese cool for a moment before popping it into your mouth. If the oil starts to separate, it is too hot. Lower the heat and the oil will re-integrate with the cheese.
In Switzerland, I'm told that some like to touch their bread into a glass of Kirsch before swirling it in the cheese.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Notes:
Karen's version does not depart from the classic, traditional recipe. This is as authentic as it gets.

Etymology:
Fondue is a riff on the French word "fondre," which means "to melt." (More specifically, fondue is the feminine passive past participle of the verb fondre, which is employed in the name of this dish as a noun.)
After the fondue is eaten, there will be a thin golden crust of toasted cheese at the bottom of the pot. This is called *la religieuse*. Traditionally, it is lifted out and eaten—considered a delicacy in Switzerland. La religieuse is French for "nun." This golden cracker of cheese is thought to look like the cap worn by European nuns of yesteryear.

Historical notes:
The first cookbook to include fondue was published in Zurich in 1699. Fondue was heavily promoted in Switzerland during the 1930s, and became an American craze in the 1960s (along with the now forgotten Nehru jacket and pendant).
The requirement to kiss someone at the table if you drop your bread in the fondue is authentic. You can make up your own rules as to whom should be kissed.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

RACLETTE

Ingredients	3 servings
Some options for the table-top grill (choose a few)	
Olive oil (drizzle generously everything below)	
Chicken breast (sliced thin)	One breast half
Italian sausages or chorizo	½ lb.
Halibut or other firm fish	½ lb.
Tenderloin (sliced thin)	½ lb.
Shrimp	½ lb.
Sliced onion	1 very large onion
Sliced bell pepper	1 bell pepper (any color)
Thin asparagus	6 stalks
The potatoes:	
Potatoes	24 oz. (1 ½ lb.)
Raclette cheese (cut into thick slices) (There is no good substitute. In a pinch use Jarlsberg or Monterey Jack, but it's not the same.)	½ lb. is plenty
Traditional accompaniments:	
Gherkins	
Cocktail onions	
Some ideas for condiments for the grilled items (be creative):	
BBQ sauce	
Japanese BBQ sauce	
Popeye's Swee Heat dipping sauce	
Primal Kitchen Yum Yum Sauce	
Thai red chili sauce	
Mango chutney	
Spicy seafood cocktail sauce	
Chinese plum sauce	
A-1 sauce	
Salad:	
Lettuce leaves with vinaigrette	

Notes:

Raclette is dish with origins in the Swiss Alps, particularly the French-speaking Valais region of Switzerland (home of the Matterhorn), which, during Napoleonic times, was linked to France as the Valais Republic. It is now popular across Europe in Alpine areas.

The term raclette derives from the French word racler, meaning "to scrape." It is the name of the cheese and also of this style of eating the cheese with potatoes and other accompaniments.

For centuries, Swiss shepherds and cowherds have melted cheese near a campfire and scraped it onto potatoes for a hearty meal. Today, it is a convivial communal meal whose central feature is melted Raclette cheese scraped onto small boiled potatoes and served with gherkins, pickled onions, and dried meat (hams, salami, etc.).

A modern and more elaborate way of serving raclette involves an electric table-top grill with small pans, known as coupelles, which attach underneath the grill to melt slices of raclette cheese. The grill expands the options for accompanying meats, fish, and vegetables to be served with the potatoes and melted cheese. This is traditionally eaten in a relaxed, leisurely, informal setting lasting hours, with each guest tending to her own grilling. If you want to speed this up, one person can be placed in charge of grilling the items in a more efficient manner and serving them to the guests.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Tradition calls for simple boiled potatoes. We prefer to upgrade to Potatoes Southcombe. Karen's Oven-Fried Potatoes may also be used.

Though not traditional, you may also set out some lettuce leaves with vinaigrette.

Consider separate small pates for (1) the potatoes & cheese and (2) the grilled items with their various sauces. Or use those crazy Raclette plates designed for this!!

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

POTATOES

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

POTATOES ANNA (POMMES ANNA)

Ingredients	6 servings
Potatoes (large Idaho russet)	3 lbs.
Butter (melted)	1 stick (8 Tbsp.)
Paprika	lightly on each layer
Salt	lightly on each layer
Pepper (or seasoned pepper)	lightly on each layer

Equipment: I get good results from a Calphalon paella pan, whose smooth rounded bottom makes it easy to get the potatoes out with a spatula. A cast iron frying pan would work, too.
For slicing the potatoes, you may do them by hand or use a Mandolin, but it is easiest to use a Cuisinart (potatoes cut in half and placed cut side down) with a 4 mm slicing blade. That's between ¼ and ⅛ inch.

Quantity: You can make a larger batch that this (4 lbs. will yield 5 layers). And it will still be delicious. But you cannot achieve the Potatoes Anna crispiness when it is that thick. Likewise, it you add too much butter, it will impair the crisping.

Directions:

Prep

No need to peel the potatoes. Just scrub them well with water and a scratchy pad. Slice them quite thin (4 mm – between ⅛ and ¼ inch). If doing ahead, put the sliced potatoes in a pot of water to keep them fresh looking; then empty them into a colander when ready. Melt the butter.

Build the casserole

Dribble some butter in the bottom of the pan and swirl it around with a potato slice. Build the first layer of potatoes starting in the middle and laying the slices slightly overlapping in a gradually expanding spiral. (Don't go up the edges of the pan; just lay them flat. If the pan is flared, each layer will be a little larger circle than the one before, so it will all get filled up.) Sprinkle each potato layer rather generously with salt, pepper, paprika, and a light drizzle of butter. Repeat until potatoes are gone. Should be four or five layers. Press them down firmly.

Weigh it down

Cover tightly with three sheets of tin foil and press it down around the potatoes. Place weights on top. I use a heavy meat press and two super-heavy bricks.

Stovetop (3 minutes)

Place the pan of potatoes on the stovetop over high heat for 3 minutes. (On my not very professional gas stove, it's the hottest burner, full blast.) This short time will not get anything brown. But it will jumpstart the browning process in the oven.

Oven (one hour)

Bake at 450°. After 30 minutes, then remove the weights and tinfoil covering (save the foil). Bake another 30 minutes (or as needed) without any covering so that it browns on top. Use judgment here. Potatoes should be very tender and beginning to brown on top. The bottom will be even more browned, so don't worry about getting the top perfectly brown.

Invert the potatoes

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Remove from oven and re-cover with the “used” tinfoil. Let rest 5 minutes.
Carefully run a skinny spatula under the potatoes to separate them from the pan.
Place a dinner plate (or something big enough to hold the potatoes) on top. Carefully invert (flip them over) so that the potatoes fall onto the plate, with the browned underside on top. This pretty much requires two people. If you can’t pull off this step, just serve them out of the pan. They will taste just the same.
Cut like a pie and serve in wedges.

Origin:
This classic French dish dates to Napoleon III’s era. It was created by the head chef at Café Anglais, the top French restaurant of the day. He is said to have named the dish after one of the *grande cocottes* (aka, courtesans, which were high class prostitutes) at Napoleon’s court. It is disputed which Anna was the namesake.

Tradition:
The paprika is not traditional. Leave it out if you crave authenticity.
Also, technically, this should be made with clarified butter.
A true Pommes Anna is made with a special copper pan ($485) designed to be flipped over from time to time during the baking process so that both top and bottom brown. Like mine, Julia Child’s version is done on the stovetop first, to brown. But she follows with a medium oven. I find I get better results with a hot oven.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MASHED YUKON GOLD POTATOES WITH SOUR CREAM

Ingredients	2 servings	6 servings
Yukon Gold potatoes (cubed) (or substitute russet baking potatoes)	1 ⅔ lb.	5 lbs.
Salt for the cooking water	lots	lots
Butter	½ stick	1 ½ sticks
Sour cream (or substitute a wee bit of cream cheese)	almost ½ cup (3 ⅓ oz.)	1 ¼ cups (10 oz.)
Half & half and/or whole milk	⅓ cup (as needed)	1 cup (as needed)
Garlic salt (Lawry's brand is preferred)	½ Tbsp.	1 ½ Tbsp.
Pepper	⅓ Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.
More cream or half & half (added if put in warming oven)	a drizzle	a drizzle

Equipment

We use a large Dutch oven—large enough to avoid boiling over. But any large pot will do.

Directions

Peel and chop the potatoes. (Quartering them is adequate.)

Boil in tons of salted water until soft: 20-25 minutes or so—if starting from boiling water. 25-30 minutes—if you start the potatoes in cold water.

Drain the potatoes in a colander, return to pot, and mash them with the other ingredients.

Don't mash too much; leave some "flavor bursts" (tiny chunks of potato). This tip, thanks to my sister Jennifer Meyer, from growing up in Grinnell, Iowa.

If making ahead, put the potatoes in baking dish or Dutch oven and top with a generous splash cream. Cover and keep warm in 250º oven for up to 1 hour, or 200º for up to two hours. There will be cream sitting on top; mix it into the potatoes before serving.

Note

The *Electric Kitchen Cookbook* suggests putting fresh peeled garlic cloves (cut in half) into the water when boiling the potatoes. Then season with all of the above plus dried parsley, oregano, thyme, and salt (skipping the garlic salt). That would be worth a try for comparison.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S OVEN-FRIED POTATOES

Ingredients	2 servings
Baking potatoes – unpeeled (cut into large pieces - (⅔ to 1 inch)	1 large potato
Paprika	¾ Tbsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	1 tsp. (⅔ tsp. if married to Karen)
Dried minced onion	1 Tbsp.
Garlic salt	¾ tsp.
Choice of some fun seasoning, such as: Phil McGrane's Secretary of Steak Rub Kinder's Buttery Poultry Blend Cajun's Choice Blackened Seasoning Johnny's Chicken & Pork Seasoning Mrs. Dash Bavarian Inn All Purpose Seasoning Paul Prudhomme's Vegetable Magic Emeril's Essence	¾ tsp.
Olive oil	⅓ cup (5 Tbsp.)

Equipment

To mix the potatoes, spices & oil, I use a metal bowl. This could also be done in a large Ziplock bag.

For broiling, I use a "jelly roll" pan (flat baking sheet with a rim). Do not line with foil. That would interfere with the browning process.

Directions

Cut unpeeled potatoes into large cubes (⅔ to 1 inch).

Put potatoes into a mixing bowl. Add spices and oil. Mix.

Spread potatoes on flat pan so they barely touch. Use two pans if necessary to spread out.

Bake at 450° for 30 minutes (less time for smaller potato pieces).

If you wish, you may turn them over with a spatula half-way through. But this is not necessary, and I don't bother.

Serve immediately, or move them to a warming oven (200°).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ANDY'S GREEK SMASHED POTATOES

Ingredients	6-8 servings
Small red potatoes (washed & dried, but not peeled) (or mix small red and white potatoes)	2 ½ lb. (20+ very small potatoes)
Olive oil (Use a good one. Tuscan herb from Olivin is divine)	very generously (perhaps ½ cup by the time you're done)
Kosher salt	generous sprinkles
Pepper	generous sprinkles
Dried rosemary	A light sprinkle
Minced garlic (fresh if possible, or from jar)	Three cloves = 6 Tbsp.

Note: Total baking time = over an hour. Start early!

Directions

First bake

Heat oven to 450°.
Put the potatoes (whole, with nothing on them) on baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes until tender enough to squish.`

Smash 'em

Smash them onto the same pan. (Place a spatula on the potato and hit it with a tenderizing hammer.) You want the skin to break, but not be completely smashed—about an inch thick. Don't worry if some of the potato breaks off.
Drizzle the smashed potatoes generously with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Put a tiny dollop of garlic on each potato and spread it around. Sprinkle them with dried rosemary.

Optional rest time

If you wish, you may now pause for a couple of hours. Put potatoes in a cool place.

Second bake

Increase oven temperature to 500°, and cook for about 20 minutes until they are brown on the bottom.

Source

Based loosely on the recipe in Tom Douglas, *Tom's Big Dinners* (2003). Andy bought this book in Seattle for my Father's Day. I have modified the recipe over time.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

POTATOES SOUTHCOMBE

Ingredients	Small side servings	
	2 people	6 people
Tiny Yukon gold potatoes, or Klondike Gourmet petite potatoes	¾ lb. (12 oz.)	2 ¼ lbs. (36 oz.)
Grapeseed oil	3 Tbsp. to start, more as needed	3 Tbsp. to start, more as needed
Maldon sea salt (if possible!)	Generously, when all done	Generously, when all done

Select the tiniest potatoes. Leave the skins on. If very small, you may leave them whole. But if 1 inch or greater in diameter, cut in half. Larger ones should be quartered or even cut into sixths.

Parboil the potatoes in salted water until al dente—barely edible but still quite firm: Approx. 15 minutes (including the time it takes to return to a full boil). (If this step is done in advance, chill the potatoes by washing in cold water, then put in the fridge after boiling.)

Sauté the potatoes in grapeseed oil (a good dousing, but not deep frying) in large non-stick pan over medium heat, turning frequently, until they are a beautiful, deep golden brown. This will take 35-60 minutes, particularly if the pan is full of potatoes. If you turn this temperature any higher, be prepared to monitor constantly to avoid burned potatoes. If needed, these potatoes can be kept warm on lowest setting for longer.

Spread potatoes out on a jelly pan (cookie sheet with a rim) and finish in the oven for about 15 minutes at 350° (or whatever temperature the oven is for other things). Or just keep them on the stove under low heat. This may continue for another hour!

Season with Maldon sea salt and pepper. (The Aussie secret!)

Source: Brent Southcombe, national chef of Australia, dear friend, and the best chef I've ever cooked with. Brent once made these potatoes at our home for a Givens Pursley dinner, so I named the dish after him. Alas, Brent and his family have returned to Australia.

Notes: A real chef can flip these potatoes without using a spatula. This dish works fine for up to 8 people. It is not recommended for more—requires too much attention.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EMERIL'S SCALLOPED POTATOES

Ingredients	6 servings	8 servings	10 servings
Simmer potatoes in cream			
Yukon gold potatoes (if necessary, substitute Russet bakers)	2 ½ lbs.	3 ¼ lbs.	4 lbs.
Heavy cream (enough to cover the potatoes)	5 cups	6 ½ cups	8 cups
Crystal hot sauce (or Sriracha)	2 ½ Tbsp.	3 ¼ Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.
Butter the pan			
Butter	Generously grease the lasagna pan		
Build the casserole			
Salt	A very light sprinkle on each layer		
Pepper	A sprinkle on each layer		
Jalapeño Jack (my preference) Or Tillamook extra sharp cheddar, Or any other nice cheese or combination of cheeses.	19 oz.	25 oz.	31 oz.
Hungarian paprika	A generous sprinkle on each layer		

Cheesiness:
My version is very cheesy—more of an au Gratin. Reduce the amount cheese if you want a more traditional version of scalloped potatoes, which is more creamy than cheesy.

Equipment:
Simmer the potatoes & cream in a very large, covered Dutch oven or other pot, big enough that it doesn't boil over. Use a large (10' x 14") uncovered lasagna pan to bake the scalloped potatoes.

Directions:

Scrub and slice the potatoes

Scrub the potatoes hard with a green scrubby thingy to get them clean. There is no need to peel them, especially if using Yukon golds. I slice them in a Cuisinart with an 8 mm (really thick) chopping blade. A mandoline (not to be confused with a mandolin) also works well. Or use a knife.

Simmer the potatoes in cream

Place the potatoes in a larger than necessary pot (lest you not pay attention and let it boil over). Add enough cream to barely cover them. Add hot sauce. (You can skip the hot sauce if you're really scared. But I promise you, it won't be hot by the time you're done. Instead, it will leave … je ne sais quoi.) Cover the pot with a lid and gently bring to a simmer. This is not like boiling potatoes in water. You want no more than an active simmer. (Or, if you prefer to spend the next day cleaning the pot, crank up the heat.) Simmer until the potatoes are barely fork tender. This could take anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes depending on many variables. The potatoes on the bottom will cook faster and get mushy before the ones on top are done, so try to move them around a bit—but be gentle and don't break them into pieces. To test for doneness, a fork should pierce pretty easily but with some resistance. God forbid, please don't cook them until they are falling apart. For reasons unknown to science (or at least to me), they will not soften up much in the oven.

While the potatoes are simmering, grate the cheese.

Build the casserole

Using tongs and a spatula, gently remove each potato slice one at a time and make a layer covering the lasagna pan. Sprinkle each layer with salt, pepper, grated cheese, and paprika. However, before putting these things on the top layer, pour the remaining cream from pot onto the potatoes and spread it around. (This should not be a super huge amount; it will have reduced. If you have a lot of cream left, don't use it all.)

Repeat for 2 or 3 layers. Two is best – more crispy top (so use a large pan). Do not exceed 3 layers.

Refrigerate (optional)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

If you wish, the casserole may be prepared several hours or even a day in advance and put in the fridge. If so, put it in a warming oven for 20 minutes to take off the chill before baking.

Bake

Bake uncovered at 375˚ for about 40 minutes. (Or at 400˚ for about 30 minutes. Or much longer at lower temperature.)

Rest

After coming out of the oven, this will need to rest about 10 minutes to soak up the cream and solidify enough to be served elegantly.

Source:

This recipe is based loosely on:

Wine Spectator Magazine (8/2004), which published the Emeril Lagasse version.
Food & Wine Magazine (11/2021) featured a remarkably similar version as their cover story, but with a variety of root vegetables. And it called for only parmesan cheese. The recipe on Emeril's website (www.emerils.com) uses the same amount of cream and just a little Swiss cheese, and it calls for Idaho bakers.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FRIED MASHED POTATO PANCAKES

Ingredients	2 servings
Make mashed potatoes	
(See recipe on page 175)	
Turn them into potato pancakes	
Flour	⅓ cup
Eggs (beaten)	2 eggs
Progresso breadcrumbs (plain or seasoned)	⅓ cup
Butter	

Equipment

Just a frying pan.

Directions

Make mashed potatoes (see separate recipe).
Form them into pancakes the size of a small hamburger.
Dredge the potato pancakes in flour, then beaten egg, then fine breadcrumbs.
Fry in butter (not too hot) for quite a while until nicely browned.
Keep in warm oven until ready to serve.

Notes

I cheat and use Progresso breadcrumbs. You may make your own breadcrumbs if you have time, but you want something pretty fine, like Progresso makes. Panko is too crunchy.
These are a very rough Midwestern and Southern alternative to the much more sophisticated Jewish dish, Potato Latkes, which I desperately love but apparently lack the skill to make property, though I have tried so hard.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FRENCH FRIES (POMMES FRITES)

Ingredients	2 servings	4 servings
Burbank russet potatoes (Idaho bakers)	2 large potatoes	4 large potatoes
Canola oil - Experts say use Peanut oil	3 quarts (¾ gallon)	4 quarts (1 gallon)
Sea salt	Generously	generously
Serve with:		
Mayonnaise (if in Belgium, or your name is Karen)		
Ketchup (if a True American)		

Equipment:
A Chinese wire & wood wok thingy is the best thing for retrieving the fries.
You may use an electric fryer. But they are a fuss to clean up.
I use a very large, heavy Calphalon pot. It needs to be at least 8 inches tall, because things may "boil" up like mad when first put in (if even a tiny bit wet).
If you don't have a stove with high BTUs, it can be hard to achieve and maintain the cooking temperature needed on the second fry. I've tried adding a lot of oil, but that is very hard to re-heat on a stove w/o massive BTUs. It is best to do this in multiple batches if making for more than two people.

Directions:

Potato prep:

Remove any significant blemishes, but don't peel the potatoes.
Slice the potatoes (peel on). This can be done by hand, with a mandoline, or with the 6 mm French Fry blade in the Cuisinart, which will produce very thin, McDonald's like fries.
My preference is the mandoline (not to be confused with a mandolin, which, if possible, should be playing in the background).
Soak them in water at least 20 minutes. Drain in a colander and set out to dry on paper towels for 30 minutes. To speed the drying, move them to fresh paper towels after a few minutes. This drying process is important; wet fries in hot oil will boil up.

First Fry:

Fry at 330° for 3-5 minutes. They should look wilted, not crispy. Remove and set out to rest on paper towels. (Temp will drop precipitously when you add the potatoes, so the oil should be 345° before you put them in.)
Rest for 30 minutes if possible (this matters).

Second Fry:

Fry a second time at 375° until golden brown (3-4 minutes, use judgment).
Drain on paper towels. Salt generously. Serve immediately.

Source:

Gourmet Magazine (4/2009) (325/350°); Fine Cooking (8/2011) (330/360°)

Notes:

Some aficionados say the trick is to let the cut potatoes soak in water for two hours (changing the water once). Supposed to produce a crispier fry.
After second fry, potatoes can be kept warm in the oven (spread out on baking sheet) for a while, but are best when served immediately.

Or try this:

Based on an internet recipe, I parboiled them in water, salt and 3 Tbsp. of white vinegar for 10 minutes before double frying them. If you do this, increase the last fry to 400 degrees to achieve crispness. This produces a very nice tender result, although it will remind you a bit of McDonalds.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PATATAS PANADERAS (OVEN-ROASTED SPANISH POTATOES)

Ingredients	2 Servings	6 Servings
First bake		
Yukon Gold potatoes	1 ¼ lbs.	3 ½ lbs.
White or yellow onion (thinly sliced, then cut into strips)	⅓ large onion	1 large onion
Bell pepper (your choice of color) (sliced into thin strips)	⅓ bell pepper	1 bell pepper
Fresh garlic (minced)	3 cloves	1 head of cloves
Extra virgin olive oil	3 Tbsp.	7 Tbsp. (almost ½ cup)
Sea salt	1 tsp.	2 ½ tsp.
Freshly grated pepper	Several turns of the grinder	
Second bake		
Dry white wine	2 Tbsp.	6 Tbsp. (⅓ cup)
Serve		
Parsley (optional)	a sprinkle for garnish	

Equipment*:*

For 2 or 3 people: medium-large (8 x 12”—interior) lasagna pan or baking dish.
For 4 to 6 people: (10 x 14”—interior) lasagna pan or baking dish.

If your pan doesn’t have a cover, cover with tinfoil (for first bake).

You want the pan large enough to keep the potato mixture from getting too thick (3 layers max). This will improve browning.

Oven:

First bake (covered) = 325°. Second bake (uncovered) = 390°.

Directions:

Chop chop

Peel the potatoes and slice them into 1/4-inch thick rounds; submerge them in a pot of water until ready for use. Slice onions and bell peppers into thin strips. Peel and mince the garlic cloves.

Combine in baking dish

Combine the potatoes, onion, bell pepper, garlic, salt, and pepper in a baking dish. Pour on the olive oil. Mix together and spread into an even layer, with potatoes, etc. overlapping—two or three layers deep. Try to leave mostly potatoes on the top layer—we care more about browning them than the vegetables.

First bake (covered)

Cover and put in 325° oven for 1 hour & 10 minutes. Potatoes should be just beginning to get tender.

Optional pause

If you wish, you may remove the potatoes from the oven and let them rest while tending to other things. Leave the covered baking dish on the counter for up to four hours.

Second bake (uncovered)

Increase oven temperature to 390°. Remove cover or tinfoil. Add the wine. Bake uncovered for another 45 minutes (or longer as needed, especially for a larger batch). The wine will steam off, the onions will finish caramelizing, and the top edges of the potato rounds will turn beautifully golden and crisp. The potatoes will be completely tender when pierced with a fork.

Bake

Serve hot, garnished with more parsley.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Serve with:

These Spanish potatoes are the traditional accompaniment to Pollo en Pepitoria. Plate the chicken directly on top of these velvety potatoes on the dinner plate. Ladle it all with lots of the rich gravy.

The perfect Spanish dessert would be a Flan or Crema Catalana.

Etymology & history:

Patatas Panaderas translates to "baker's potatoes." The name dates to the time when only the wealthy had ovens in their homes. For centuries across Spain and the rest of Europe, ordinary households cooked over open hearths, fireplaces, or simple small stoves. While these setups were adequate for boiling stews, frying, or grilling, they could not bake. In towns and cities, the baker had a huge wood-fired brick oven. (In rural villages, there was no baker. Instead, families took turns using a single communal oven.)

Back in the day, families would prepare trays of thinly sliced potatoes, onions, and olive oil at home and bring them to the local neighborhood bakery. After the daily bread batches were finished, the bakers allowed residents to slide their potato trays into the cooling brick ovens. The residual heat cooked the potatoes slowly until tender.

The word "panaderas" is both a plural noun (for female bakers) and an adjective (technically, an appositive noun) meaning "in the style of the baker." Here, the feminine form of the adjective (panaderas) is used because the word modifies the feminine noun patatas (potatoes). It does not refer to female bakers.

This Spanish dish actually originates in French cuisine, where it is known as Pommes de terre à la Boulangère. In French, a boulanger is a male baker, while boulangère means female baker or the wife of the baker. The culinary phrase à la boulangère means "in the style of the baker's wife."

Historically, French housewives would prepare a bed of potatoes and onions under a joint of meat and bring it to the local baker (boulanger). It was often the baker's wife (la boulangère) who managed the townspeople's dishes, sliding them into the massive wood-fired oven to slow-cook using the residual heat after the morning bread was pulled out.

When the recipe traveled across the Pyrenees and became a staple in Spain, Spanish cooks adopted the French method but adapted the ingredients to fit the Mediterranean palate. The Spanish substituted olive oil for French butter, white wine for French beef or chicken stock, and bell peppers and onions for the French thyme and parsley.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Source:

This recipe for Patatas Panaderas is based largely on *Food and Wine* magazine (Sept. 2025), which I have modified to move it toward the more authentic Spanish version. My version substantially increases cooking times.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CANDIED SWEET POTATOES WITH CHAMBORD

Ingredients	*8 servings (plenty for Thanksgiving)*
Sweet potatoes (inexplicably called yams out West) (whatever you call them, you want the dark sweet ones)	2 ½ lbs. (3-5 potatoes depending on size)
Butter (melted)	1 ½ sticks (6 oz.)
Brown sugar	1 cup
Chambord (a French liqueur)	½ cup

Equipment:
A large pot to boil them. Then a covered casserole dish.

Directions:
Peel sweet potatoes. Remove any bad spots.
Cut in half lengthwise. Then cut into spears (cutting each half potato once, twice, or even four times depending on thickness of potato). Potatoes over 8 inches long may be cut in half before making the spears.
Boil them almost tender (about 12 minutes. Watch out – they go from hard to mushy very fast!).
If you plan to bake them the morning or day before, leave them a tad under-done.

Remove them carefully one-at-a-time onto something where they may cool off.
If you have goofed up and overcooked them, spray them gently with cold water to stop the cooking.
After they have cooled, arrange the potatoes in casserole.

Pour melted butter into small mixing bowl. Add brown sugar and Chambord. Mix together and pour over the potatoes.

You may pause now and put the uncooked casserole in the refrigerator (or a cool backyard) until ready for baking.

Bake covered at 350° for about 60 minutes (assuming they are put in cold).

Note:
If you have not overcooked them, these potatoes hold up very well the next day. Indeed, I think they are even better if baked the day before (or in the morning) and kept in the fridge. Re-heat cold potatoes, covered, at 350º for 40 minutes.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ANWAR SADAT'S OVER-COOKED SWEET POTATOES

Ingredients	*Per 8 servings (plenty for Thanksgiving)*
Sweet potatoes (inexplicably called yams out West) (whatever you call them, you want the dark sweet ones)	One per person
Butter (melted, if you like)	For serving
Salt & pepper	For serving

Directions

Pre-heat oven to 350º.
Scrub the potatoes thoroughly, and let them dry.

I've always pierced the potatoes with a sharp serving fork to prevent them from exploding, because that's how my mom taught me. But modern commentary says exploding potatoes are rare, and that letting the steam escape is actually a bad idea taste-wise. So, you may do as your mother taught you, or not.

Lay a sheet of tin foil directly on the oven rack. Place the sweet potatoes on the tin foil. Foil is critical (especially if you pierced them), because the sweet potatoes will drip onto and through the rack.

Do not wrap them in tin foil, as one might a baking potato. They will be perfectly over-done after 2 hours or so. You could speed this up with a higher temp, but this slow cook produces a marvelous result.

Origin story

We like our sweet potatoes very well done, in honor of our first dinner at Tom and Paula Lustig's house in Washington, D.C. Dinner was about to be served when the news playing in the background announced that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat (of the Camp David Accords) had been assassinated. Dinner took a pause, as we were gripped to the TV. The sweet potatoes kept cooking. Eventually we ate. The sweet silken taste of these overcooked potatoes was the only solace to that horrible news. I have loved them that way ever since.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BAKED POTATOES

Ingredients	*Quantity*
Baking potatoes (Russets)	One per person
Butter (melted, if you like)	For serving
Sour cream	For serving
Chives	For serving
Salt & pepper	For serving

We like our baked potatoes well done. I am perplexed by restaurants that think a baked potato (or any potato) should be served al dente.

Directions
Preheat oven.
Scrub the potatoes thoroughly and let them dry.

I've always pierced the potatoes with a sharp serving fork to prevent them from exploding, because that's how my mom taught me. But modern commentary says exploding potatoes are rare, and that letting the steam escape is actually a bad idea taste-wise. So, you may do as your mother taught you, or not.

Here's the choice:
If you wrap them in tinfoil (as do the old school steakhouses like the Stagecoach Inn in Boise) you will have remarkable flexibility and forgiveness as to when they are done. Put 'em in the oven and Fuggedaboudit. Indeed, they can tolerate a high temp with ease. Try 400º for 2 hours, then drop to 300º or lower until dinner is ready. The result is very good, but the skin will be soft due to the tinfoil.

A more perfect baked potato with crisp skin requires baking without the tinfoil wrap. If you skip the foil, rub them with olive oil and sprinkle with salt before putting them in the oven. At 350º, potatoes without foil will be nicely done in 1 ½ hours.

Here's the goal: When they are done, slit the skin open with a knife. Then use your hands (and a thin dish towel for heat protection) to scrunch the potato around the bottom to pop it open. The soft white flesh of the potato should burst into a mound of steaming-hot happiness.

Add butter, sour cream, and chives—and not much else, in my opinion. Save the bacon and cheese for an omelet.

If serving with Grandpa Meyer's chicken, douse them generously with the special sauce.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PARMESAN ROASTED RED POTATOES

Ingredients	2 servings	3 servings
Small red potatoes (washed and cut in half)	⅔ lb.	1 lb.
Olive oil	2.7 Tbsp. (1/6 cup)	4 Tbsp. (¼ cup)
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (finely grated)	2 Tbsp.	3 Tbsp.
Minced garlic (fresh or from jar)	1 tsp.	1 ½ tsp.
Salt	⅔ tsp.	1 tsp.
Pepper	⅓ tsp.	½ tsp.
Choice of: Mrs. Dash Paul Prudhomme's Vegetable Magic Emeril's Essence	⅔ tsp.	1 tsp.
Parsley (chopped) (fresh is best, or use from jar)	1 tsp.	1 ½ tsp.

Equipment*:*

Colander, mixing bowl, jelly roll pan.

Directions:

Place the potatoes in a colander and wash thoroughly.
Cut them in half (the long way if they're not round). Cut out any bad spots. If some are bigger than the rest, cut into thirds, so they are all about the same size.

Place potatoes in a large bowl with the olive oil, parmesan cheese, garlic, salt, pepper, and seasoning. Toss to coat.

Spread the potatoes evenly on a jelly roll pan.
Bake at 400º for about 35 minutes (until golden brown and fork tender).

Serve:

Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S BEST EVER POTATO SALAD

Ingredients	8 servings
Boil the potatoes and the eggs	
Potatoes (Yukon Gold, russet bakers, or small red potatoes) (skin-on, cut into bite-size pieces)	2 lb. (three large potatoes)
Eggs (hard boiled)	6 eggs
The dressing	
Mayonnaise	1 cup
Mustard	1 Tbsp.
Apple cider vinegar	1 tsp.
Green onion (chopped fine, with a little green) (or substitute shallot)	2 green onions
Gherkins (chopped fine)	4 gherkins
Paprika	½ tsp.
Salt & pepper	to taste (rather a lot)

Directions:

Boil the eggs gently (see "How to boil an egg" on page 12). When thoroughly cooled (10 minutes in cold water), carefully remove and discard the shells.

Cut the cold hard boiled eggs in half and remove the yolk. Finely chop the whites.

Chop the potatoes into small bite-size pieces (the size you want in the finished product). Boil in an ample supply of salted water until fork tender. (Some people insist on undercooking the potato, but we reject this.) Drain. No need to let cool.

Put the yolks in a large mixing bowl and mash gently with a fork. Add the mayonnaise, mustard, vinegar, green onion, pickle, paprika, salt, and pepper. Mix together.

Then add the potatoes and gently mix to coat the potatoes. This should be done while the potatoes are still warm.

Potato salad tastes best after resting in the refrigerator for a number of hours, or even the next day or two.

I think it tastes better if served at room temperature, rather than right out of the fridge.

When serving, you may add an additional dash of paprika for color.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

RICE, ORZO, COUSCOUS & POLENTA

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PLAIN OLD RICE

Ingredients	2 servings	3 servings
Water (or chicken broth) – if making white rice	1 ¼ cup (10 oz.)	2 cups
Water (or chicken broth) – if making brown rice	1 ¼ cup (10 oz.)	2 cups
White rice (basmati or jasmine) Or brown rice	almost ⅔ cup (5 oz.)	1 cup
Butter (optional, especially for Asian)	¼ stick	⅓ stick
Salt	¼ tsp.	⅓ tsp.

Equipment:
Works well in rice cooker. Can also do in covered pot on the stove.

Ratio: The ratio is 2 to 1 (liquid to rice) for white rice. More liquid is needed for brown rice (an extra ½ cup for 2 small servings).

Rinse: Before cooking, rinse the rice with cold water. This will make the finished product less sticky. I put the rice in a fine mesh strainer and balance that on a colander. Put the whole contraption in the sink and run water over it for a number of minutes. Drain well by letting it rest. If making a large batch, you may let the rice soak in a pot of water, and then drain it through a strainer.

Directions – rice cooker:
Put rice, butter (optional), salt, and water (or broth) into rice cooker and let it work. (It will take 20 minutes.)

Directions – on the stove:
Bring the water (or broth) to a boil. Add the rice, butter (optional), and salt. Return to a boil, then cover. Reduce heat and simmer for 18-20 minutes. (Don't lift the lid for the first 18 minutes—steam is important.)

Fluff and rest:
When rice is cooked, cover and let it rest for 3 to 5 minutes.
Remove cover and fluff with a fork.
Replace cover and let rest for another 5 to 10 minutes.
(This prevents mushy rice by allowing excess moisture to be absorbed.)
Serve.

Store until later:
I'm told that plain cooked rice may be covered with Saran Wrap and kept in the fridge up a few days before serving.

See also recipes for:
"Karen's Onion Rice" on page 193.
"Pretty Authentic Mexican Rice" on page 194.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S ONION RICE

Ingredients	2 servings	3 servings
Onion (chopped fine)	½ onion	¾ onion
Olive oil	1 Tbsp.	1 ½ Tbsp.
Chicken broth – if making white rice	1 ¼ cups (10 oz.)	2 cups
Chicken broth – if making brown rice	1 ¾ cups (14 oz.)	2 ⅔ cups
White rice (basmati or jasmine) Or brown rice	almost ⅔ cup (5 oz.)	1 cup (8 oz.)

Equipment:
Works well in rice cooker. Can also do in covered pot on the stove.

Notes: We like the richness of chicken broth. You may substitute water. The ratio is 2 to 1 (liquid to rice) for white rice. More liquid is needed for brown rice (an extra ½ cup for 2 small servings).

Rinse: Before cooking, rinse the rice with cold water. This will make the finished product less sticky. I put the rice in a fine mesh strainer and balance that on a colander. Put the whole contraption in the sink and run water over it for a number of minutes. Drain well by letting it rest. If making a large batch, you may let the rice soak in a pot of water, and then drain it through a strainer.

Directions:
Brown the onion well in olive oil. If you have time, sauté gently for a very long time (up to an hour) in order to caramelize, and then finish up with a nice browning.

Cook the rice – rice cooker:
Put broth, rinsed rice and sautéed onion into rice cooker and let it work. (It will take 20 minutes.)

Cook the rice – on the stove:
Bring the water (or broth) to a boil.
Add the rinsed rice, the sautéed onion, and salt.
Return to a boil, then cover. Reduce heat and simmer for 18-20 minutes. (Don't lift the lid for the first 18 minutes—steam is important.)

Fluff and rest:
When rice is cooked, cover and let it rest for 3 to 5 minutes.
Remove cover and fluff with a fork.
Replace cover and let rest for another 5 to 10 minutes.
(This prevents mushy rice by allowing excess moisture to be absorbed.)
Serve.

Source: Loosely based on recipe in *Essential Pasta Cookbook*.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PRETTY AUTHENTIC MEXICAN RICE

Ingredients	2 servings
Brown the rice:	
Rice	½ cup
Butter & cooking oil (canola, vegetable, or grapeseed)	Just enough to keep rice moist
Sauté the onion:	
Onion (chopped fine)	⅔ onion
Add the garlic, tomato & chile pepper flakes:	
Garlic (chopped fine or from jar)	3 cloves or 1 heaping Tbsp. from jar
Tomatoes (chopped small)	1 or 2 tomatoes
Chile pepper flakes	½ tsp.
Salt	¼ tsp.
Cook the rice:	
Chicken broth	1 ¼ cups
Butter	1 pat
Fresh salsa, tomato sauce, or tomato puree	Just a bit for color. This is completely optional. Do this if you happen to have some in the fridge.
Frozen peas (optional)	1 Tbsp.

Equipment

I use a large copper frying pan for all the sauté and browning. Then I use a Japanese rice cooker. Needless to say, it would be more authentic to compete everything in the pan on the stove. But the rice cooker is so forgiving and will keep it warm without fuss.

Directions

Lightly brown the rice (optional):

Gently fry the rice in a little butter and cooking oil over medium heat for about 10 minutes until lightly browned. When the rice is boiled, this step will cause the rice to "open up" in that classic Mexican rice way. You could skip this step, but it will taste better and authentic if you don't. Remove the rice to the rice cooker or elsewhere.

Sauté the onion:

Using the same frying pan (now empty), sauté the onion in butter for about 10 minutes (or much longer over low heat to caramelize).

Add the garlic and tomatoes:

When the onion is lightly browned, add the tomatoes and garlic. Continue to sauté the onion, garlic and tomatoes for another 5 or 10 minutes.

Mini-chop the vegetables:

Put the sautéed onions, tomatoes & garlic into a mini-chopper. Pulse a few seconds; don't turn it to complete mush.

Cook the rice:

Combine the rice and the sautéed vegetables in a rice cooker, or put everything back in the frying pan. Add chicken broth and butter. Optionally, add a bit of salsa, tomato puree, or tomato sauce (for color).

Add peas:

Quite optional: When the rice is cooked, you may toss in a few frozen peas and let them warm up in the rice for a while before serving.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Source:
Based loosely on various authentic Mexican rice recipes.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ORZO DI GIOVANNI

Ingredients	2 servings	6 servings
Sauté onion:		
Shallots (minced) or Onion (minced)	1 very large shallot or ⅓ medium onion	3 very large shallots or 1 medium onion
Olive oil	2 Tbsp. (as needed)	6 Tbsp. (as needed)
Brown the orzo:		
Orzo	¾ cup (5 ⅓ oz.)	2 ¼ cups (16 oz.)
Olive oil	1 Tbsp. (as needed)	3 Tbsp. (as needed)
Crushed red chili flakes	A little shake	A good shake
Mushrooms (very optional!)		
Mushrooms (sliced)	A small handful, don't over-do	
Olive oil	As needed	
Add the liquid:		
Chicken stock or broth (low sodium is best)	1 ½ cups (13 oz.) (as needed)	4 ½ cups (38 oz.) (as needed)
Water	Half as much	Half as much
If you happen to be braising a lamb shank or anything else, use the braising liquid and some additional water, instead of the chicken stock.		
Plate:		
Fresh Italian parsley (minced) (optional)		A generous sprinkle (⅛ cup)

Equipment

Everything is done in one pan. It must be large enough to hold the orzo and all the liquid. For 1-3 people, use a medium frying pan. For 4-6 people, use a large frying pan. For a large batch, use a Le Creuset Dutch oven or some such.

Directions

Mushrooms (*optional):*

If you happen to have some sliced mushrooms, you may brown them in olive oil. Remove from pan, and add them to the browned orzo later.

Sauté the shallot/onion:

Sauté the minced shallot/onion in olive oil until barely soft (just a few minutes—or longer on slow heat to caramelize). Don't over-brown; the onion will cook longer with the orzo.

Brown *the orzo:*

Add ⅔ of the orzo to the frying pan with the onion (reserving the rest). Add a touch more olive oil, if needed—but not too much; all the oil will end up in the orzo. Add a sprinkle of red chile flakes. Brown the orzo and the onions over medium-high heat for another 2 or 3 minutes, turning occasionally. Don't overdo the browning. Some should be brown, some not, so that you have a nice mixture of colors. Near the end, add the additional (raw) orzo. This provides a nice color contrast.

Optional: add the sauteed mushrooms.

Add *the liquid:*

I water down the chicken broth with water (2 to 1). You may combine them initially, or just add them separately. Gradually add the broth and water to the onions & orzo a ladle at a time (as if you were making a risotto). Stir constantly, adding more liquid as it is absorbed by the orzo. The orzo will stick to the pan if you stop stirring for more than a couple of minutes. This may take up to 20 minutes. YOU MAY NOT NEED ALL THE LIQUID. Stop adding liquid when the orzo stops absorbing it. Add only as much liquid as needed to achieve *al dente* consistency.

Pause:

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

If the rest of the meal is not ready, the cooked orzo may be kept in a warming oven for a while.

Season and serve:

After plating, sprinkle with a little minced Italian parsley, if you like.

Source

John (Giovanni) Moeller.

Notes

Orzo is a tiny pasta shaped like a large grain of rice. When cooked, it presents in a form that will remind you more of risotto or couscous.

The mushrooms are a non-traditional add-on. I add them if I happen to have them in the house. But don't add too many.

John's recipe calls for just water and brazing liquid. I substitute chicken stock and demi-glace, if no brazing liquid is available. I learned from John the trick of browning half the rice, which creates a beautiful presentation with contrasting colors.

John browns his orzo (half of it) dry in a pan with no oil. I like to add the orzo to the pan with the sautéed onion. This is simpler, and the orzo seems to like the oil.

A similar recipe may be found as "Leon Lianides's Leg of Lamb with Orzo" in *Beard on Pasta*. It involves adding the orzo to the roasting pan, with the juices, adding more chicken stock, then baking the orzo, and topping with kasseri cheese.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

COUSCOUS—SIMPLE VERSION

Ingredients	2 to 4 servings
Bring liquid to a boil	
Chicken broth	1 ½ cups
Water	¾ cup
Currants or raisins (optional)	¼ cup
Salt (not much—the broth is salty)	¼ tsp.
Add the couscous	
Couscous	1 cup (this more than a typical 5.6 oz. box)
Good olive oil	A generous drizzle

Equipment:
I use a cast iron Le Creuset cooking pot, which retains heat well. Any pot will do.

Directions:
Put the watered down chicken broth liquid in a pot.
(The package directions call for just water; I prefer watered down chicken broth—3 to 1).
Optional: Add the currants or raisins and bring to a boil.
Add a pinch of salt.
Heat the liquid. As soon as it reaches a boil, turn off the heat and add the couscous. Stir and cover with a lid. Let sit for 5 minutes off heat (no peeking).
Fluff the couscous with a fork.

Notes:
Boxed couscous often contains a package of spices. I throw them out.
"Rice Select Original Couscous" (in a plastic jar) is more economical and doesn't have the useless spice packages.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

COUSCOUS—COMPLICATED VERSION

Ingredients	2 to 4 servings
Sauté the garlic	
Olive oil	1 ½ Tbsp.
Garlic (minced)	3 cloves (or 1 tsp.)
Turmeric	⅓ tsp.
The couscous	
Chicken broth	1 ½ cups
Water	¾ cup
Salt (not much—the broth is salty)	¼ tsp.
The add-ins	
Currants or raisins (optional)	¼ cup
Lemon peel (freshly grated)	Peel from up to 2 lemons
Pine nuts or slivered almonds	⅛ cup
Lemon juice	
Freshly squeezed lemon juice	1 lemon
The Presentation	
Cilantro (finely chopped)	A sprinkle

Equipment:
Use the same pot for both the sauté and making the couscous. I use a cast iron Le Creuset cooking pot, which retains heat well. Any pot will do.

Directions:

Sauté the garlic

Before making the couscous, heat olive oil the pot you will use for the couscous.
Add the garlic and sauté 1 minute.
Add the turmeric near the end and continue sautéing another minute.

The couscous

Put the watered down chicken broth into the pot with the sautéed garlic and spices.
(The package directions call for just water; I prefer watered down chicken broth—3 to 1).
Add any seasonings. (I use a little or none of the seasoning packs, and use a bit of salt instead.)
Optional: Add the currants or raisins to the pot.
Heat the liquid. As soon as it come to a boil, turn off the heat and add the couscous, lemon peel and the nuts.
Cover with lid. Let sit off heat for 5 minutes (no peeking).
Before fluffing, add the lemon juice to the couscous. Then fluff with a fork.
After plating (or otherwise presenting in a bowl), sprinkle with cilantro.

Notes:
Boxed couscous often contains a package of spices. I throw them out.
"Rice Select Original Couscous" (in a plastic jar) is more economical and doesn't have the useless spice packages.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CREAMY POLENTA

Ingredients	3 servings
Store-bought polenta in a tube (fresh) - plain version	1.1 lb. (1 tube)
Butter	⅓ stick
Cream or Half & half	⅓ cup
Chicken broth	⅓ cup (more as needed)

Equipment:
You can use just about anything. I use a medium size Le Creuset pot.

Directions:
Cut up the polenta into large chunks. Combine in pot: the polenta, butter, cream, and chicken broth. If planning a dinner party, this can be done ahead and left sitting for an hour before turning on the heat (or even longer if you have room in fridge). Or, if you have a warming oven going, you can start warming it there.

Heat gently on medium heat. After it has warmed up (only takes 5-10 minutes, depending on size), smash it all up with a potato masher until it's creamy. Cover and put on low heat to let it "meld" into creamy perfection. Altogether, this will require 20 to 40 minutes, with some attention (mashing and adding additional broth, if needed). This additional cooking time is key to getting the flavors to emerge.

Keep warm:
If not ready to serve, cover and keep in warming oven for up to an hour.

Source:
I just made this up. But it is a common recipe.

Notes:
Polenta (creamy or fried) is a traditional dish in Northern Italy. Originally peasant food, it is now served even in fancy restaurants. In Italy, it may be served as a simple side dish, perhaps with sautéed mushrooms on top. Or it may be served family style spread out on a large board and topped with marinara sauce, cheese, and even meatballs! In our house, it is not associated with Italian dinners, but is served as a starch (instead of mashed potatoes) with lamb and other dishes.

From scratch:
I'm lazy and use the "tube" of polenta from the grocery store. But you can also make real polenta from scratch: 1 cup corn meal, 3 cups chicken broth, 1 cup half & half, ½ stick butter (serves 3). This will take about 40 minutes to get the corn meal tender.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ANDY'S FRIED POLENTA

Ingredients	2 servings
Store-bought polenta in a tube (fresh) - plain version	1 lb. (1 tube)
Olive oil	very little, as needed

Equipment: This is one of the rare occasions where a non-stick frying pan works better.

Recipe: Slice polenta about ½ inch thick. Sauté over fairly high heat for about 3 minutes per side in just a very little olive oil. If you too much oil, won't get the browning you want.

Note: Of course, you may make polenta from scratch. Pretty simple with corn meal. That would be good, but I never bother.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

WINE-BRAISED CHICKEN WITH OLIVES, ARTICHOKES AND ORZO (SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 84)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

TURKEY & FIXINGS

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

THANKSGIVING TURKEY (IN TIN FOIL)

Figure 1.5 pounds per person (15 pound turkey for 10 people) (with zero left-overs). Make that 2.0 pounds per person for a smaller turkey (ratio of meat/bones is different).

Goal = 170°. Take it out of the oven at 167º (temperature will continue to rise a few degrees). If you go over 170º, don't fret. The tinfoil process is very forgiving.

Foil wrapped (w/o stuffing) – 450° (longer if stuffed)		*For comparison purposes: Unwrapped – 325°*	
7-9 lbs.	about 2 ½ - 3 ¼ hrs.	6-8 lbs.	3 ½ to 4 hrs.
10-13 lbs.	about 3 - 3 ¾ hrs.	8-12 lbs.	4 to 4 ½ hrs.
14-17 lbs.	about 3 ½ - 4 ¼ hrs.	12-16 lbs.	4 ½ to 5 ½ hrs.
18-21 lbs.	about 4 - 4 ¾ hrs.	16-20 lbs.	5 ½ to 6 ½ hrs.
22-24 lbs.	about 4 ½ - 5 ½ hrs.	20-24 lbs.	6 ½ to 7 ½ hrs.

Equipment:
You need a good roasting pan (no cover) and a rack that will hold the turkey. The roasting pan will be used later to make the gravy. Buy a ton of tin foil, the wider the better.
If you have a thermometer that plugs into the stove, good for you. But I don't trust them. The only thermometer I trust is the $100 "Thermapen" brand.

***Directions*:**

Prep the turkey

Remove the neck and giblets (and plastic pieces!). Throw out the neck. Cook the giblets and serve to dogs. Unless you are my mother, in which case, chop up the giblets and put them in the gravy.
Thoroughly rinse the turkey for a long time in the sink.
Cover bird generously with olive oil. Salt and pepper generously. Repeat on other side.
Salt and pepper interior, too.
Place 6 very long (45") pieces of tin foil on the kitchen counter, overlapping only partly and spread out so that the turkey can be placed in the middle.
Place the turkey on the six pieces of tin foil breast side up.
Insert a meat thermometer that may be left in (with a long cord that plugs into oven or reaches outside).
One at a time, fold each leaf of tin foil loosely around the turkey. If you press them too tightly, they may stick to the skin while cooking. (The tin foil makes it unnecessary to tie the legs and wings!)
Add a final (7th) piece of foil on the top.
Lift the wrapped turkey and place it (breast side up) onto the rack in the turkey roasting pan.
This wrapping (from bottom up, except for the last sheet) will allow you to easily unwrap and check temperature and then re-wrap.

Roast the turkey

Place turkey in 450° oven. Start checking temperature an hour before it should be done.
When turkey is (157°) (approaching done) remove top foil sheet and fold back all the others to reveal as much of the turkey as possible (about ⅔ of the turkey).
Return to oven uncovered and increase temperature to 490°. In about 10 minutes (watch carefully!) the turkey will turn from white to golden brown. If needed to brown quickly without more cooking, use the broiler for that last couple minutes.
Ideally, removed the golden brown turkey from the oven at 167°. The temperature will continue to rise. You're aiming for 170º, but a degree or two over is fine.
Tent with tin foil. Let rest 45 minutes before carving.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

***Notes*:**
Some say that it is better to roast the turkey upside down (so the juices flow to the breast). That may be, but this foil method keeps everything juicy and succulent. And it looks so much nicer if you can avoid those awful marks on the breast from roasting it upside down. The tinfoil method solves the problems of (1) having to tuck in the wings, (2) some parts cooking before the rest, (3) the need to baste. Spatchcocking a turkey also solve some of these problems, too. But tin foil is easier and very forgiving, even if you cook it a bit too long.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

TURKEY GRAVY

Ingredients	8 servings
Pan juices from the turkey (add some butter or bacon grease if pan juices are inadequate)	1 ½ cup
Flour	1 cup (follow this ratio based on however much pan juices you have)
Half & half or whole milk (or some of each)	as needed, up to 2 cups
Chicken broth	as needed, up to 4 cups (ratio is twice as much broth as half & half)
Salt & pepper	Generously (to taste)

Equipment:

Use the roasting pan to make the gravy.

Directions:

Remove turkey from the roasting pan, leaving in all the juices (drippings) and "burned stuff" in the pan.
Put roasting pan on the stove under medium flame.
If you are short on pan juices, add some butter or bacon grease.
Add flour (in 1.5/1.0 proportion to the amount of fat) to make a roux. This is a lower proportion of flour than a normal roux, but I find it works better. Stir and cook the roux a few minutes, deglazing the pan at same time.
Add the whole milk or half & half very slowly to make a "white sauce."
Continue to thin the gravy with chicken broth until it is fairly runny.
This will take a lot of chicken broth. Make it quite thin; it will thicken up more later.
Salt & pepper to taste.

Perfectionism:

Perfectionists will tell you to let the pan juices separate in a measuring cup (or special separating device). Then use just the top part to make the roux. And add in the rest of the pan juices later as liquid for the gravy. But you don't really have to fuss about this. I don't.

CHEATER CHICKEN GRAVY

If you don't have enough chicken juice (or turkey drippings), make a roux with an equal part of flour to whatever drippings you have, followed by chicken broth and/or half & half to thin. Then supplement the inadequate amount of gravy you have with a jar of store-bought chicken gravy. Season with salt & pepper.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CRANBERRY SAUCE

Ingredients	Big family (6-10)	Really big family (10 or more)
Fresh cranberries (in bag)	24 oz.	32 oz.
Granulated sugar	2 cups	2 ⅔ cups
Water	2 cups	2 ⅔ cups

Put the cranberries in a colander and rinse thoroughly.
In large saucepan, stir sugar into water. Bring to a boil. Then add the cranberries. Bring to a boil again. Then reduce to a simmer. Stir occasionally for perhaps 15-20 minutes until the cranberries pop. Turn off heat and allow to cool to room temperature. The refrigerate until served.

Source:
Directions on the bag of cranberries.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S TURKEY TETRAZZINI

Ingredients	3 servings
Spaghetti (broken into thirds)	10 oz.
Mushrooms (sliced)	4 oz. can or 6 whole mushrooms
Onion (chopped)	¾ medium onion
Olive oil	A splash
Butter (for sauté)	A couple pats
Butter (for roux)	2 pats
Butter (for pan)	2 pats
Flour	2 Tbsp.
Evaporated milk	13 oz. can
Cream of chicken soup	10 ¾ oz. can
Marjoram	¼ tsp.
Celery salt	½ tsp.
Salt	To taste
Pepper	To taste
Crystal hot sauce	2 tsp.
Sharp cheddar cheese (grated)	8 oz.
Turkey (or chicken) torn into small pieces	12 oz. (2 cups)
Pimento (chopped)	2 Tbsp.
Parmesan cheese (grated)	4 oz. (2/3 cup)

While preparing sauce, cook the spaghetti (broken into thirds) in salted water. Drain.
If using real mushrooms, slice and sauté in butter and olive oil.
Chop onion and sauté in butter and olive oil.
Make roux of butter and flour (cook a couple minutes).
Gradually add mushroom water (if using canned) and evaporated milk to make white sauce.
Then add the chicken soup.
Add the cheese, and stir to melt.
Season with marjoram, celery salt, and hot sauce (plus salt & pepper to taste).
Add the turkey meat, pimento, onions, and mushrooms.
Put cooked spaghetti into large, buttered casserole dish.
Top with the cheese/turkey sauce.
And sprinkle with the parmesan cheese.
Bake uncovered at 325 for 30 minutes

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MASHED POTATOES (SEE RECIPE UNDER "POTATOES")

CANDIED SWEET POTATOES WITH CHAMBORD (SEE RECIPE UNDER "POTATOES")

OYSTER DRESSING (SEE RECIPE UNDER "STUFFING")

STUFFING WITH CURRANTS AND CHUTNEY (SEE RECIPE UNDER "STUFFING")

DAD'S THANKSGIVING SPINACH CASSEROLE (SEE RECIPE UNDER "VEGETABLES")

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

STUFFING & BREADCRUMBS

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

NANCY MEYER'S OYSTER DRESSING (AKA SCALLOPED OYSTERS)

Ingredients	*5 people*
French bread (cut into cubes)	1 ⅔ cups
French bread crumbs	¾ cup
Saltine crackers (crushed)	1 of a sleeve (3 oz. = 1 ¼ cups)
Celery (chopped) - raw	⅔ cup (3 stalks)
Green onion (chopped, using white & green parts) – raw (or substitute shallots)	1 bunch (¾ cup when cut)
Reserved liquor of the oysters	All of it
Heavy cream	1 ½ cup
Butter (melted)	1 stick
Paprika	⅓ tsp.
Salt	Sprinkle
Oysters – fresh in jar (from grocery store) (leave them whole)	10 oz. jar

Equipment:
Le Creuset deep casserole dish or Dutch oven (with cover) is ideal. You will also need a big mixing bowl, and a colander set over a bowl (for the oysters).

Directions:

Make the breadcrumbs

Cut bread into large cubes.
Leave half as cubes. Turn the other half into crumbs.
Run and pulse the Cuisinart until they turn into crumbs – a minute or two.
Make a lot, measure out what you need, and freeze the rest.

Drain the oysters

Drain the oysters in a colander or sieve over a bowl. Set aside the oysters, reserving the precious "oyster liquor."

Prepare the dressing mixture

Crush the crackers into a large bowl.
Add the bread cubes and crumbs, celery (raw), green onion (raw), salt & paprika, oyster liquid, cream, and melted butter. The result should be soft and damp, add more cream if necessary.

Build the casserole

Grease the casserole dish with butter.
Put ½ of crumb mixture into the casserole dish.
Arrange the whole (uncut) oysters on the crumbs.
Add remaining crumb mixture as a second layer.
(Note: For a double batch, do 2 layers of oysters, separated by ⅓ of the crumbs in 3 layers.)
Sprinkle on some more paprika for beauty.
Cover with lid (or tin foil).
Bake at 350˚ for about 35 minutes (five minutes longer for a double batch). Take out when piping hot and steaming. Don't overcook or you will have chewy oysters.

Source:
Nancy Meyer, who followed the recipe from an ancient *Joy of Cooking*.

Notes:
This is really just a stuffing with oysters in it. But it is traditionally called "oyster dressing" or "scalloped oysters."
Mom's recipe calls for twice as much oysters and half as much dressing (bread and crackers).
My version gives you a wonderful, delicate, fluffy dressing with a strong influence of oysters. If you really want something all about the oysters, switch the ratio back to Mom's version. If you want to "hide" the oysters, you could cut them in half or thirds.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HEAVENLY STUFFING WITH CURRANTS AND CHUTNEY

"It's so heavenly, even atheists love it."

Ingredients	8 servings
Onion (or shallots), chopped fairly small	1 or 2 onions (1 lb.)
Celery, chopped fairly small	4 sticks celery
Dried bread cubes (French bread)	¾ lb. (dry weight) = 1 lb. loaf of bread
Cornbread stuffing mix (or leftover cornbread).	6 oz. box (If box comes with separate seasonings, I toss them. But you may use them if you like.)
Chutney – your choice: Hot Mango Chutney (Crosse & Blackwell) Major Grey (Crosse & Blackwell) Sharwood's from Whole Foods	1 jar (9 oz.) Don't be tempted to put in more; it will overwhelm.
Zante currants (raisins may be substituted)	½ cup (4 oz.) (If they are a little dried out, poach them in the chicken broth first to plump them up.)
Chicken broth	32 oz. (as needed to moisten)
Crystal hot sauce (or substitute Sriracha)	1 tsp. – add it to the broth!
Crushed red pepper flakes	1 tsp.
Parsley (dried)	1 Tbsp. dried
Marjoram (dried)	½ tsp. dried (If using fresh marjoram, use ½ of a small plastic container. Hold the stem and gently slide fingers down the stem to remove tender leaves.)
Sage (dried)	1 tsp.
Salt	None or very little
Pepper	Medium amount

Equipment:
A giant Le Creuset Dutch oven (with cover) is ideal. And a giant mixing bowl.

Bread cubes:
If making home-made, cut French bread into smallish cubes. Place on cookie sheet and spread out. Dry in oven at 200 degrees for 45 minutes (but not longer—don't toast them, just dry them a bit so they absorb more liquid).

Dry ingredients:
In huge bowl, combine the breadcrumbs and cornbread stuffing mix.
Toss with raw onion and celery, raisins, & chutney.

Liquids and spices:
In a measuring cup, combine the chicken broth, hot sauce, red pepper flakes, parsley, marjoram, salt & pepper. (This way, seasoning coats evenly).
Pour broth & seasonings over stuffing, stir. If necessary, add more chicken broth to fully moisten.

Bake it:
If cooking separately (not in the turkey), place in casserole, cover, and bake at 350 for 60 minutes (max).

Bread Note:
I prefer to make my own bread cubes from fresh French bread, but you may use store-bought dried bread cubes. Sometimes at holidays the stores sell "homemade" bread cubes in a bag with seasoning pouch. Just throw out the seasoning packet.

Cornbread Note:
Ignore directions on box of cornbread stuffing. Just mix it in dry.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

“Good with”:
This is our Thanksgiving stand-by for turkey. In the turkey, separately, or both.
Also excellent with roasted chicken, especially game hens.
Also good with pork chops.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HOMEMADE BREADCRUMBS

Ingredients
Your choice of bread: French baguette Soft French bread Artisan bread Pretty much anything
Optional: olive oil and/or melted butter

Notes:
I never remove the crust. It becomes part of the breadcrumbs.
If using really soft, spongy French bread, slice it and allow it to dry overnight.
Always make extra and freeze them. They keep well for a couple of months.

Make the crumbs:
Cut bread into large cubes. Put into Cuisinart with slicing blade.
Pulse the Cuisinart until they turn into crumbs. For many recipes, you want these super fine.

For crunchier crumbs:
For crunchier breadcrumbs (not necessary for most recipes), spread them on a cookie sheet.
Optional: Drizzle with olive oil and/or melted butter.
Bake at low temperature (@220 degrees) for 1 hour.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

VEGETABLES

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

NEDERLAND-STYLE BROILED TOMATOES

Ingredients	2 serving
The tomatoes	
Tomatoes (plump, bright red)	1 tomato (½ per person) (or 1 per person heirloom tomatoes).
Salt & pepper	Just a bit
The breadcrumb mixture	
Olive oil (Olivin in Boise sells the best) (their lemon flavored olive oil is nice with this)	2 ½ Tbsp.
Grey Poupon or other good mustard	¾ Tbsp.
Panko (or other breadcrumbs)	1 ½ Tbsp.
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (grated)	1 Tbsp.
Top with parsley	
Dried flat-leaf parsley	A tiny sprinkle just for color

Prep the tomatoes

Cut out the stem part of the tomato. If needed, but off a thin piece on the bottom. Then cut each tomato in half with zigzag cut.
If using weirdly shaped heirloom tomatoes, Make the zigzag higher up on the tomato and throw out the top half.
Sprinkle lightly with salt & pepper.

Mix the breadcrumbs

In a small bowl, combine the olive oil, mustard, Panko, and cheese. (If you skip the cheese add that volume of additional Panko.)
Put a dollop on each tomato half, and spread it out a bit.

The parsley

Place the tomatoes in an oven-proof dish or broiling pan.
Sprinkle the prepped tomatoes with a tiny bit of parsley just for color.

Rest time

The tomatoes may be prepped a few hours ahead of time. Cover with Saran wrap and put in fridge.

Broil them in pre-heated oven

Preheat the oven to 350. Place them in the hot oven. If they need to share an oven with other things, skip the broiling and just bake them—they'll be just fine.
If broiling, give them a two-minute head start in the hot oven before turning on the broiler. They just be done in 6-12 minutes total, depending on conditions. When done, the inside of the tomato will be hot and tender. Watch them carefully; they transition very quickly from perfect to mushy.

Alternatively (if you don't have oven space): Place baking dish with tomatoes on the BBQ grill (lid closed) for about 10 minutes (time may vary widely).

Source:
We learned this in the 1980s from our old friend and fellow chef, Barbara Lavender, who lived in Nederland, Colorado.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

IMAM BAYILDI (TURKISH EGGPLANT CASSEROLE)

Ingredients	5 servings
Prep the eggplant:	
Eggplants (either the traditional large ones or the small Italian version) (skin on, sliced thin: ¼ to ⅜ inch)	2 large or 4 small eggplants
Salt (to prep the eggplant)	tons of it
Sauté onions and spices:	
Onion (medium chop)	1 ½ large onions
Garlic (chopped or from jar)	3 cloves or 1 tsp. from jar
Cinnamon	⅓ tsp.
Chile flakes	⅓ tsp.
Add tomatoes etc.:	
Tomatoes (chopped) or can of chopped tomatoes	4 tomatoes, or 14 oz. can
Tomato paste	1 Tbsp.
Salt and pepper (go light on the salt, the eggplants are salty)	to taste
Parsley (finely chopped) (half in casserole and half when served)	2 Tbsp.
Yogurt topping & sesame seeds:	
Plain Greek yogurt	16 oz.
Parsley (finely chopped)	(the remaining half)

Equipment*:*

If doing a smallish batch, everything can be done in an ovenproof cast iron frying pan (or two). Otherwise, you will need to fry things separately and move them to a lasagna pan or even a turkey roaster (for a large batch—10 people or more).

For salting the eggplant, you need something to catch the water they release: Ideally use a large wire cooling rack set over a large jelly roll pan (rimmed baking sheet pan). Or you may just place the cooling rack over paper towels on the counter. (Saves washing the jelly roll pan.) If you don't have a cooling rack, just use a jelly roll pan.

Directions:

Zebra the eggplants (optional)

Cut off the top and bottom ends of each eggplant. Use a vegetable peeler (or knife) to slice off vertical stripes of peel, leaving about half the skin on, so that it looks like a zebra. Why? This leaves enough skin to give some stability to the eggplant slices, but reduces the amount of skin (which is tougher and stronger tasting). This exercise is optional; just leave the skin on if you like.

Salt, wash, and dry the eggplants

Follow the salting technique under the "Basics" section of this cookbook.

Brown the eggplant

Fry the eggplant slices in olive oil over medium-high until golden brown on both sides, adding a bit more olive oil as needed (about 2 minutes per side). Remove and set aside.

Sauté the onion, garlic, chili flakes, and cinnamon

Fry the onion and garlic in olive oil over medium-high heat. Give the onions a head start before the garlic. Fry about 5 minutes until the onion is soft and golden and the garlic is fragrant.

Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, and parsley

Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, and ½ of the parsley. Sauté for 30 minutes. Add salt & pepper to taste as it cooks. But go light on the salt; the eggplants will still retain salt.

Prepare and bake the casserole

Make a layered "lasagna" with a little tomato sauce at the bottom, then eggplant, more sauce, and repeat. Cover with lid or foil. Bake 35 minutes at 350° (until eggplant is tender). Remove from oven and allow to rest 10 minutes before serving. Slice and serve like "lasagna" pieces. This may be served warm or at room temperature.

Yogurt topping (optional)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Top with a dollop of plain yogurt and a sprinkle of the reserved chopped parsley.

Source:

I made this dish up based on the following influences:
Claudia Roden's *A Book of Middle Eastern Food* (1968). (The book Driek Zirinsky used when she had us to dinner in 2022.)
An online recipe for "Turkish Eggplant Casserole with Tomatoes – Imam Bayildi)" on feedmephoebe.com (Phoebe Lapine).
An online recipe for "Roasted Eggplant Dish" in turkishstylecooking.com.

Etymology:

This dish is known throughout the Ottoman Empire by the name "Imam Bayildi." It literally means "the Imam fainted". According to some, the Imam was overcome with joy on tasting his wife's dish. Others suggest he was incapacitated upon hearing the cost of the expensive ingredients. According to another tale, an Imam's young bride used her dowry of costly olive oil to prepare this dish each of the first 12 nights of their marriage. When the olive oil ran out on the 13th night, the Imam fainted.

Notes:

A thousand and one Arabic nights have been chronicled. There are at least that many Middle Eastern eggplant recipes. Many recipes call for roasting the eggplant in an oven or over a grill. The Claudia Roden version is similar to French ratatouille and, like many Middle Eastern eggplant dishes, may be served at room temperature as a side dish or appetizer. Eggplant dishes are commonly served topped with a beaten yogurt sauce.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CARROTS À L'ORANGE

Ingredients	2 generous side servings 4 small side servings
Fresh carrots (peeled and sliced) (heirloom or "rainbow" carrots are nice)	4 large carrots (10 oz. total)
Orange juice (fresh is wonderful) or substitute apple juice (in a pinch)	Enough to barely cover the carrots
Butter	3 pats
Orange marmalade (this is best—not too sweet or heavy) (or substitute apricot, peach, or mango preserves) (or mango chutney)	1 ½ Tbsp.
Allspice	A tiny bit

Equipment:

I use a medium-sized copper frying pan for up to six people. Select a frying pan just large enough hold the carrots and O.J. with enough headroom that it can boil without making a mess. The pan size matters, because it determines the quantity of O.J. required to cover the carrots.

Directions:

Peel and cut the carrots:

First, peel the carrots.

How you cut the carrots is up to you—an aesthetic choice. You may cut the carrots lengthwise, then cut them lengthwise again (into quarters, or more for fat carrots), then cut them into 3-inch sticks. Or, if you prefer, you may slice them diagonally (into large angular pieces). This step may be done in advance. Submerge the carrots in water for as long as you like. Or submerge the carrots in the juice in the frying pan, and let them sit without heat for up to two hours.

Boil the carrots in the orange juice:

Put the carrots in a frying pan with barely enough juice to cover them. No more.

Boil them rather vigorously for about 25 minutes (could be much longer if you put them on a simmer). The carrots should be al dente (still a bit of a crunch) and the juice should be reduced almost to a sauce. Add more juice as needed, if the carrots need to cook longer.

Add butter, sweetener, and allspice:

Near the end of the boiling, add butter and your choice of marmalade, preserves, or chutney.

Finish with a tiny sprinkle of allspice.

Sauté for a few minutes until everything is caramelized and splendid.

Serve or keep warm:

If needed, the carrots may be kept warm for up to an hour before serving. Put them in a covered serving dish and put it a warming oven. Or they may be kept in the pan on the stove on very low heat. They are remarkably sturdy and will maintain their al dente feel, so long as you don't overcook them at the outset.

Quantity:

If this is a major component of the meal (the main side dish), make the quantity for "2 generous servings." If you are serving a lot of things, and this is one more thing that people will squeeze onto their plate, make the quantity for "4 small servings."

Light version:

You may make a "light" version of the recipe by simply simmering the carrots in the orange juice. Skip the butter, sweetener, and allspice.

Source:

I just made this up. Have been making it for decades.

In 2022, Idaho Power included a similar recipe with the monthly bill. Idaho Power's version adds 2 apples and 2 Tbsp. fresh ginger. That is worth experimenting with.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SPINACI ALL'AGLIO E OLIO OR SPINACI ALLA ROMANA (SAUTÉED SPINACH)

Ingredients	4 servings
For **Spinaci all'aglio**, use only sautéed garlic:	
Garlic (from a jar) (or make fresh if you wish)	3 Tbs.
Olive oil	Generously, as needed
Fresh baby spinach	10 or 11 oz. tub
Salt & pepper	To taste
For **Spinaci alla Romana**, also add these optional ingredients:	
Pine nuts	1 ¼ oz.
Currants	1 Tbsp. (don't overdo)

Equipment:
For two people, I use a very large frying pan. For anything larger, a large wok is easiest.

Directions:

Wash the spinach, if not pre-washed:
If using triple-washed, ready-to-eat baby spinach, there is no need to trim or wash. If the spinach must be washed, it is essential that you fully drain and dry the washed spinach, using a colander and paper towels. Excess water will convert the sautéing process into a steaming process, resulting in a mushy mess.

Sauté the garlic, pine nuts, and currants:
Over high heat, sauté the garlic in olive oil for about two minutes. If using pine nuts, add them in half-way through. If using currants, add them near the end.

Sauté the spinach:
Over high heat, add the spinach in batches, adding more as soon as it wilts enough to allow more room in the pan. (If you have a big enough pan or wok, do it all at once.) Drizzle more oil on top (only if needed). Use tongs (better than a spatula) to turn constantly, for just a couple of minutes. Stop the moment they are completely wilted—before they turn to mush.
Season with salt & pepper, and serve at once. Or put in a serving bowl and keep in warming oven for a short time.

Source:
Lidia's Italian American Cookbook and Marcella Hazan's *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking*.

Notes:
Spinaci alla Romana has both pine nuts and currants. But it is equally wonderful with just the pine nuts. Don't overdo either, however.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

GRILLED ASPARAGUS

Ingredients	2 servings
Asparagus	8 oz. (½ lb.)
Olive Oil	Generously
Salt & pepper	Good shake

Wash the asparagus and cut off the ends. Put the asparagus in a nice serving dish.
Drizzle very generously with olive oil, and sprinkle with salt & pepper.
Heat the BBQ grill pretty darned hot, but reduce heat where the asparagus will be.
Grill, turning once or twice, for 6-10 minutes, depending on thickness and heat. Aim for "al dente," as they will continue to cook and soften.
Remove from grill and return to the serving dish (which still has olive oil in it).
Toss them again in the olive oil.

Optional: Grate fresh parmesan cheese over the top.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

SEARED ASPARAGUS OF THE GODS

Ingredients	2 servings
Asparagus	8 oz. (½ lb.)
Olive oil	2 Tbsp.
Shallots (minced or cut in rings)	1 large shallot
Garlic (minced)	½ Tbsp. (2 cloves)
Crushed red chili flakes	Large pinch
Salt	a sprinkle
Pepper	a sprinkle
For lemon dressing:	
Fresh lemon juice	Juice of ½ lemon
Fresh lemon zest	From ½ lemon
Extra virgin olive oil	1 ¼ Tbsp.
To serve:	
Parmesan cheese (shaved or grated)	

Prep:
Clean asparagus and snap off tough ends. Mince the garlic. Sliced or mince the shallot.

Sauté
Heat frying pan to high temp. Add olive oil—not too much. Sauté the asparagus first for about 2 minutes (longer for fat asparagus). Add the shallot, garlic, and red chili flakes. Sauté for another minute or two until "al dente.". Don't overcook. Season with a tiny bit of salt and pepper. Remove to serving bowl. Top with bits of shallot and garlic from pan.

Sauce
Make sauce of lemon juice, lemon zest, and olive oil. This is not cooked; just combined in a bowl. Pour over asparagus.

Serve
Top with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese.

Can be made ahead and kept in oven. If so, cook asparagus much less. Don't add the lemon dressing and parmesan until serving.

Source:
Fine Cooking magazine. May 2003. Magazine says to slice shallots in rings. And calls for shaved pieces of parmesan.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

JIFFY BEANS AND SHROOMS

Ingredients	4-5 servings
Fresh green beans	12 oz.
Mushrooms (white or baby portobellos) (sliced)	8 oz.
Butter	1 stick (so you'll have plenty left over to mix with beans)
Crushed red pepper	¼ tsp (a light sprinkle)
Salt	A shake
Pepper (or seasoned pepper)	A shake
Optional: Additional seasonings of choice: Cajun's Choice Blackened Seasoning Mrs. Dash Jimmy's Salad Elegance seasoning The Original Spike All Purpose Seasoning	A few good shakes
Optional: Parmesan or Romano cheese	4 Tbsp.

Equipment:
I like to use a large frying pan that will accommodate the beans & mushrooms. You will also need a pot to boil the beans.

Recipe:
Wash and slice the mushrooms.
Fry mushrooms in lots of butter with some crushed red pepper until lightly browned (several minutes).
Wash and trim the green beans (snap off the ends, or cut them off).

The beans now need to be cooked until almost tender—but still undercooked. You have choices:

You may steam them (about 4 minutes). Or boil them in salted water. Then drain and remove the beans.
Alternatively: Sauté the raw beans on very high heat in the frying pan used for the mushrooms. This allows them to cook in the buttery sauce left over. (If you have browned some rack of lamb or something, you may use that leftover pan!)

Optional: If you just boiled or steamed the beans, you may return the beans to the frying pan with the sautéed mushrooms. If needed, add more butter to melt in.

Toss the beans and mushrooms with parmesan cheese (optional), seasoning (optional), salt and pepper.
Place in oven-proof serving dish (or just keep them in the frying pan for serving).
Add a tiny bit more parmesan on top.
Serve at once or keep in a warming oven. The beans should be "al dente" not mushy.

Pre-Make Option:
This may be made ahead (slightly underdone) and refrigerated in a covered casserole. Re-warm in 275 degree oven for 25 minutes or longer (depending on size of dish).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

GREEN BEANS AND MUSHROOMS WITH CREAMY LEMON VINAIGRETTE

Ingredients	6 servings
Vinaigrette:	
Zest of lemon (Meyer lemon if possible)	2 lemons (½ cup)
Juice of lemon (Meyer lemon if possible)	the same lemons
Heavy cream	½ cup
Grey Poupon or other good mustard	½ tsp.
Minced garlic (from jar is OK)	¼ tsp.
Salt	⅔ tsp
Pepper	½ tsp
Extra virgin olive oil	1 cup
Mushrooms (optional):	
Mushrooms (sliced)	8 oz.
Butter (or substitute good olive oil)	½ stick
Minced garlic (from jar is OK)	½ Tbsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	a good shake
Beans:	
Green beans	1 lb.
Salted water	plenty

Creamy Lemon Vinaigrette:
Zest the lemons.
In a large bowl, whisk lemon juice, lemon zest, cream, salt & pepper. Then slowly whisk in the olive oil. (The beans will later be tossed in this bowl with the vinaigrette.)
(You may make the vinaigrette up to a day ahead; place in vinaigrette bottle or other container with lid and refrigerate.)

Mushrooms (optional):
Sauté the mushrooms, garlic, and chili flakes in butter until nicely browned.
Remove the mushrooms to a dish. Pour on the remaining "mushroom butter" from the frying pan
Set aside.

Beans:
Boil beans in large pot of salted water until al dente (about 4 minutes). Drain into colander. Rinse under cold water to stop cooking unless serving immediately.
If serving immediately, put beans and mushrooms in the bowl with the vinaigrette and toss.
Transfer to a serving platter and warm it n oven before serving.
Or make a few hours ahead. Layer cooked beans and mushrooms in a casserole. Refrigerate.
When ready for dinner, add the vinaigrette to the casserole and toss. Re-heat in 275º oven for 25 minutes or so until hot.

Optional - Breadcrumbs:
See recipe for Grilled Asparagus with Lemon Vinaigrette and Parmesan Breadcrumbs.
Sprinkle some breadcrumbs onto casserole or serving platter before warming in oven.

Source:
Based loosely on a recipe in Fine Cooking (11/2008), which I have modified substantially.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HUNAN STYLE GREEN BEANS WITH MUSHROOMS (OR BROCCOLI)

Ingredients	2 servings
Fresh green beans (or substitute broccoli)	8 oz.
Optional: Mushrooms (sliced)	3 oz.
½ grapeseed oil and ½ sesame seed oil (if you have it, otherwise just grapeseed oil) (or wok oil or peanut oil)	Just enough to liberally cover the pan (about 3 Tbsp. total)
Vietnamese chili garlic sauce (Huy Fong Foods, Inc.)	1 Tbsp. (more if you dare, less for the elderly)
Sun Luck brand La Yu Chili Oil	½ tsp. (more if you dare, less for the elderly)
Alternatively: House of Tsang brand Szechuan spicy stir fry sauce	1 Tbsp.

Equipment:
Everything may be done together in one pan, with proper sequencing.
A wok is the classic pan for stir-fried vegetables, but a wok works best if you have a gas range that produces intense BTUs. Alternatively, use a copper frying pan (which browns better than a non-stick pan). Any frying pan will do.

Directions:

Prep:
Clean and trim green beans (or cut broccoli).
Slice and chop shallot or onion. (Optional)
Clean and slice the mushrooms. (Optional)

Cook:
Turn on highest heat under pan. Start with a generous splash of grapeseed & sesame oils, and add more as needed during cooking.
Do the mushrooms first (optional). Then set aside and add at the very end.
Fry with the beans or broccoli on highest heat for about 7 minutes, adding the chili garlic sauce and/or chili oil. Don't overdo the spices – these are hot! The vegetables should show signs of browning or even blackening, but still be barely cooked (al dente). At the end, add the sautéed mushrooms.
This may be kept in a warming oven (very low) until dinner is ready.

Notes:
My source recipe calls for Chinese long beans, but we always use fresh green beans. I do not recommend frozen beans. Good with broccoli, too.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

OVEN-ROASTED ZUCCHINI WITH BREADCRUMBS AND PARMESAN

Ingredients	2 servings
The Squash:	
Zucchini (don't peel) (cut into spears)	2 zucchinis
Olive oil	A generous drizzle
Crystal hot sauce	a splash
Salt (Kosher or flaked)	½ tsp
Pepper (freshly ground)	¼ tsp
The Crumb Mixture:	
Breadcrumbs (homemade)	¼ cup
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (grated)	¼ cup
Thyme	¼ tsp.
Oregano	¼ tsp.
Dried basil	¼ tsp.
Garlic powder	¼ tsp.

Equipment: A covered baking pan or jelly roll pan

Directions:

Cut the stems/ends off the zucchini.
Slice the zucchini into spears (cut in half long way, then cut again into halves or thirds).
Place on jelly roll pan. Drizzle generously with olive oil and hot sauce. Add salt & pepper. Toss them around on the pan.

In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, parmesan cheese, and spices.
Sprinkle with the crumb/cheese mixture over the zucchini on the jelly roll pan. For best presentation, sprinkle it mostly down the middle of the zucchinis so that it's a tiny mound with fewer sprinkles elsewhere.
Then drizzle on more olive oil on top to moisten the breadcrumbs.

Bake uncovered in oven at 350° for 20 minutes (for al dente).
If they come out before other things are done, leave them on the counter until they cool a bit (so they don't continue to soften), then place in warming oven.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

NANA'S CAULIFLOWER WITH STUFF ON IT

Ingredients	4 ample servings (8 small servings)
Cauliflower (cut into pieces) (Orange cauliflower is great!)	1 head (2+ lbs., before trim)
Butter	2 ⅔ sticks
Progresso brand breadcrumbs (garlic & herb flavor is good)	1 ¼ cup (6 oz.)

Equipment:

I use a wide but shallow Creuset Dutch oven (with a lid), which works for both steaming and in the oven. Use a large one in order to spread out the cauliflower fairly thin to give plenty of area to add the breadcrumb topping.

Directions:

Melt the butter. Mix melted butter with the breadcrumbs. Should be on the runny/buttery side.

Trim and wash the cauliflower, leaving it in rather large parts (with multiple florets).
Put a steamer in a large pot with just enough water to nearly reach the steamer, then add the cauliflower.
If not serving immediately, steam the cauliflower for exactly 5 minutes until barely soft (VERY AL DENTE). Steam for about 6 minutes if serving immediately.
If making this well ahead of time, run cold water on the cauliflower to stop the cooking.
Return the steamed cauliflower to the pot (without the steamer).
Put the breadcrumb mixture on top.
If serving soon, cover with lid and place in a warming oven for up to an hour.
If dinner is still hours away, keep in fridge. Then put in a 350° oven to re-heat up (25 to 30 minutes).

Note:

We like orange cauliflower. It tastes similar to regular cauliflower, but has a slightly sweeter, milder, and creamier flavor. The orange color comes from a genetic mutation that produces beta-carotene—the same pigment found in carrots. As a result, it has 25 times more Vitamin A than regular cauliflower.

This recipe includes an ample amount of breadcrumb topping, which we love. This gives guests the option to choose how much of the breadcrumb mixture to take.

Source:

Karen has been making this since she was in high school. She learned it from her mother, who made it up.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

STIR-FRIED BROCCOLI OR BROCCOLINI

Ingredients	2 servings
Broccoli or broccolini	8 oz. (½ lb.) (before trim)
Olive oil, avocado oil, and/or sesame oil	As needed (will be a lot)
Garlic	½ Tbsp.
Red pepper flakes or Kickin' Chili Onion Crunch (from Spice World)	1 tsp.

Equipment:

Use a wok with a lid, if you have one. Or a large frying pan with a lid.

Directions:

Prep:

Wash the broccoli or broccolini. Cut or chop up the broccoli into bite-sized pieces (removing most of the "stems." Leave the broccolini in longer pieces.

Fry:

Stir-fry the broccoli/broccolini in oil on high (but not crazy high) heat turning occasionally. It will "drink" a lot of oil at first; add more as needed. After three minutes, add the garlic and hot seasoning (chili pepper flakes or chili onion crunch). Keep going until it shows some nice browning marks. This might take 10 minutes. If the broccoli/broccolini is not yet cooked through, cover the pan and let it cook another minute or two. Once the lid goes on, the steam takes over (without adding any more water) and softens it very fast. So watch out! Get this off the stove while it still has a bit of crunch to it.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

ACORN SQUASH

Ingredients	Per person
Acorn squash	½ squash per person
Butter	2 Tbsp. per half squash
Honey	2 Tbsp. per half squash

Equipment: Line a baking dish or pan with tinfoil to facilitate cleanup. For each squash half, take a sheet of tinfoil and roll it. Then bend it into a circle. Place the squash into the circle, which will keep it upright while baking.

Cut squashes in half. Scrape out insides. Cut off a tiny bit on the bottom of each half so that it will sit flat when served. Place squash halves onto artichoke holders or make a little ring out of tin foil to hold them upright. Put butter into each half. Dribble generously with honey. Bake at 350 for one hour.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DON ANDERSON'S VEGETABLES DE LA MODE

Ingredients	2 servings	6 servings
Sauté the onion (and optional pepper):		
Onion (cut into half rings) or Shallots (cut in half rings)	½ large onion 3 large shallots	1 ½ large onion 9 large shallots
Optional: Red, green, or yellow pepper (cut into strips)	¼ pepper	¾ pepper
Olive oil	A splash	A generous splash
Cheese sauce:		
Butter	2 Tbsp. (¼ stick)	6 Tbsp. (¾ stick)
Flour	2 Tbsp.	6 Tbsp.
Whole milk	As needed (about 1 ¼ cup)	As needed (about 3 ¾ cups)
Cheddar cheese	1 cup shredded	3 cups shredded
Crystal hot sauce	1 Tbsp.	3 Tbsp.
Chili flakes	½ tsp.	1 ½ tsp.
Your choice of seasoning: Organics brand Cajun Seasoning Mrs. Dash extra spicy, or whatever	½ Tbsp. (use judgment)	1 ½ Tbsp. (use judgment)
Vegetables:		
Broccoli and/or cauliflower (raw) (chopped large)	12 oz. (before trimming) 10 oz. (after trimming)	2 ¼ lbs. (before trimming) 1.9 lbs. (after trimming)
Or: Frozen broccoli florets from Costco (thawed) - See "Costco cheater version"	½ lb. (8 oz.)	1 ½ lb. (24 oz.)

Equipment:

I prefer a copper frying pan. I use the same pan first for the sauté and then for the cheese sauce preparation. Medium pan for up to 4 servings; large pan for larger batch.
Bake in a Dutch oven, Romertopf, or other covered oven-proof dish.

Sauté the onion (and optional pepper)

Peel onion or shallots. Cut them in half, then slice each half into "half rings."
Begin on high heat, then reduce heat. Brown the onion/shallots in olive oil about 10 minutes until nicely browned.
If you're doing red, green, or yellow peppers, throw them in after giving the onions/shallots a one-minute head start.
Remove from skillet and put them in the empty Dutch oven.

Make the cheese sauce

Melt butter and add flour to make a roux. Heat and stir the roux for 3 minutes to eliminate the raw flour taste. Very gradually add milk as needed to make a white sauce (on the thin side).
Gradually add grated cheddar cheese. Season with hot sauce and seasonings to taste. If sauce is too thick, add more milk.
Karen and I like it pretty hot and spicy; you can tone this down if you wish.
This is a large portion of cheese sauce. Karen and I like it this cheesy, but you could reduce this quantity if you wish.

Combine the vegetables & cheese sauce

In the Dutch oven, combine the sautéed onions, sautéed peppers, broccoli, and/ or cauliflower.
Mix in the cheese sauce.
You may pause here, if you like, and put the vegetables into the fridge for a few hours. Bring casserole to room temperature before baking.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Bake (fresh broccoli / cauliflower)

If using fresh, raw vegetables, bake covered at 350° for about 40 minutes, until vegetables are cooked al dente and cheese sauce is bubbly. Let rest 10 minutes before serving.

Bake (Costco cheater version)—not particularly recommended, but a time-saver

Costco sells frozen broccoli florets (pre-chopped). Evidently these are slightly parboiled, so you don't want to cook them much. They come in individual 1 lb. packages—for 4 servings. Defrost the broccoli. Bake covered at 350° for 25 minutes. Serve immediately.

Or, if you want to slow things down, put them in a 350° oven and immediately drop the temp to "warm" (200°). It can then sit in the oven longer than 25 minutes. Either way, it should get all bubbly, but not cook too much. The result (miraculously) is al dente broccoli.

NOTES:

Serving size

These quantities are for a modest side serving. Hearty eaters have been known to eat nearly two of these servings.

The name

This is one of several recipes based on dishes served to me by Don Anderson (see page 9). Don would never have added a pretentious descriptor like "de la mode" to anything he made. This is my tongue-in-cheek naming of a dish that is actually more midwestern comfort food than fashionable Parisian cuisine.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EASY CHEESY CASSEROLE - WITH BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER

Ingredients	2 servings
Broccoli and/or cauliflower (raw) (chopped large)	12 oz. (before trimming) 10 oz. (after trimming)
Sour cream	12 oz.
White cheddar cheese (coarsely grated) (or other grated cheese)	6 oz. (divided in half)
Paprika	1 ¼ Tbsp.
Thyme (fresh leaves or dried)	1 tsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	⅔ tsp.
Salt	1 tsp.

Equipment

If you have an ovenproof Le Creuset pan or Dutch oven with a lid, you may use it both to steam the vegetables and as the baking dish. For two people, use a medium-size pot.

Directions

Blanch the broccoli/cauliflower

Put some water in the pot with a vegetable steamer, and bring to a vigorous boil. Add the vegetables and steam them vegetables about 5 minutes until barely tender. (You want them al dente—a bit of a crunch, but basically ready to eat. They will not soften up a lot more in the oven. The oven time basically warms them up again and melts the cheese.)

Cool the broccoli/cauliflower

Place steamed vegetables in a colander, and run a ton of cold water to stop the cooking.

Prepare the casserole

In the empty cooking pot, combine the sour cream, half the cheese, paprika, thyme, red chili flakes, and salt. Stir together. Then add the blanched vegetables, and toss together. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top.

Pause

This may be prepared in advance and put in fridge. Be sure to bring it to room temperature before it goes into the oven. You don't want this to bake too long, or else the sour cream will break down.

Bake

Bake at 340° for 25 minutes. Start covered for 15 minutes, then remove lid. When done, the cheese should be melted and the top slightly browned. Serve soon.

Notes

Derived from a recipe by Phoebe Lapine appearing in *Food and Wine* magazine (4/2020).

This is a faster version of Don Anderson's Vegetables de la Mode (faster because you don't need to make a cheese sauce).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S GERMAN SWEET & SOUR CABBAGE

Ingredients	10 servings
Browning prep:	
Thick-sliced bacon	½ pound
Vidalia or other sweet onion (medium-fine dice)	1 large onion
Granny Smith apple (cut into 8 slices for browning, skin on)	3 apples
Cabbage:	
Red cabbage (coarsely chopped)	1 cabbage
The sweet/sour sauce:	
Butter	⅓ stick
Flour	¼ cup (4 Tbsp.)
Chicken broth	1 ⅓ cup (or more)
Apple cider vinegar	1 ⅓ cup
Sugar	⅓ cup
Salt	½ tsp.
Pepper	½ tsp.
The liquid:	
Water or more chicken broth	¼ cup

Equipment: Use a large frying pan (preferably copper or cast iron) to fry the onions and make the roux/sauce. Then the cabbage and everything goes into a very large Dutch oven.
If oven-frying the bacon (which I prefer), use the bottom of a broiling pan or a jelly roll pan (no need to use the slotted part, which is a bother to clean).
Note: If *serving* with rouladen, you may prepare enough onion and bacon for both recipes.

Oven-fry the bacon
Lay out thick bacon strips in a large broiling pan. Bake at 350º for 25-30 minutes (barely cooked and chewy). Remove to a paper towel. Reserve the grease. Cut the cooked bacon into thin strips (¼ inch). (See "How to oven-fry bacon" on page 14.)

Fry the onion
Sauté the diced onion with the reserved bacon grease in large frying pan with some bacon grease until deeply golden. Remove the onion, but SAVE THE PRECIOUS BACON GREASE for browning the apples.

Brown the apples:
Slice each apple into 8 slices (an apple corer is perfect).
Fry the diced apples in the leftover bacon fat on very high heat. They should quickly brown. Take them out quickly, before they turn to mush. After they are browned, cut each slice in half before adding to the cabbage.

Chop the cabbage:
Quarter the cabbage. Cut out the "stem" part from each quarter. Cut each quarter into thirds. Then cut each third into thirds (very coarse chop). Set aside.

The sweet/sour sauce:
Using the same frying pan, make a roux of butter and flour. Cook the roux 2 minutes.
Slowly stir the chicken broth and the vinegar (back and forth in roughly equal quantities) into the roux to create a gravy. Add as much as necessary to get a thin sauce.
Add a sugar, salt & pepper. If the sauce thickens up, add more liquid.

Combine everything:
Combine all ingredients (cabbage, onion, bacon, apples, and sweet/sour sauce) in giant Dutch oven or other pot. Toss to blend and cover the cabbage with the sweet/sour sauce.
Finally, add a little water (or more chicken broth), which will go to the bottom of the pot and create some steam to start the cooking. Amazingly, that's all the liquid you need; it will make its own liquid.
Cover and put on the stovetop. Cook on medium heat until hot and bubbling, then reduce heat to barely simmering. Keep covered. After 45 minutes, test for doneness. You want it al dente—

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

quite tender, but with some crunch left. Cooking time can vary from 45 minutes to 1 ½ hours depending on how low the simmer is. When nearly tender, it can be kept on the stove (covered) with very low heat for a long time without getting too mushy.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DAD'S THANKSGIVING SPINACH CASSEROLE

Ingredients	*8 servings*
Fresh spinach	Fresh = two one-pound tubs (32 oz.)
or substitute frozen spinach	Frozen = two 9 oz. boxes (18 oz.)
Eggs (hard boiled, then sliced)	4 eggs
Bacon (chopped then fried)	⅓ pound
Baby bella mushrooms (sliced)	8 oz.
Onion (chopped fine)	1 small onion
Cream cheese	4 oz. (½ package)
Sour cream	5 oz.
Crystal hot sauce	1 Tbsp.
Mrs. Dash seasoning	1 tsp.
Salt	A tiny bit
Pepper	A good shake

Equipment:
If you use a very large wok or frying pan, you use it to fry everything and then wilt the spinach. Or you may use another large pot to wilt the spinach.
Use a covered casserole for the spinach casserole.

Directions:

Hard boil eggs
Boil and peel the eggs. (See "How to Boil and Egg" on page 12.)
lice the eggs (tossing the end pieces with just egg white).

Fry the bacon, mushrooms, and onion
Cut up bacon into bite-size pieces, then fry. Set aside in colander or on paper towels.
Sauté sliced mushrooms in the same pan with leftover bacon grease until nicely browned, adding olive oil as needed. Set aside (may be combined with the bacon).
Sauté finely chopped onion in the same pan, adding olive oil as needed. Set aside separately.

Prepare the spinach
If using fresh spinach, add a cup water to the wok or frying pan (or use a separate pot). Bring to a boil. Add the spinach and cook on high to barely wilt it (about 2 minutes). Drain in a colander.
If using frozen spinach, leave in it in the container, set it on a plate, and defrost it in microwave at very low heat. Don't cook it. Drain in colander.

The cream cheese sauce
Put the cream cheese in mixing bowl and microwave for 30 seconds to soften.
Add the sour cream, hot sauce, Mrs. Dash seasoning, the fried onion.

Build the casserole
Put half the spinach into a casserole. Spread half cream cheese sauce on top. Cover with the egg slices, bacon bits, and mushrooms. Mix the remaining cream cheese sauce into the remaining spinach that is still in the colander. (Don't use all the sauce, if it seems like too much). Add remaining spinach/sauce mixture to the casserole.
The casserole may be prepared and kept in the fridge a few hours, but not longer.

Bake the casserole
If chilled, bring to room temperature before baking.
Bake covered at 325˚ for 50 minutes.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BECKY'S VERY COMPLICATED ASPARAGUS

Ingredients	2 generous servings	6 generous servings
The asparagus:		
Asparagus	9 oz. (before trim) 5 oz. (after trim)	1 ¾ lb. before trim (1 lb. after trim)
Avocado oil (or grapeseed oil or good olive oil)	generously	generously
Salt and pepper	generously	generously
The balsamic reduction:		
Balsamic vinegar	¼ cup	¾ cup
Honey	½ Tbsp.	1 ½ Tbsp.

Equipment

A serving for up to 6 fits on a large (11 x 16 inch) jelly roll pan.

Balsamic reduction

Prepare before baking. See recipe on page 25.

Directions

Break off and throw away the chewy ends of each asparagus spear. (Breaking is better than cutting; the asparagus "knows" where to break.) Carefully wash the asparagus and set out to dry on a paper towel. Put the spears in the pan and drizzle generously (but not over-abundantly) with avocado oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss the spears and re-arrange nicely—spread out in a single layer (not piled up).

You may do the above in advance and pause here, until ready for dinner.

Bake uncovered at 400° for 10 minutes until barely tender.

Remove from oven and drizzle elegantly with the balsamic reduction.

Hot or cold

At home, this is ordinarily served hot. But it also does nicely cold, e.g., for a picnic or Shakespeare pre-theater dining.

Source

This delightfully simple recipe comes from our dear friend Becky Anderson. The recipe's name ("Very Complicated") is based on Becky's hilarious recipe notes. Here is an exact transcription of the text she sent me:

> "You put asparagus in a pan and rub avocado oil into the spears and throw salt on top. Then you bake at 400 for about 10 min until slightly tender. THEN (u see how many steps there are? Getting really complicated now) you pour some balsamic reduction over the whole thing in pretty and artistic lines pretending u r a French chef. VOILA c'est tout!!!"

My only changes are: I do a homemade balsamic reduction, and I add pepper (in addition to salt).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

MOROCCAN VEGETABLE TAGINE

Ingredients	Serves 8-10 (as side dish)
Sauté in olive oil:	
Onion (coarsely chopped)	1 large onion
Portobello or regular mushrooms (quartered)	8 oz.
Olive oil (high quality EVOO)	As needed (about 2 Tbsp.)
Garlic (minced or from jar)	2 Tbsp. (6 cloves)
Red pepper flakes	3 tsp.
Combine in a huge mixing bowl:	
The sautéed onion and mushrooms (from above)	
Fresh green beans (pick out the bad ones, rinse them, and cut off the ends) (Costco's hand trimmed haricot verts are very nice.)	8 oz.
Small white or red potatoes (cut into four wedges, or in half if very small)	8 oz.
Cauliflower (very coarsely cut)	8 oz.
Zucchini (very coarsely sliced)	1 small zucchini
Canned whole San Marzano tomatoes, with the juice – each tomato cut in half (or fresh tomatoes, blanched in boiling water for 1 minute, skinned, and cut in half)	36 oz.
Italian flat leaf parsley (or regular parsley) – chopped	The tender part of a bunch (avoiding most of the stems)
Cilantro – chopped	The tender part of a bunch (avoiding most of the stems)
Bay leaves	3 bay leaves
Salt	2 tsp.
Pepper	1 tsp.
Paprika	2 tsp.
Ginger	1 tsp.
Turmeric	1 tsp.
Coriander	1 tsp.
Williams Sonoma chicken, beef or veal demi-glace	1 Tbsp.
After mixing:	
More olive oil (to drizzle over vegetable mixture)	1 Tbsp.
Water or chicken stock (only if needed)	None or up to ¼ cup

CAUTION: When cooking with a tagine or Dutch oven on the stovetop, do not let the burner get above a low heat, or you will spend the rest of the week soaking your pot to clean it. I use the lowest setting on my large middle burner. If you do not have a stove with a very low burner setting, you will need to use a circular heat diffuser between the pot and the flame or other heat source. Some modern tagines are made with flameproof ceramic and/or cast iron bottoms, designed to be placed directly on a flame. Alternatively, you may skip the stovetop and cook the dish in a 300° oven. Some recipes call for a final browning under a broiler (which was historically accomplished by replacing the conical lid with a flat plate holding coals).

Equipment

Use a large frying pan (I prefer copper) for the sauté.
This recipe for 10 fits in my largest tagine. If you don't have a tagine, use a large Dutch oven. Unless you are using a gigantic Dutch oven, you will need to pre-mix everything in a huge mixing bowl before putting it into them the tagine or Dutch oven.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions

Sauté the onion and mushrooms in olive oil. Give the onions a 4 minute head start. Then add the mushrooms. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes when half-way done. Continue sautéing until golden (10 or 15 minutes total).

In a very large mixing bowl, combine: the sautéed onions & mushrooms, the raw vegetables, the canned or fresh tomatoes (with juice), and the spices. Mix well. Move vegetables to the tagine or Dutch oven.

Drizzle with olive oil.

Cover the tagine or Dutch oven and place on stovetop. Simmer on the low for about 3 hours (this includes the long time it will take to come to heat). You want a very low simmer. Keep cooking until beans and potatoes are very well done.

Add water (or chicken stock) only if needed. The juice from the canned tomatoes is probably enough liquid. In fact, you may need to crack the lid for the last while if it is too watery.

You can shorten cooking time by increasing the heat. But you will spend the next day trying to clean the tagine.

Source

Loosely based on an internet recipe from some American woman from the Midwest who married a man from Morocco.

Notes

The woman in the internet recipe used beef bouillon. I switched to demi-glace.

If you are serving potatoes as a dish, you may choose to omit the potatoes from this recipe to convert it to a non-starch vegetable dish.

Pretty much any vegetables will work in this dish. Sometimes I add baby eggplant (cut into cubes). Broccoli would be good, too.

History of the tagine

The traditional earthenware pot with a conical lid that is used throughout North Africa (the Maghreb) is called a tagine (pronounced something like “tah-jeen”). The word is also used in the names of dishes prepared in this pot.

In a dry climate, one must conserve water, guard fuel, and waste nothing. The traditional heat source is hot charcoal, which cooks the food efficiently and deliciously at a slow simmer. The conical lid creates a self-basting loop with very little liquid required.

Tagine dishes commonly encountered in the U.S. and Europe are based on the cooking techniques that predominate in Morocco and Algeria. In Tunisia and Libya, the same pot is used, but with entirely different recipes and cooking techniques.

There is also a strong tradition of Jewish cooking using the tagine—a tradition that traveled to North Africa when the Moors were defeated and Sephardic Jews were expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492.

Tagine cuisine has many influences over the centuries, but it originated with the Berbers. Unlike the nomadic Arabic Bedouins with whom they shared the desert, the Berbers (who were indigenous to the North Africa) were mostly settled farmers living between Egypt and the coast of Morocco. Berber kingdoms date to antiquity. The Berbers were Christianized by the end of the 4th century. By the beginning of the 8th century, they were converted to Islam following the Muslim conquest of the Maghreb. Though assimilated into Moroccan society today, the Berbers remain fiercely proud of their history, protective of their social, linguistic, and culinary traditions, and adamant that they are not of Arab descent. Berbers today prefer to call themselves Amazigh (which means “free men” in their native language). The word “berber” means “barbarian” in Arabic.

Note: References to berbere dishes found in Ethiopian restaurants have nothing to do with the Berbers. Berbere is Amharic (the official language of Ethiopia) for “hot” or “pepper.”

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BREAKFAST

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

GRITS

Ingredients	2 serving
Quaker Brand Old Fashioned Grits (or substitute Quaker Brand Quick 5-Minute Grits)	½ cup
Water	2 cups (more as needed)
Salt (optional)	pinch
Butter	¼ stick
Grated cheddar cheese (optional)	½ cup (or more!)
Jalapenos (fine chop) (very optional)	1 tsp.

Equipment:
Covered pot.

Directions:
If using stone ground grits, follow directions on package for pre-wash and/or soak.
Bring water to boil in pot. Add salt, if you choose.
Add grits to the water, and stir immediately to avoid clumping.
Reduce temperature to very low (gentle simmer).
Cover pot, but check in and stir every five minutes.
Add more water as necessary—may require quite a bit.
If using cheese or jalapenos, add it half-way through.

Total simmer time for "5-minute grits" is actually 7 minutes.
Old fashioned grits may be 20 minutes or longer.

Grits options:
Old fashioned (long cooking) grits are increasingly hard to find.
Stone ground grits are available widely on the web, including Amazon.com. Some of these are fussy, requiring pre-rinse and soak:

- Charleston Favorites Stone Ground Grits
- Weisenberger Stone Ground White Grits
- Bob's Red Mill Corn Grits

Whatever you do, do not use instant grits.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EGG-IN-A-HOLE (OR FAUX FRENCH TOAST)

Ingredients	1 serving
Your choice of bread: whole wheat, brioche, challah, potato bread, cinnamon/raisin bread, etc.	1 slice (with hole)
Eggs	1 egg
Butter (unsalted is nice)	several pats
Crystal hot sauce	If desired, on the egg
Optional:	
Bacon, ham, sausage, or chorizo	Be generous
Slice of tomato	1 ½ or 2 slices
Salt & pepper (or cayenne pepper)	To taste (on tomato slice)
Cheese (typically cheddar or high quality American) (sliced or shredded)	Be generous

Equipment:
A large skillet will hold two. If cooking more, an electric griddle is the easiest. Heat to 350˚.

Directions:

Prep:
Thaw the bread, if frozen. A few seconds in microwave works.
Use a cookie cutter to cut a hole in each slice. Use the largest size hole that the bread can comfortably accommodate.

Optional meat:
Cook the bacon, ham, or other meat. Slice meat into small pieces or crumble it up. Set aside.
Slice the tomato. Place slices on oven-proof plate or tray. Sprinkle lightly with you choice of salt, pepper, cayenne pepper. Don't go overboard with seasonings. Place under broiler for no more than 2-3 minutes until barely tender. Set aside.

Grill:
Heat skillet or griddle to medium high. (Getting temperature right is critical.)
Place each hole on top of a tiny piece of butter. Then add a large pat of butter for each slice. Before it melts too much, lay the bread on top (with the melting butter pat in the hole). When the butter has melted, crack an egg into each hole. If desired, add a bit of salt, pepper and/or hot sauce right on the egg. Put a bit more butter on top of bread.
Grill until nicely browned. Turn over and brown on the other side. I prefer to take them out when the egg is cooked but yolk is still runny (like an egg over easy). Take out extra early if you will be putting them under the broiler.

The extras (optional):
Set aside the holes; they don't go into broiler. Sprinkle the cooked meat onto the egg-in-a-hole. Then add the tomato slices. Finish with cheese. Broil a few minutes until cheese has melted.

Serve:
Plate the egg-in-a-hole with the hole on the side.
Serve at once with jam or apple butter, which people may add to the hole on the side.

Faux French toast:
To make a surprisingly tasty and super-easy fake French toast, use cinnamon bread, raisin bread, or challah. Skip the "extras" (serve any meat on the side). Serve with maple syrup. You'll be surprised how good this is.

Source:
The "extras" (meat, grilled tomato, and cheese) are not traditional. They are my additions, which I add only on occasion when I feel like it. Karen and I first encountered this dish (without the extras) at a bed and breakfast on our honeymoon. Being such innocents, we thought it was quite exotic. Of course, it is not exotic. Everybody makes it. This dish is as old as the hills.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Other names & etymology:
There are many other names for the dish, including “bullseye eggs,” “eggs in a frame,” “eggs in a nest,” “egg in the basket,” “hole in one,” “one-eyed Jack,” “one-eyed Pete,” “one-eyed Sam,” “pirate’s eye,” “Popeye,” “gashouse eggs,” “gashouse special,” and “gasthaus eggs.”

“Gasthaus” is an inn or country tavern in Germany. In some parts of Germany, the word “gasthof” is used instead. “Gashouse” is a colloquial American mispronunciation and misspelling of the German.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

FRENCH TOAST (PAIN PERDU)

Ingredients	2 servings
Your choice of bread: croissants, soft French bread, brioche, challah, potato bread, cinnamon bread, etc.)	2 bread slices (per person) or 1 croissant (per person)
Eggs	4 eggs
Whole milk	⅓ cup (add more if you like; I prefer an eggy batter)
Vanilla	1 tsp.
Cinnamon	2 tsp. (add more as each slice is dipped)
Nutmeg	1 tsp.
Sugar (very optional)	1 Tbsp.
Butter	1 stick
Optional stuffing:	
Cream cheese (whipped is easier to spread)	1 oz. per person
Preserves (Apricot, peach, seedless raspberry jam, or damsonplum are all good. I think "four fruits" is too sweet.)	A nice dab for each toast
Chopped walnuts	⅔ oz. per person

Equipment:
An electric griddle is the easiest.
Heat electric griddle to 350˚ for bread, 300˚ for croissants (which cook slower).
Or use a large skillet.

Directions:

Prep:
Melt butter in microwave (50 seconds for one stick) and set aside.
If using French bread, slice the bread. If using croissants, cut them in half lengthwise.

Optional: Stuffing:
Use a loaf of soft French bread for this. Slice the bread by alternatively making a complete slice and then making a partial slice into the bread leaving one edge of crust attached. The result is each "sandwich" of bread has a pocket for stuffing. Make the slices quite thin so that the whole "sandwich" isn't too fat.
Spread whipped cream cheese into the pocket of each sandwich, followed by preserves and nuts.

Batter:
Prepare batter of eggs, milk, vanilla & cinnamon. (Sugar is quite optional; I don't include it.)

Fry:
Dip bread (or croissants) in batter; leave it in the batter long enough to soak before flipping.
As each slice is dipped, add more cinnamon.
Pour some butter on griddle and place bread (or croissant with cut edge down).
Continue until all bread / croissants are on griddle.
Cook until golden brown.
Drizzle with more butter, flip, and brown other side.

Serve:
Serve with melted butter, maple syrup, bacon or sausage.
Or top with strawberries, strawberry syrup, a dusting of powdered sugar, and whipped cream. A restaurant in Dublin called San Lorenzo's tops their version with salt caramelized bananas, peanut butter, mascarpone whipped butter, and Belgian chocolate sauce.

Etymology:
The French call it pain perdu (French for "lost bread"). So named because it was a good way of using up stale bread before it is lost.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Why do we call if French toast? That is harder to answer. The dish, or something like it, can be traced to a Roman Empire era cookbook called *Apicius* (named after a Roman noble). A recipe quite similar to the modern one (except missing the milk) appears in *Le Viandier*, a Medieval cookbook credited to the French chef named Guillaume Tirel, who went by the alias Taillevent. The recipe also appears German sources in the 14th century, where it was called arme ritter ("poor knights"). The name French toast appeared first in England in the 17th century. The dish appears in various forms around the world: Bread and butter pudding in the U.K., torrija in Spain, and rabanadas in Portugal.

Notes:
The dish traditionally uses a bit of sugar in the batter (or could use a cinnamon/sugar mix in a shaker). I dropped the sugar decades ago.

Source:
I have been making French toast since I was 9 years old and could barely reach the stove.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HELLS CANYON PANCAKES

Ingredients	6 pancakes (2 people)	9 pancakes (3 people)	24 pancakes (8 people)	30 pancakes (10 people)	54 pancakes (18 people)
Mix in bowl:					
Eggs (add first, then beat gently)	1 egg	2 eggs	5 eggs	7 eggs	12 eggs
King Arthur's buttermilk pancake mix (preferred) or Bisquick	1 cup	1 ½ cups	4 cups	5 cups	9 cups
Baking powder	1 tsp.	1 ½ tsp.	4 tsp.	5 tsp.	9 tsp.
Baking soda	½ tsp.	¾ tsp.	2 tsp.	2 ½ tsp.	4 ½ tsp.
Plain or vanilla Greek yogurt	3 oz.	5 oz.	12 oz. (two 5.3 oz. containers)	15 oz. (almost three 5.3 oz. containers)	27 oz. (five 5.3 oz. containers)
Vanilla (preferably Mexican) (I use this much; you may choose to use less)	1 Tbsp.	1 ½ Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.	5 Tbsp.	9 Tbsp.
Cinnamon (double this for banana pancakes!)	¼ tsp.	⅓ tsp.	1 tsp.	1 ¼ tsp.	2 tsp.
If using bananas, add: Banana extract	½ tsp.	¾ tsp.	2 tsp.	2 ½ tsp.	4 ½ tsp.
Whole milk	@ ½ cup	@ ¾ cup	@ 2 cups	@2 ½ cups	@ 4 ½ cups
After mixing batter add: Melted butter to the batter. (You will need more for frying)	*¼ stick*	*⅓ stick*	*1 stick*	*1 ¼ sticks*	*2 sticks*
Mix and match fruit (optional):					
Blueberries – drop onto pancakes on griddle! Fresh are best. Costco's frozen are good. Just thaw in microwave.	¾ cup 6 oz.	1 ¼ cups 10 oz.	3 cups 24 oz. 1 ½ lbs.	3 ¾ cups 30 oz. 1.9 lbs.	6 cups 48 oz. 3 lbs.
Peaches (skin removed) or nectarines - chopped	2 peaches 1 cup	3 peaches 1 ½ cups	8 peaches 4 cups	10 peaches 5 cups	16 peaches 8 cups
Syrup from peaches (if using canned)	1/3 cup	½ cup	1 1/3 cups	1 2/3 cups	2 2/3 cups
Banana (mashed)	1 banana	1 ½ bananas	4 bananas	5 bananas	8 bananas
Banana (chopped) – and to batter last	1 banana	2 bananas	4 bananas	5 bananas	8 bananas
Banana extract	¾ Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.	3 ¾ Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.

Directions

Beat egg(s) in mixing bowl. Add the other ingredients (except butter). Add milk as necessary to make a good batter. They taste better and fluffier if batter is not too thin. Then add the melted butter. (Flour will clump if to you add the butter first.)

Bananas or peaches may be added directly to the batter. But blueberries must be added to the pancakes on the griddle (unless you want blue pancakes!).

Let the batter rest at least 10 minutes before using (30 minutes is even better).

Cook pancakes with melted butter on griddle at moderate heat (about 375°--depending on your griddle). Lower temperature is essential for thicker pancakes, so that they cook through. Wait till they brown up. They cook a lot longer than regular pancakes.

Serve with maple or fruit syrup and more melted butter.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Source

Peach version is based on a recipe in the Idaho Power bill – whose power comes from the mighty Hell's Canyon dam in the deepest gorge in North America. Hence the name of these pancakes.

Notes

These pancakes are a bit mushy and harder to flip. This is due to the baking powder and the yogurt. But it's worth it for the incredible flavor.

Idaho Power's original recipe calls for flour, baking soda, and baking powder sifted together. I don't bother with sifting. Oddly, the Bisquick box calls for baking soda, not baking powder. Baking soda is used when there is an acid to react with. Yogurt is acidic. Baking powder has its own acid mixed in (cream of tartar). Anyway, I use both, with good results.

Staff breakfast

For Givens Pursley staff breakfast, make the 54-pancake version.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HOME FRIED POTATOES, CORNED BEEF HASH, OR FLATIRON SCRAMBLE,

Ingredients	*2 servings as side dish*
Fried Potatoes:	
Baking potatoes (pealed & diced small)	2 potatoes (about 15 oz. total after pealing)
Onion (chopped)	1 onion
Green pepper (chopped) – skip for hash	1/8 pepper
Grapeseed oil (or other cooking oil)	Start with 1 tsp., add more as needed
Butter	Start with 1 pat, add more as needed
Salt	A little (much less for corned beef hash)
Pepper	Generously
Smoked paprika	Generous sprinkle – enough to turn potatoes reddish
Crystal hot sauce or chili flakes (optional)	Not much
Alternatively: Karen's Oven Fried Potatoes (leftovers)	
Corned Beef Hash:	
Potatoes, etc.	As above
Leftover corned beef (cut into very small cubes) or Hereford brand corned beef (cut into large cubes)	10 oz. (more or less, depending on how meaty you want the hash)
Flatiron Scramble:	
Potatoes, etc.	Make half the quantity stated above!
Eggs (scrambled)	4 eggs
Bacon, sausage, ham, or Taylor Pork Roll (chopped or crumbled)	6 slices of bacon or other meat
Cheddar or other cheese (grated)	Generously

Fried Potatoes

Peel potatoes, then dice into rather tiny cubes (about ¼ inch). Bring large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add potatoes and boil for exactly 7 minutes for a 3-person batch. (A bit longer for large batch.) CAUTION: They should be barely parboiled, not soft. Drain in colander and rinse briefly.

Heat grapeseed oil and butter in the large non-stick frying pan on highest heat.

After 8 minutes (longer if a big batch), add the onions and green peppers and continue browning on high heat for another 10-15 minutes as needed. Add a touch more butter or oil only if necessary for browning, but not too much. Otherwise they will not brown properly. When done, potatoes should be in a "dry" pan with little if any oil.

Season with salt (skip salt if adding corned beef), pepper, and lots of paprika.

Consider adding some hot sauce or chili flakes.

The finished potatoes may be kept warm in the skillet on very low heat or in 200˚ oven while other menu items are prepared.

Corned Beef Hash

Cut the corned beef into cubes. Cut leftover corned beef into small cubes (they will not break down any more). If using canned corned beef, cut into large cubes, which will fall apart during the cooking process.

Skip the green peppers. Give the potatoes and onions at least a 10 minute head start, then, when nearly done, add the corned beef. After a while, gently smash the potatoes and corned beef together so that some of the potatoes "break" and the corned beef gets all mixed around. Don't overdo and turn it into mush. Turn the hash occasionally and let it brown for about 10 minutes after adding the corned beef.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Flatiron Scramble

Make the fried potatoes as above, but only half the quantity. Add more butter and the crumbled meat to the fried potatoes in frying pan. When everything is very hot, add the eggs and scramble together. While the eggs are still soft (not quite done), add half of the grated cheese. Plate, and sprinkle on the other half of the cheese. Melt the cheese under the broiler for a minute.

Notes

Home fried potatoes are typically served for breakfast, but they also make a good potato side dish for dinner. You can even add fried mushrooms, if you like.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

EASY HASHBROWNS

Ingredients	2 servings
Simply Potatoes (brand) Shredded Hash Browns	10 oz. (½ of the 20 oz. bag)
Avocado or grapeseed oil	Drizzle just enough to barely cover the frying pan
Butter	A number of pats

Equipment*:*

This is one of those rare instances in which a non-stick frying pan is preferred. The frying pan must be large enough to fit a dinner plate into it (for flipping over the potatoes).

Directions:

Heat large frying pan to relatively high heat. Drizzle a little grapeseed oil into the pan. (Avocado and grapeseed oils have high smoking points and are excellent for browning.) Use the minimum amount necessary to coat the pan.

Add the potatoes. Carefully arrange them into a "giant pancake" shape covering most of the pan. It should be slightly less in diameter that the size of the dinner plate to be used for flipping them. Press the potatoes down gently, and don't allow any raggedy ends around the circle. You want a neat edge for flipping. Place a few little pieces of butter on top of the potatoes (which will melt in).

Getting the temperature right is the tricky part. You want a moderately high heat. (I set my bottom right burner at about ⅔.) Add a lid (to capture heat). Let them fry (without peeking or molesting in any way) for 7 minutes. The edges should show signs of browning. If necessary, let it cook a bit longer until you see signs of browning.

Take the pan off the heat and move to a countertop. Place a dinner plate over the potatoes. Holding the plate with one hand, carefully invert the frying pan so that the plate is now on the bottom. The potatoes are now sitting on the plate with the gloriously browned side on top. Gently slide the potatoes back into the frying pan so that the un-browned side is now on the bottom.

It is now fully hot, so you may skip the cover. Continue browning for another 7 minutes (or until the other side in nicely browned).

Serve at once with your best eggs or omelets.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

PERFECTLY EASY HAM, EGG & CHEESE SCRAMBLE

Ingredients	2 servings
Sliced deli ham (e.g. Boar's Head) (chopped)	6 to 8 thin slices
Crushed red chili flakes	Generously
Butter	Lots!
Eggs (preferably brought to room temperature) (scrambled)	5 eggs
Cheese of choice (sliced or grated)	5 to 8 slices

Equipment*:*

I use a large copper frying pan. However, because of the cheese, a non-stick frying pan will be easier to clean (be sure to use a non-metal spatula).

Quantities:

The quantity (proportions) of eggs, ham, and cheese in each serving is very much a matter of taste. You decide.

Directions:

The ham

Lay the deli ham slices in a stack on cutting board. Slice into medium strips. Then cut in the other direction to make little squares.

Combine the chopped ham, the red chili flakes, and a few pats of butter in the frying pan. Cook over medium to medium-low heat for a long time until it is just about to start getting crispy. Leave it in the frying pan.

The eggs

Scramble the eggs in a bowl. Add more butter to the frying pan with the cooked ham. Bring to heat if it has cooled off. Add the scrambled eggs. Stir and mix with a spatula, scraping up and mixing in the ham. It will be messy looking.

The cheese

Very soon (when the eggs are not quite done), add the cheese. Reduce heat. Use spatula to flip everting over so cheese is on the bottom. Let sit a half-minute or so until cheese sofents and begins to melt. Then scramble everything together. Promptly plate (before the eggs get over-done).

Serve:

Serve at once with buttered toast and jam. Eggs are best with Crystal hot sauce.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DANIEL'S MOUNTAIN CORNED BEEF HASH

Ingredients	2 servings
Vidalia onion (small chop)	½ very large onion
Grapeseed oil (or olive oil)	1 Tbsp.
Crushed red chili flakes	1 tsp.
Corned beef or roast beef hash (canned)	1 can
Cheddar cheese (grated) – optional!	A light sprinkle

Equipment

This is one of the rare things that I think does better in a non-stick frying pan (with a non-metal spatula).

Directions

The onion

Chop the onion.
Brown the onions in the skillet on fairly high heat with a little bit of grapeseed oil. Add the red chili flakes midway through browning. Cook until the onions are starting to brown up, but not completely done (5 to 7 minutes). At this point, the onions should have absorbed most of the oil. If not, mop up the extra oil (or drain the onions). Too much oil will interfere with the browning of the hash.

The hash

When onion is almost done, add the can of hash. Do not add any more oil (which would impair the browning).
Using spatula, mix the onions and hash in the frying pan to incorporate the onions.
Mound it together, and then press the mound down to make a neat giant flat circular shape.
Reduce heat to medium-high. Cook undisturbed for several minutes until a nice crust develops.
When browning up nicely (about 6 minutes), carefully flip it over, one spatula serving at a time, so as to preserve the crust.
Reform into a circle and brown the other side.
Altogether this will require cooking 12 minutes or longer.
Plate the servings.
Optional: Top each serving with a sprinkle of grated cheddar cheese, and melt under a broiler.

Serve with eggs & fried apples

Serve at once with eggs and toast. Don Anderson would always serve fried apples on the side, which is killer. See Daniel's Mountain Fried Apples on page 252.

History

My dear friend Don Anderson used to make this on Sunday morning at his Daniel's Mountain retreat in Virginia following the annual Usufruct festivities and Shakespeare performance. (See Notes on Don Anderson on page 9.)
This is a quick and simple dish in contrast to my recipe for homemade hash. But the fried onions and browning really perk up the rather ordinary canned hash. Don always used corned beef. Karen prefers roast beef hash. Both are great.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DANIEL'S MOUNTAIN FRIED APPLES

Ingredients	*2 servings*	*4 servings*
Apples	2 apples (1 per person)	4 apples (1 per person)
Butter	½ stick butter	1 stick butter
Maple syrup	¼ cup	½ cup
Cinnamon	A sprinkle	A sprinkle

Note: One apple per person is a nice generous serving. This could be cut in half if you just want to give a little bit to dress up the plate.

Slice and core ***apples***. Leave the skins on. Place sliced apples in large Dutch oven or frying pan with ***butter***. Turn middle burner to heat high (or medium, if you are not going to watch them carefully). Do not cover (the liquid needs to steam off). The frying process takes about 10-12 minutes (on high heat). Turn them regularly until they are lightly browned. They go very fast in the last minute or two, so pay attention!

When apples are nicely browned, leave them in the pan and turn down the heat to medium. Add a good dousing of ***maple syrup*** and a sprinkle of cinnamon. Let this bubble and cook with the butter until thickened—about 2 minutes. Serve, ladling the maple-butter sauce over the apples.

When done, the apples can be put into small bowls and kept warm in the oven (about 200 degrees). Or they could be cooked in a Dutch oven, then covered and kept warm oven until ready to serve.

Great with eggs and hash (see Daniel's Mountain Corned Beef Hash on page 251.) Or serve with French Toast. Life is good.

History:
Don Anderson (see page 9) used to serve this on Sunday morning after the Usufruct (in the days before we went to the Homestead for brunch). I started serving this again for Karen and Andy in 2002.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

HUEVOS RANCHEROS

Ingredients	2 people (this is a large serving)
Fry the tortillas:	
Corn tortillas (recommend Casa Valdez 6" or bring home from restaurant)	4 or 6 tortillas (2 or 3 per person)
Vegetable oil	½ inch deep (or less)
Fry the eggs:	
Eggs	4 eggs (2 per person)
Butter	A small pat
Build the tortillas:	
Refried beans (bring home from restaurant) (or use separate recipe for frijoles refritos	8 oz.
Queso fresco (Mexican cheese) (grated) Or substitute white cheddar	very generous sprinkle
Pork carnitas in red sauce from La Tapatia or your favorite restaurant (if it happens to include a bit of onion or mushroom, that is a wondrous thing)	1 cup or more
Optional: choose your sauce or skip as you like:	
Secret carnitas sauce from La Tapatia (or other serious Mexican restaurant)	up to 8 oz. (4 oz. per person)
Red enchilada sauce (ideally warmed in oven for 1 hour—flavor will improve)	up to 12 oz. (6 oz. per person)
Serve with (optional, as desired):	
Chopped cilantro	
Pico de gallo (chopped tomatoes & onions)	
Fresh salsa from supermarket (I like the hot one)	
Guacamole	
Crystal hot sauce	

Warm things up:

Preheat oven to 330 degrees (not too hot).
Warm up the pork carnitas and refried beans in oven or microwave.

Fry the tortillas:

Heat a little oil in frying pan to about 325°(not crazy hot).
Fry the tortillas very briefly. Cook enough to "wilt" and barely cook them, flipping once. Take them out just before they stiffen and harden. Depending temperature, this may be a 10-15 seconds per side. Be careful. If you go even a few seconds too long you'll end up with crispy tostadas. (There is a difference of opinion on this. Some prefer crispy. But I prefer the traditional wilted version, as presented in Dianna Kennedy's masterful Mexican cookbook.)
Place wilted tortillas on a platter, separating each one with a paper towel. If making a large batch, you may keep them in a warming oven.

Fry the eggs:

Fry the eggs sunny side up in butter. Take them out well before the yolks are hard. They will cook more in the oven. Accordingly, there is no reason to flip them over, even if that is how you usually prefer your eggs.

Plate:

Place two or three tortillas on plate (overlapping like a Venn diagram).
Add a generous dollop of refried beans and smear it around.
Sprinkle on the grated cheese. (Putting the cheese on before the other ingredients is particularly important if using cheddar; you want to hide the cheese and let the other ingredients show. If using Mexican cheese, that could go on later; it will not melt and it looks nice.)
Next, add the fried eggs.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Top the eggs with a generous scoop of carnitas. To enhance the presentation, sprinkle the pork around the egg yolk, not on top of it.
Optional: Pour on sauce (either secret carnitas sauce from La Tapatia or red enchilada sauce).
Pop in oven for about 5 minutes to heat everything up and melt the cheese.

Serve with optional toppings:
Chopped cilantro, pico de gallo, salsa, guacamole, and hot sauce.

Source:

I made it up. Real huevos don't have all this stuff.
For reference, see Diana Kennedy's 1972 classic *The Cuisines of Mexico*. Diana Kennedy (age 99 and still around in 2022) is not Mexican. Nor was Julia Child French. Yet both are the 20th century arbiters of and missionaries for these cuisines to the American audience. Diana's recipe is simple and authentic (just eggs and sauce). And she subscribes to this approach for the tortillas: "Heat the oil and fry the tortillas lightly on both sides, as you would do for enchiladas—they must not be crisp."

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHIPPED BEEF ON TOAST

Ingredients	3-4 people (or 2 gluttons)
Shallot (minced) - or substitute onion (This item is optional)	1 large shallot (yielding 2 Tbsp. minced)
Butter	4 Tbsp. (½ stick)
Flour	3 Tbsp.
Whole milk	2 cups (add more if needed)
Cayenne powder (or crushed red chili flakes)	⅓ tsp.
Paprika	¼ tsp.
Dried beef (e.g., Hormel brand) – slice into julienne strips, cut strips in half	5 oz. jar
Do not add salt! It is already too salty.	
Serve on buttered toast (artisan asiago cheese bread is wonderful)	Three slices (or six very small slices)
With a fried egg on the side	1 egg per person

Melt butter in a large frying pan. Sauté the shallots for just a minute or two.
Add the flour to the shallots to make roux. Stir the roux on low heat for a couple of minutes to cook out the raw flour taste. Then add milk gradually to make a white sauce. Add a small amount of cayenne and bit of paprika. Stir in the chipped beef. Let it simmer on lowest setting a few minutes. Add additional milk as needed. (It will take a lot to keep it from getting thick. You want a creamy, almost thin, texture.)

Serve on buttered toast, with an egg on the side.

Notes: *Joy of Cooking* also calls for the following items (which I also see in other internet recipes, so she's not crazy). We don't use them, but they are fun to ponder:

Optional (from Joy of Cooking recipe):	
Parsley or chives (chopped)	A sprinkle
Dry sherry	2 Tbsp.
Capers or chopped pickles	2 Tbsp.

Source:
Joy of Cooking (1975 ed.).

Origins:
This dish has a long tradition in honest American diners (as well as chain restaurants, and even Stouffers frozen food). Karen and I grew up with it served at home. It has now all but disappeared from menus. Sadly, I no longer find it on the menu at Lowell's at Pike Place in Seattle. This dish has a deep military connection (a love-hate affair). A 1945 Navy recipe calls 7 pounds of the beef and 100 slices of toast. Here is a quotation from *Band of Brothers* by Stephen E. Ambros: "At the end of May, the men of Easy packed up their barracks bags and … [took] a stop-and-go train ride to Sturgis, Kentucky. At the depot Red Cross girls had coffee and doughnuts for them, the last bit of comfort they would know for a month. They marched out to the countryside and pitched up tents, dug straddle trenches for latrines, and ate the Army's favorite meal for troops in the field, creamed chipped beef on toast, universally known as SOS, or Shit on a Shingle."

Beef:
There is nothing "chipped" about this beef. According to Wikipedia, it is "pressed, salted, and dried beef that has been sliced into thin pieces. … The processed meat producer Hormel once described it as "an air-dried product that is similar to bresaola, but not as tasty." Bresaola is an Italian dry aged meat concoction made with horse, venison, pork, or, preferably, top round of beef.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

OATMEAL

Ingredients	2 servings (generous)
(Any combination of milk & water totaling 3 ½ cups), such as:	
Heavy cream	¾ cup
Water	2 ¾ cups
Quaker Oats (old fashioned, long cooking version)	1 ½ cups
Cinnamon	¼ tsp.
Vanilla (use best quality, imported)	¼ tsp.
Nutmeg (freshly grated from nut)	Generous sprinkle
Butter	2 to 4 pats
Maple syrup or brown sugar (optional)	2 Tbsp.
Serve with your choice of:	
Berries, sliced bananas, milk, maple syrup, brown sugar	

Equipment*:*

Cook oatmeal in an uncovered pot. Add cover when done if not serving immediately.

Liquid*:*

You may use any combination of cream, milk and/or water totaling 3 ½ (for two servings). This is fairly high ratio of liquid to oats. It will take longer to cook down, and be worth every minute.

Directions:

Put cream & water in pot on high heat. Stir in the oats, cinnamon, vanilla, nutmeg, butter, and syrup (optional). As soon as it reaches a boil, reduce heat to a low, steady simmer. Simmer uncovered with frequent stirring for as long as it takes to get a nice, slightly soupy consistency (15-18 minutes).

If you don't serve at once, cover and place in warming oven, or leave on very very low heat on stove. You may need to add another splash of liquid.

May be served with sliced bananas, blueberries, or other fruit.
Some like to add more milk or syrup to their bowl.

Source:

Our son Andy made a batch over Christmas 2025. I thought his addition of cinnamon and vanilla was clever. I'd never done that before.

Notes:

We use Old Fashioned Quaker Oats, because that's what Karen likes. Irish steel-cut oats are also excellent, but some adjustments to quantities and cooking time will be required. Needless to say, never use quick-cooking oats.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

OMELETS FOR A CROWD

Explanation*:*
Every year, I make omelets (and made-to-order eggs) for the staff appreciation breakfast at Givens Pursley. (This is my small contribution to a much larger group effort in which the lawyers make an elaborate breakfast for staff.) These are my notes. The stove temperatures refer to the settings on the electric stove in the firm's kitchen. Needless to say, these notes could be adapted to making a single omelet or two.

Equipment*:*

- For the omelets: one medium (10 ½") copper skillet, plus a lid large enough sit inside but not to touch the eggs (I use a 10" Le Creuset lid). I use Mauviel copper pans that I buy directly from France. They are substantially heavier and far better than the cheaper version sold to the American market (e.g., Williams-Sonoma). This is not just for show. These heavy copper pans allow you to make an endless number of omelets without washing the pan. If used correctly, they are more non-stick than real non-stick pans. And they produce a better result.
- One small skillet for pre-warming of non-cheese omelet ingredients. Nonstick is good, but this could be another copper skillet. Doesn't matter.
- One or two small nonstick skillets for special-order eggs. If cooking for a crowd, you want nonstick for these, because they will constantly require washing (especially when people want cheese in their scrambled eggs). At home, I would always use copper for frying eggs.

That said, use whatever you have.

Temperature settings (for Givens Pursley stove)*:*

Finding the right temperature to cook an omelet is an art. It needs to be high enough to achieve something that barely approaches (but stops short of) browning the omelet. And low enough to cook the eggs so that the cheese finishes melting at the same time. The directions below are for the stove at Givens Pursley:

- Set one of the large front burners to 3.5. This will be used for cooking the omelets.
- Set one of the back burners to 2.0. Use it to keep the empty omelet pan warm (without smoking) when not in use.
- Set the other back burner to 3.0. Use it to pre-warm the non-cheese omelet ingredients.
- Set the other large front burner to 3.5. It will be used for special-order eggs. The temperature on this burner may be adjusted as needed (higher for scrambled, lower for fried eggs).

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Prep*:*

All omelet ingredients should be prepped in advance. E.g., Fry & crumble bacon, sauté mushrooms, etc., etc. This will take more than an hour. Put each menu ingredient in a bowl near the omelet prep chef. (At home, my omelets are much simpler. But people dining out invariably want lots of stuff in their omelets.)

Beat a million eggs in a large bowl.

Melting butter in advance in a 2-cup measuring cup is a time-saver. Just pour a little butter into the pan for each new omelet. But, if you prefer, you could just put pats of butter into the omelet and egg pans.

Directions*:*

As each order comes in, the omelet prep chef will combine all the non-cheese ingredients (meat, mushrooms, onions, etc.) into one bowl, and put the cheese into another bowl. Paper bowls are handy.

Put the non-cheese ingredients into the non-stick skillet and let it warm (at 3.0) while the omelet is getting started. Move empty omelet pan to 3.5 burner. Be sure omelet skillet is fully up to heat (3.5) before adding eggs. Put a generous amount of butter into the empty omelet skillet. Use a ladle to add the beaten eggs. Grind on some salt & pepper. Add hot sauce, on request.

Tricky part: Tilt the omelet pan and use a fork to pull some of the slightly cooked egg toward the center of the pan, allowing runny egg to fill that space. Keep doing this in every direction, until there is little or no more runny egg.

Next, add the cheese. Finally, top with the pre-heated non-cheese ingredients. (This sequencing is aimed at helping the cheese to fully melt by the time the omelet is done) Cover immediately and let it cook to perfection on the 3.5 burner: Eggs should be barely beginning to brown (some very light tan marks) and cheese is melted. Little or no peeking is allowed (that lets heat escape). After some practice, you will intuitively know when the omelet is ready—a couple of minutes at this modest heat.

While the omelet is still in the pan, use a spatula to gently fold one-third of the omelet onto itself (toward the center of the pan). Take the pan off the stove, and hold it over the plate. Delicately transition the omelet to the plate, folding the entire omelet into thirds as you go. (This is impossible to explain; it just happens) The end result is that the omelet will be sitting upside down with the two one-third folds underneath and the magnificent “not quite browned” center of the omelet displayed on top.

A simple cheese omelet (with less stuff) may simply be folded in half (as pictured).

Notes*:*

A number of famous French chefs (notably Jacques Pépin) use omelet making as a test (or audition) for new hires. This seemingly simple dish requires mastery of heat control, timing, and finesse. On Julia Child’s first live appearance on Boston public television (which was supposed to be just a talking interview), she brought a hot plate and demonstrated how to make an omelet.

If I were tested, Jacques Pépin would never hire me. His approach to an omelet is diametrically opposed to mine. He has many versions, but they all have a creamy, “baveuse” (oozy) center. And a barely cooked exterior.

My technique is based on the feta cheese omelets I loved to eat at a beloved Greek restaurant in Ann Arbor while I was studying law. They bear no resemblance to the classic French omelet. And they are much better. Well, … so I say.

My omelet roots reach earlier than law school. In the 4th grade, I made cheese omelets and even jelly omelets (yes, there is such a thing) for breakfast on school days while my parents slept in. (They were theater people.) At that tender age, I even made fluffy omelets with beaten egg whites with yolks folded in. I have no bloody idea where I learned that. But I remember making them on cold winter mornings in Grinnell, Iowa like it was yesterday.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

DESSERTS

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S KEY LIME PIE

Ingredients	One pie – 8 servings (or 6 large servings)
Pie crust::	
Honey Maid graham cracker crumbs	2 cups (a 13.5 oz. box is more than needed)
Sugar	⅓ cup
Butter (melted)	1 ⅔ sticks (13 Tbsp.)
Pie filling	
Bag of real Key limes (Do not substitute other limes.) or Key lime juice in bottle: Floribbean brand from Williams Sonoma or Nellie & Joe's of Key West from Amazon.com or Albertsons	¾ cup of juice About 1 ⅔ lb. pound of limes (35 limes or so.) Best to order 2 lbs. limes, just in case.
Sweetened condensed milk	1 ½ 14 oz. cans. A "14 oz." can (dry weight) will yield about 10 oz. in a measuring cup (wet volume). So 1 ½ cans will look like about 18 oz. in a measuring cup.
Egg yolks	5 yolks
Whipped cream *(or substitute whipped cream from a can):*	
Heavy cream	1 ½ cup
Confectioners' sugar	3 Tbsp.
Vanilla extract (Mexican vanilla is best)	¾ tsp.

Day ahead note: Many things in life are better fresh. Curiously, however, this pie ages well. Indeed, it is even better the second day. So make it the day before serving, cover in saran wrap and refrigerate. Then prepare and add the whipped cream up to 2 hours before serving.

Bottled juice note: Although not as good as fresh Key limes, it is pretty darned close and a big time-saver. However, bottled juice has shelf-life issues. It should be refrigerated after purchase. Be sure to taste it. If it tastes "off," throw it away. It should taste very intensely like limes without any off-putting flavor.

Equipment: A good quality, fairly deep ceramic pie pan. Electric mixer for the whipped cream.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

Directions:

Graham cracker crust:
(You may substitute a store-bought graham cracker crust, but it won't be as good.)
Combine graham cracker crumbs and sugar. Stir in melted butter.
Using back of spoon and fingers, press mixture into pie shell being careful to keep the thickness even. Bake the shell for 8 minutes at 350 degrees.
Note: How thick the crust should be is a matter of taste. This is enough for a rather thick crust. Use less if you prefer a thinner crust (which emphasizes the taste of the key lime).

The pie:
Squeeze enough Key limes to produce the required juice. Or use store-bought Key lime juice.
In bowl, whisk together sweetened condensed milk and egg yolks. Then whisk in the Key lime juice. Pour the filling into pie shell and bake at 350 degrees until just set, about 15 minutes. (A touch of the finger should show this is not liquid.)

Cool:
Transfer pie to wire rack to cool, about 1 hour. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight. It actually tastes better the second day!

Whipped cream:
The whipped cream may be prepared up to 3 hours before serving. If possible, chill the mixing bowl with the whipped cream until ready to serve (don't worry if you can't.)
Beat cream on medium speed until thickened, about 3-5 minutes. Add the sugar and vanilla and continue beating until medium-firm peaks form, another 3-5 minutes. Using a rubber spatula to move the whipped cream to form a mound in the middle of the pie. Then artistically spread the mound of whipped cream around the top of the pie. Serve to eight of your best friends.

(If you must, you may cheat and substitute whipped cream in an aerosol can. Spread it around with a knife or rubber spatula to make it look as if it were homemade. But this is nothing like the real thing.)

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S LEMON MERINGUE PIE

Ingredients	One pie – 8 servings (or 6 large servings)
Pie crust	
Pillsbury ready pie crust	one pre-made pie crust
Lemon filling	
Sugar	1 ¼ cup
Cornstarch	⅓ cup
Salt	⅛ tsp.
Water	1 ½ cup
Fresh lemon juice	½ cup (3 lemons, or more)
Lemon zest	3 tsp (from the lemons you have)
Meringue	
Egg whites (at room temperature)	5 eggs
Cream of tartar	⅓ tsp.
Sugar (preferably superfine)	⅔ cup
Vanilla	⅓ tsp.

Pie crust

One could do this from scratch. But it is perfectly good to use a Pillsbury pie crust.
Lay out the crust into a pie pan. Fold the excess crust under and press together to form thick crust edge. Flute with a fork around the top of the crust. Prick bottom and sides with fork. Bake at 450° 10-12 minutes until light brown. Let it cool before filling.

Lemon filling

Add the cornstarch, sugar, and salt to an empty saucepan, and whisk together. Turn on heat and gradually whisk in the water, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Bring to simmer, stirring constantly. Continue stirring for one minute. The filling should be very thick.
Pour the lemon filling into the pie crust. Press a piece of plastic wrap on the pie.
Ideally, go on immediately to the next step (according to Joy of Cooking). But one can stop here, and do the meringue the next day.

Meringue

Beat the egg whites until peaks begin to form.
Very gradually beat in the cream of tartar, then the sugar. Continue beating until peaks are stiff and glossy, but not dry. Finally, beat in the vanilla.

Make the pie

Remove the plastic wrap from the pie. Spread the meringue on top, anchoring the meringue to the edge of the crust.
Bake for 20 minutes at 325°. This should slightly brown the peaks of the meringue.
Place on rack and let cool completely before refrigerating. Pie can survive in the fridge for a day or two, but best served soon.

Source:
Joy of Cooking

Notes:
On 10/2019, CHM slightly increased the proportion of the meringue to the pie filling (over the *Joy of Cooking* quantity). The meringue is based on *Joy of Cooking*'s method #2, which is easier to make but less stable than Method # 1 (*i.e.*, should be eaten the same day).

History:
Karen has been making this since time immemorial.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S CHOCOLATE PECAN PIE

Ingredients	One pie
Pie shell:	
9-inch pie shell	
Nestle Tollhouse semi-sweet chocolate chips (preferred over Ghirardelli)	1 cup (8 oz.)
Pecan halves (not chopped)	1 ½ cup
Mix together:	
Eggs (beaten)	3 eggs
Light corn syrup	¾ cup
Light brown sugar	½ cup
White sugar	¼ cup
Vanilla	2 tsp.
Cinnamon	½ tsp.
Salt	¼ tsp.

Preheat oven to 350°.
Place pie shell on foil-lined baking sheet.
Scatter chocolate chips on bottom of pie shell.
Scatter pecans over the chocolate.
In a mixing bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients (eggs, corn syrup, brown sugar, white sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt).
Pour mixture over the pecans and chocolate.
Bake until set (50 to 55 minutes).
Cool before serving. Indeed, this pie does very well made the night before.

Source:

This recipe is derived from an Emeril Lagasse recipe found on the internet.

Notes:

For years, Karen used the recipe in *Joy of Cooking*. Switched to this on in 2011. Andy has always loved this pie.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S PUMPKIN PIE

Ingredients	2 servings
Mix dry ingredients	
Sugar	¾ cup
Salt	½ tsp.
Ground cinnamon	1 tsp.
Ground ginger	½ tsp.
Wet ingredients	
Eggs	2 eggs
Canned pumpkin	15 oz. can
Evaporated milk	1 can (12 fl. oz., 1 ½ cups)
Pie crust	
Pillsbury ready pie crust	

Equipment:
Small bowl to mix dry ingredients. Large bowl to mix everything. And a 9-inch pie pan (baking dish).

Directions:

Mix dry ingredients

Combine in small bowl: sugar, salt, cinnamon, and ginger.

Combine all pie ingredients

Beat the eggs in a larger bowl. Stir in the canned pumpkin and the dry ingredients. Then gradually add the evaporated milk.

Make the crust

You could make a homemade crust. Or just press a pre-made crust into the pie pan.

Bake

Pour the pie ingredients into the pie shell. Place into 425° oven for 15 minutes. Drop setting to 350° and bake for another 35-45 minutes. (No need to cool the oven down; let temperature drop gradually.) It is done when a knife inserted into pie comes out clean.

Cool and serve

Cool the pie on a wire rack for 2 hours. Serve at once, or refrigerate. Serve with whipped cream.

Source:
Recipe on can of Libby's 100% Pure Pumpkin. The recipe on the can calls for ¼ tsp. of ground cloves. Karen would die before putting that in anything. The Libby recipe also offers a "new fashioned" version with is identical except: a smaller amount of evaporated milk (1 cup—less than a can), the addition of one 14-oz. can (1 ¾ cup) sweetened condensed milk—and the elimination of the sugar. That would be more liquid. Don't know how that would affect the pie.

History:
Karen has made this 1,000 times. Chris finally wrote it down on Christmas 2020.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

KAREN'S CHOCOLATE FONDUE

Ingredients	8 servings
Milk chocolate with toffee and almonds (Chocolove brand in yellow wrapper) – because no one seems to carry Toblerone anymore.	14 oz. (1.75 oz. per person) – this is generous!
Heavy cream	1 cup (0.125 cups per person)
Serve with:	
Pound cake	
Brownies	
Bananas	
Strawberries	

Directions:
Heat cream in Le Creuset pot over medium heat. Break up chocolate and add to cream. Stir until melted.

Equipment:
Many recipes call for a double boiler. This is not necessary.

Source:
Karen has made forever.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

CHRIS'S STRAWBERRY TOPPING FOR ICE CREAM OR SHORTCAKE

Ingredients	6 servings
Fresh strawberries (sliced)	1 lb.
Sugar	⅔ cup
Serve over:	
Shortcakes or sliced angel food cake	
Vanilla ice cream	
Whipped cream	
Chocolate syrup	

Strawberry topping:

Cut off the green tops of the strawberries. (If the strawberry is very big, slice it in half; then cut off green top.) Quarter them (or into 6^{ths} or 8^{ths} depending on size). Divide into two bowls. Leave one just plain. To the other bowl of strawberries, sprinkle generously with sugar and mix. Cover and let strawberries sit at room temperature approx. 4 hours. They will break down into a syrupy joyous sauce.

Chill the plain strawberries.

Serve both. Some people like one, the other, or both.

Serve over shortcakes, sliced angel food cake and/or vanilla ice cream. Make chocolate syrup and whipped cream available as an optional addition.

Source:

Who knows? Made since time immemorial .

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

BANANAS FOSTER

Ingredients	3 servings
Butter	½ stick
Dark brown sugar	1 cup
Banana liqueur	2 oz.
Lemon	1 lemon
Orange	1 orange
Bananas	2 bananas
Nutmeg	A little
Cinnamon	A little
Dark rum or Grande Marnier	4 oz.
Vanilla ice cream	

Melt the butter in medium or large frying pan, then add brown sugar to form creamy paste. Cook for a minute or two, then add juice of lemon and orange. Continue to cook for another 5 minutes until reduced. Then stir in the banana liqueur, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Then add the sliced bananas and brown them for a minute on each side. Add the rum or Grand Marnier, and flambé. Carefully place banana slices on bowls of ice cream, then top with the heated sauce.

Notes:

Traditionally bananas are cut lengthwise and then into half cut into four pieces. For a dramatic presentation, one chef suggests carefully slitting the banana peel, cutting the bananas into coins, and then reinserting them into the banana peel. This allows banana to be "peeled" at tableside revealing magically sliced bananas. Nutmeg is not traditional; Alton Brown calls for nutmeg and allspice instead of cinnamon. I thought the nutmeg sounded good, but not the allspice. Then toss a little cinnamon on during flambé to make a magic, sparkling powder. One chef recommends grinding cinnamon stick to make fresh. One chef suggests scooping up some of the warm liquor into a ladle, lighting it, and pouring it back into pan is a column of flame. All the traditional recipes call for rum. They use Grande Marnier at Cactus Pete's Plateau Room, and it is quite delicious.

Cactus Pete's:

They make Bananas Foster with some variations at Cactus Pete's Plateau Room (which is now closed, darned it). Although non-traditional, they are quite delicious. They use Grand Marnier instead of rum. And they add juice of lemon and orange. I've not seen that in any of the other recipes. Of course, they do everything in about 2 minutes tableside at Cactus Pete's. I've extended cooking times somewhat.

Source:

Original recipe is from Brennan's in New Orleans. Some modifications from Alton Brown and others I found on the internets.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer

AFFOGATO

(Ice Cream & Espresso)

Ingredients	1 Serving
Ice cream or gelato (vanilla is traditional, hazelnut is also good) (chocolate, if you are married to Karen)	1 largish scoop or 2 small scoops
Espresso (decaf or regular)	1 shot (1 ½ oz.)
Very optional:	
Whipped cream (or frothy milk from espresso maker)	a dollop

Put the ice cream or gelato in a small bowl.
Pour the espresso over it.

If you wish, you may add some whipped cream or frothy milk.

DRUNKEN AFFOGATO

(Ice Cream, Espresso & Liqueur)

Ingredients	1 Serving
Ice cream or gelato or even sorbet (sorbetto in Italian)	1 largish scoop or 2 small scoops
Espresso (decaf or regular)	1 shot (1 ½ oz.)
Amaro or Liqueur (e.g., Frangelico, Drambuie, Kahlua, Grand Marnier, Cointreau, etc.)	Anywhere from ½ to 1 ½ ounce
Very optional:	
Whipped cream (or frothy milk from espresso maker)	a dollop

You may substitute amaro (or other liqueur) for the expresso. Or, better yet, use both.
The combinations are endless. Brad Thomas Parsons (in his book *Amaro*) suggests:

- Amaro Bràsulio with a sour raspberry sorbetto (skip the espresso)
- Branca Menta (minty flavored) with chocolate gelato (with espresso)

Etymology:
Affogato means “to drown” in Italian.
The full name for this dessert is L’affogato al caffè, but it is typically shortened to just Affogato.

Source:
The origins of Affogato are unknown, but it gained popularity in Italy in the 1950s. It came to the U.S. a couple decades later.
Karen and I first tried Affogato at a restaurant in London in 2014. Brilliant. It is now my favorite and most satisfying dessert. And I’m starting to see it on menus everywhere, including Ti Amo (formerly Flatbread) in Bown Crossing.

© 2026 Christopher H. Meyer