My Recipe

Ingredients:

Method:

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"A Scout is Hungry" Camporee Cookbook

This book has recipes for some of my favorite foods, which I wind up making over and over. Some are family recipes, others I've picked up over the years. I've also included definitions of cooking terms, discussions of herbs and spices and why you'd use each, and other things which might inspire you to try your own hand at creating a new recipe.

Enjoy!

- Mike Brown
2/13/25

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A Note on Measurements

All of the measurements in this book are in Imperial units, which can be confusing. I'm not metric. Sorry, but that's just the way it is. I'm old.

Volume: The basic units, and conversions, are as follows:

Pinch or Dash - not much, just a little…
Teaspoon (t or tsp) - a sort of basic unit.
Tablespoon (T or Tb) - three teaspoons.
Measuring spoons usually come in sets of ¼, ½ and 1 t and 1 T, so recipes will use those fractions.
Ounce (oz) - two tablespoons
Cup (c) - eight ounces or sixteen tablespoons. Measuring cups usually come in sets of ¼ cup (four T), ½ cup and 1 cup.
Pint (pt) - sixteen ounces or two cups
Quart (qt) - two pints or eight cups
Gallon (gal) - four quarts or eight pints

Weight: 16 ounces (oz) is a pound (lb).
This also applies to the fluid ounces (fl oz) in a volume of water - "a pint's a pound the world around" - but not necessarily to any other substance.

Temperature: All temperatures are given in Degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Water freezes at 32°F and boils at 212°F.

Cooking is an art, not a science: When I'm cooking with herbs and spices I rarely use measuring spoons. Learn how much you hold in the cupped palm of your hand, and that's close enough - then throw in a bit more, if you like it. More often than not, you can substitute another ingredient if you don't have something, and in most cases you can switch proteins - chicken instead of pork or beef, tofu can replace meat if you want to go vegetarian, and so forth.

Baking is science, not art: If you're baking something, the above doesn't apply. Don't vary the recipe or it won't work.

Fresh vs Dried: As a general rule, any ingredient which is dried or concentrated has a stronger flavor than the fresh version, which is mostly water. As a result, you use less of a dried herb than if you're using it fresh - a general rule is to use three to four times as much fresh herb as dried. For example, if the recipe calls for a tablespoon of dried basil, you'd want to use ¼ cup (4 tablespoons) of fresh herb.

Some Common Cooking Terms

Cutting:
Chop - cut up into smaller pieces (note: the pieces should be as close as possible to the same size, to cook at the same time).
Dice - To cut into 1/8 to 1/4-inch thick cubes
Grate - reduce to small shreds by rubbing it on a grater
Julienne - cut into ⅛" equal-sided srips, usually about 1" long
Mince - to cut into very tiny pieces, almost a liquid
Peel - to remove the skin or outer layer, usually of a vegetable
Puree (pure-ray) - grind into a liquid
Slice - cut into thin, flat pices
Sliver - cut into long, thin strips

Heating:
Bake - cook in an oven, usually at moderate temperatures (~350°F)
Blanch - vegetables - boil briefly, then put in ice water to stop cook
Boil - heat until it's bubbling violently
Braise - cook foods partially immersed in liquid using low heat
Broil - cook with high heat using a top heating element
Caramelize - develop a brown color and nutty flavor of caramel
Deglaze - add liquid (water or stock) to a pan after sauteeing meat
Fry - cook in hot fat or oil, usually around 350°F
Grill - cook food on a rack under or over direct heat
Poach - cook in liquid just below boiling. Often used to cook eggs.
Reduce - boil a liquid until it's thickened by evaporation of water
Roast - cook in uncovered pan in the oven
Sear/Brown - cook meat quickly over high heat to seal in juices
Sauté *(saw-tay)* - cook quickly in a bit of oil/butter until light brown
Simmer - heat until gently bubbling, not as much as boiling
Steam - cook above boiling liquid
Stew - cook in just enough liquid to cover ingredients

Mixing:
Beat - stir rapidly to make a mixture smooth
Combine or Stir - mix together
Fold - gently mix together by lifting and layering one into another
Marinate - soak ingredient in liquid
Mix - to stir together (a generic term)
Whip - beat food to incorporate air and produce volume

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Some Thoughts on Cooking, Before We Start

- **Be Prepared:** Don't start cooking right away, as tempting as that might be. Before you start on any recipe, make sure that you have everything you will need ready at hand. Start cooking only after everything is ready to go. Measure out what can be measured, clean and peel what needs to be cleaned or peeled, cut up what needs to be cut up. I usually set up a bunch of mixing bowls, and put everything which needs to be added at the same time into one bowl, while keeping things separate which will be added separately. I'll often arrange the bowls in the order I will need them, so I don't miss anything. Chefs call this "**Mise en Place"** (pronounced "mees en plass"), which means "everything in its place".
- **Safety First:** Raw meat - especially chicken or turkey - can be a source of salmonella or other bacteria. Use a separate cutting board for raw meat (or use one side of the board for meat, one for everything else). Wash the board in hot soapy water as soon as you're done with the raw meat. Wear gloves when handling raw meat, or wash your hands thoroughly before you touch anything else.
- **Wear gloves when you're cutting up hot chili peppers** - if you don't, the capsaicin in the peppers will transfer to your hands, and the next time you rub your eyes (or, worse yet, go to the bathroom) you'll learn why the same substance is a key ingredient in tear gas. Someday, you'll thank me for that…
- **A Recipe is both a Prescription and a Process:** In addition to being a list of ingredients, a recipe will tell you how to prepare the ingredients, and in what order to add them to the dish. This last can be important - add things in the wrong order, and the dish might not work at all.
- **A sharp knife is a safe knife:** Learn how to sharpen your knives, and keep them sharp. Dull knives slip, while sharp knives make clean cuts.
- **Clean as you go:** Usually, while you're cooking, you'll have a minute or two between steps. Use that time to clean up everything you've used and don't need anymore. The goal is that by the time the dish is on its final cook, you won't need to wash anything but that last pot because it's all done already.

Common Herbs, Spices and Seasonings

First, a few definitions:
Herbs are mostly the leaves of temperate-zone plants (i.e. basil)
Spices are made from ground parts of tropical plants (i.e. cinnamon)
Seasonings are mostly mineral in origin (i.e. salt)

Allspice - A single spice that imparts the aroma and flavor of a trio of warm seasonings — cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg — allspice is the unripened berry of a small evergreen.

Basil - A lovely member of the mint family with a mildly peppery taste, a hint of clove and mint, basil is at the same time spicy and sweet, warm and fresh. Varieties include Sweet Basil (usually sold as just "basil") and Thai Basil, which is used in Thai cooking.

Bay Leaf - an evergreen related to camphor and sassafras trees. It has a sweet, balsamic scent and bitter/spicy bite, used in gravies and grain dishes, with beans and meats, and in cooking blends like bouquet garni. Remove the leaves from the food before serving.

Cajun Seasoning - blend of salt, herbs and spices, from New Orleans - can be used while cooking or after serving, at the table.

Cayenne - ground chili pepper, used to turn up the heat and color.

Celery Salt - blend of sea salt and ground celery seed.

Chili Powder - blend of chili peppers, onion, paprika, cumin, garlic, parsley, oregano and celery seed. Used in Mexican or Tex-Mex fare. Chili Powder adds flavor more than heat.

Chinese Five Spice - Five Spice Seasoning includes all five tastes: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and hot or spicy.

Cilantro - fragrant, pungent leaf of the coriander plant, used in Mexican, Thai and Vietnamese cooking. Interesting fact: the first time you taste fresh cilantro, it will probably taste like soap. It won't taste like that once it's part of a cooked dish. Keep on with it, and you'll probably come to like it. Substitute Italian Parsley in recipes if you want.

Cinnamon - comes from the bark of an evergreen tree, and adds pungent sweetness to your favorite baked goodies and can add a depth of flavor to savory dishes as well. Combine with allspice, cloves and ginger to make your own mulling spice.

Cloves - Intensely aromatic and richly flavored, cloves have been a major player in the spice world since ancient times. Actually dried flower buds, you'll often find cloves in seasoning blends alongside cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg.

Crushed Red Pepper - A must for Mexican and African cooking, chili

- **Stir-fry Chicken Wrap:** pieces of chicken breast, snow peas, celery, bean sprouts. Shrimp is optional. Add a bit of soy sauce or teriyaki sauce, wrap and cook until done (about 20-30 minutes).
- **Saucy Chicken Wrap:** Coat a quarter chicken with a mix of orange juice, Saucy Susan sauce (or duck sauce) and green relish. Wrap in foil and cook until done (about 20-30 minutes).
- **Seafood Dinner:** peeled shrimp or scallops, snow peas, strips of red bell pepper, sliced mushrooms, bamboo shoots, maybe a thin slice of ginger. This cooks quickly - usually less than 10 minutes. The recipe notes that kids seldom like it, as it's too different… your mileage may vary.
- **Foil Fajitas:** Marinated Fajita Meat (Beef or Chicken), Onions, Green Peppers. Cook in a foil pack and serve on tortillas with salsa (see the recipe on page 26), cheese, etc.
- **Stuffed Potatoes:** Hollow out the center of a medium-size potato (don't peel it). Insert a small pre-cooked sausage (like a brown-and-serve sausage) or hot dog (cut to length). Wrap in foil and cook for about an hour. Remove, slice top and add butter, cheese, sour cream, or whatever you like.
- **Mexican Lasagna:** Build the foil pack in layers, like regular lasagna - except you use corn chips or tortillas instead of noodles. Put down a layer of chips, then crumbled meat - chorizo sausage is good, or hamburger mixed with chili powder - the more chips, then a layer of Mexican mix cheese, and repeat. You could also have a layer of salsa, or add salza to the meat layer. If you like things hot, add sliced jalapeno or serrano chilis to the meat or cheese layers (or both). The top layer should be chips.
- **Foil Pack Breakfast:** Sausage patty, hash brown potatoes, scrambled egg (doesn't have to be cooked), salt and pepper. If desired, add basil or oregano or a little salsa or cayenne. Wrap securely and cook for 15 minutes.

Outdoor cooking is not just about hot dogs and hamburgers. There are so many styles of food you can make. *Guy Fieri*

Foil Pack Cooking

A quick, no-clean-up way of cooking on a campfire is the foil pack meal. The procedure is simple - just wrap some food in aluminum foil and place the pack on top of hot coals (*not* in a blazing fire, please!) until done. The traditional foil pack uses a mixture of hamburger meat, onions, carrots and potatoes, with a bit of salt (adding some garlic powder to the salt is good) and pepper.

Here are some variations you can try, taken from a course at the University of Scouting:

- Wrap the ingredients in cabbage leaves before wrapping in foil
- Add some ketchup, Worcestershire Sauce, BBQ Sauce, Teriyake Sauce or Heinz 57 Sauce. A spoonful of Cream of Mushroom Soup can also be very tasty.
- Try different vegetables - celery, parsnip, green onions, etc.
- For the adventurous, try some slices of hot pepper (see the discussion of hot peppers earlier in this cookbook for ideas)
- Garlic goes well with anything.
- Try stew beef or chunks of chicken breast, lamb or pork for the meat - for a real change, try fish or shrimp
- Add herbs: Italian seasoning, Basil or Oregano
- Add spices: Curry Powder, Chili Powder, Cumin, Cayenne or Seasoned Salt

For something completely different, try these foil pack ideas:

- **Pizza Pocket:** Take some flat dough - you can use the premade biscuit dough from The Dough Boy or make your own with Bisquick mix - and fill the center with tomato sauce, pepperoni and cheese. Fold it over and enclose in two layers of foil. Bake for about 10 minutes a side.
- **Ham Dinner:** Chunks of ham, pineapple and sweet potato. A little Teriyake Sauce or brown sugar would be good with this.
- **Ham and Potatoes Au Gratin:** Cubed ham, chopped potato, onions and grated cheese.

flakes will liven up any dish. Use sparingly in marinara and pizza sauces, and on grilled vegetables and meats.

Cumin - One of the world's most popular spices, cumin has a warm, spicy, slightly bitter, earthy flavor. Ground cumin is used in North African, Middle Eastern, Indian and Mexican food, and as part of curry powder.

Curry Powder - In India, curry powder is almost always made on-the-spot with a unique blend of spices the cook chooses. You can do the same, when inspired and time permits. Or you can also rely on one of the commercial Curry Powders to create authentic Indian fare any time.

Dill - more delicately flavored than the seed from the same plant, it is delicious in salads, sauces, light gravies, and with fish and grains.

Garam Masala - An all-purpose, spicy warm (but not hot) Indian seasoning, Garam Masala is a traditional ingredient in Indian tandoori, samosas, kormas, and dahl. “Garam” means “hot” and “Masala” means “spices”.

Garlic - the average American consumes over 2½ pounds of garlic annually. Keep some fresh garlic on hand at all times, and if you don’t have any fresh garlic, you can use garlic powder instead. Avoid garlic salt - it’s cheaper than garlic powder for a reason - salt is cheap. If the recipe calls for garlic salt, just use some garlic powder and some salt.

Ginger - has a warm, spicy-sweet aroma and flavor, complementing both sweet (think gingerbread) and savory (think stir fry) dishes. Available in whole root, cut and sifted, powdered, and crystallized forms.

Gumbo Filé Powder - powdered sassafras leaf used in gumbo and other Creole dishes for its delicate flavor and thickening characteristics.

Italian Seasoning - not a seasoning at all, it’s a blend of Mediterranean herbs - basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme and marjoram - with an earthy, piney flavor that’s subtly sweet and peppery.

Mustard - ground Mustard seed is one of the oldest of spices. It adds warmth and heat to your dishes.

Nutmeg - the dried seed of the fruit of an evergreen. Warm and sweet, it adds depth to desserts and savory dishes alike. Sprinkle it on your eggnog, but try it on your potatoes, too!

Onion - The distinctly strong taste of onion is indispensable in the kitchen. Keep some on hand with the garlic. Its warm, sweet and salty flavor shines in most savory dishes. It comes in several convenient dried forms: flakes, granules, powder and slices. If you can’t think of something to cook right away, fry up some garlic and onions - the smell will fill the house, and by the time they’re nice and translucent you’ll come up with something for dinner. My mother taught me that...

Oregano - "pizza spice" - indispensable in Italian and other Mediterranean cooking as well as Mexican fare.

Paprika - sweet relative of the chili pepper, paprika is used to add warm, natural color and mildly spicy flavor to soups, stews, grains, and a variety of hors d'ouvres. It comes in regular, smoked and hot varieties.

Parsley - With a bright green color and a mild, fresh flavor, Parsley is a must-have for the pantry. Use it to flavor soups, vegetables, sauces, dressings, eggs and any potato dishes.

Pepper, Black - dried berries of the *Piper Nigrum* plant. Pepper lends satisfying heat and bite to most any dish - it works well in combination with other herbs and spices, and is commonly found in spice blends.

Pepper, Green - berries of the same plant as black pepper - *Piper nigrum* - but picked long before maturity. It has a fresh, herbaceous flavor. Comes in dried form or packed in brine (salt water).

Pepper, Pink - used for their sweet, fruity, mildly peppery taste and lovely color and aroma. Unrelated to black pepper, pink peppercorns are actually the dried fruit of a Brazilian tree *Schinus terebinthifolius*.

Pepper, White - another variety of *Piper nigrum* berries, picked fully ripe and then husked. White pepper has less intensity than black and lends great to white sauces, cream soups and fish dishes.

Pickling Spice - Pickling is one of the oldest ways to preserve food. Add Pickling Spice directly to the brine, or place in a tea ball or cheesecloth for easy removal.

Rosemary - the dried needles of a plant, Rosemary is used in sweet and savory dishes alike, but it has a very strong flavor so use it sparingly. Coat a leg of lamb or roast beef with Rosemary before baking.

Saffron - The world's most precious spice, saffron imparts a beautiful color, sweet aroma and distinct taste to Mediterranean, Arabian, and Indian recipes. Use a tiny bit in grain, fish, and egg dishes, salads and dressings, breads and sauces.

Salt - Salt is the world's most popular seasoning, used both at the table and as a crucial ingredient in virtually every recipe, from sweets to savories. It enhances other flavors, seasons on its own, and provides a necessary nutrient. I like Kosher Salt, which is ground to a good size for cooking.

Tarragon Leaf - adds distinctively sweet, fresh, licorice-like flavor to sauces, salad dressings, poultry, egg, and fish dishes. It's also a crucial component of spice blends like fines herbes, bouquet garni, and herbs de Provence.

Thyme Leaf - a little lemony, thyme is a crucial ingredient in Mediterranean cuisine. You'll find it in soups - add some to Manhattan Clam Chowder - and sauces, vegetable and meat dishes, as well as classic spice blends like bouquet garni and herbes de Provence.

Thai Curry

Thai cooking is intensely flavorful, and different from any other sort of food you might be familiar with. You'll find dishes called "curry" from nearly every Asian country, but an Indian curry is nothing like a Japanese or Thai curry (and none of them are anything like the mildly flavored creamed chicken mess served under the name in school cafeterias). The word "curry" comes from the Hindi "Karee" - and it just means "Mixture". All curries use a mixture of spices, which differs from country to country. Thai curries are usually coconut-milk based and use spice paste mix and chilis for heat.

If after you try this you decide you really like Thai Food, I recommend you get *101 Thai Dishes You Should Try Before You Die* by Jet Tila. Everything I've tried from the book so far justifies the title. That said, all of Tila's recipes require ingredients which you have to get from an Asian grocery. At least for a first try at Thai cooking you probably want to stick with things you can get at any good supermarket. Not to worry - this recipe is very good, you can get everything at a supermarket, and you can move on to more involved Thai dishes once you're hooked… Serve this curry over rice.

Ingredients:

1 4 oz can of Thai Curry Paste - Green, Red or Panang
4 cups of full-fat Coconut Milk (or 3 14 oz cans)
1½-2 pounds Chicken Breast or Pork Tenderloin
½ cup fresh Thai Basil, chopped, or 2 Tb dried Sweet Basil
½ cup Onion, sliced
½ cup Bell Pepper, sliced
Hot Chili Peppers, seeded and thinly sliced - more or less to taste - I use 2-3 Serrano peppers and 4-6 Thai Birdseye Chilis
1 Tb Brown Sugar
Veggies - Broccoli or Cauliflower Florets, maybe. I'll often just buy a bag of frozen Mediterranean Mix or California Mix
1 Tb Fish Sauce

Method:

- Bring 3 Tb cream from the top of one can of coconut milk to a boil over medium heat.
- Add the Curry Paste, stir-fry for about a minute
- Add the coconut milk, boil over high heat 10-15 minutes.
- Reduce heat to simmer. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer until the meat is fully cooked and the veggies are soft - 30-45 minutes should be good.

Steak with Peppercorn Sauce

I first had this dish on the island of Malta, and immediately decided to find out how to make it for myself. I've tried a few variations, but this is my favorite. The French call this recipe "Steak Au Poive", pronounced "Steak Oh Pwov" or you can call it "Steak with Peppercorn Sauce" - whatever you call it, it's strip steaks with a delicious creamy peppery sauce.

Ingredients:

4 (6 to 8-ounce) Strip Steaks, 3/4 to 1-inch thick
Kosher Salt
2 tsp Black Peppercorns, coarsely crushed
2 tablespoons unsalted Butter
1 cup Beef Stock or Broth
3 tsp Cognac or Brandy or Rum (optional, but good…)
1 cup Heavy Cream
1 Tb Green Peppercorns in brine - drained and slightly crushed

Method:

- Preheat oven to 200°.
- Sprinkle steaks with kosher salt and crushed black pepper.
- Heat butter in a heavy bottomed sauté pan over medium heat.
- Once butter is hot, add steaks and cook until browned on both sides, about 2 minutes per side for medium-rare and 3 minutes per side for medium.
- Remove steaks from pan and place on a rack set on a sheet pan.
- Place steaks in oven to keep warm while you prepare the sauce.
- Deglaze the pan by adding the stock and whisking until the crispy bits ("fond") release from the bottom of the pan.
- Increase heat to medium-high and allow the liquid to reduce for 3-4 minutes, uncovered so that the steam can escape.
- Add cognac, heavy cream, and green peppercorns to the pan.
- Increase heat to high and cook, whisking continually, until sauce thickens slightly, just enough to coat the back of a spoon; this will take 5 to 7 minutes.
- Season the sauce, to taste, with Kosher Salt.
- Place steaks on plates, top with sauce, and serve immediately.

I don't like gourmet cooking or 'this' cooking or 'that' cooking. I like good cooking. - *James Beard*

Turmeric - Turmeric's warm aroma, bright color, and gingery/peppery taste are relied upon in cooking throughout Asia. It's best known as the spice that gives curry powder its distinctive color.

Vanilla - It's hard to imagine a kitchen void of vanilla. Its full, rich, universally popular taste and enticing aroma is irreplaceable in cookies, cakes, custards, ice creams-- almost every conceivable sweet-- and a few savory dishes, too. Buy the real vanilla extract or pieces of real vanilla bark - artificial vanilla is cheaper, but not the Real Thing.

Some Like it Hot

Chili Peppers are the spicy fruits of plants in the genus *Capsicum*, relatives of tomatoes and potatoes. There are many, many varieties of chili peppers with new hybrids being created all the time, and they often have different names depending on region and whether or not they're dried or roasted. Their heat is created by the chemical capsaicin, and the amount of capsaicin in a given pepper governs how hot it is. In most chilis the heat is concentrated in the membrane surrounding the seeds, so you can reduce heat by removing the membrane before cooking.

How can you tell how hot a chili is? By its rating on the "Scoville Scale", named after Wilbur Scoville who in 1912 fed chilis to a bunch of volunteers, and tested how much sugar water it took to put out the burn. The more sugar water it took, the higher the Scoville Rating.

Here are some of the most common chili peppers you might find in grocery stores, either in fresh or dried form, in order of heat:

Bell Pepper - Scoville 0 - green, yellow, orange or red bell peppers are all chilis, but have no heat at all.

Poblano - Scoville 1,000-2,000 - large, heart-shaped, dark green fruit, extremely popular in Mexico. Often used to make chiles rellenos. When dried, it is referred to as an **ancho** or **mulato**.

Jalapeño - Scoville 2,500-8,000 - good amount of heat and rich flavor, with a heat level from mild to hot depending on cultivation and preparation. A smoke-dried ripe jalapeño is referred to as a **Chipotle**.

Serrano - Scoville 10,000-25,000 - thin, tapered fruit turns red when mature which does not need to be peeled before use. Commonly used in making pico de gallo and salsa. It is one of the most-used chili peppers in Mexican cuisine.

Thai Chili or Birdseye Chili - Scoville 50,000-100,000 - very small, but very hot. Used widely in Vietnamese and Thai cooking to add heat.

Habanero or Scotch Bonnet - Scoville 100,000-350,000 - small and orange when ripe, this is the hottest of the commonly available chilis. Handle with care!

Beef Stew

Beef stew is an easy and very warming thing to cook for dinner on a cold winter evening. It benefits from long simmering, so you can start it right after lunch and it will be perfect by dinner time. I haven't included quantities for most of the ingredients, because it's not really critical. Use what you like, and can find in the grocery store. Make lots of stew, and freeze some for later on…

Ingredients:

Stew Beef - I usually use 1-2lb
Small potatoes (or cut up larger ones into 1" chunks)
Mushrooms, sliced - wash them first
Carrots, peeled and cut into 1" pieces (or use baby carrots)
Pearl onions (or just peel small onions, about 1" diameter)
2-3 Bay Leaves (be sure to fish them out at the end)
1 Tb Basil
1-2 tsp Kosher Salt
Ground Black Pepper to taste
Water or Beef Broth or Beef Boullion cubes to add to the water

Notes:

- If you can't find stew beef, buy cheap steak about 1" thick and cut up into 1" cubes.
- Use lamb instead of beef if you like. If you do, add a little Rosemary to the stew.
- Some people like to add crushed tomatoes to stew. I don't.

Method:

- Prepare the vegetables (wash, peel, cut into cubes, etc).
- You can peel the potatoes if you like, or leave the skins on.
- Heat a large pot over medium-high heat.
- Brown the meat in the pot - give each side of the cubes a minute or two, then turn until all sides are browned.
- Put the rest of the ingredients into the pot.
- Add liquid to just cover the ingredients - you're making stew, not soup, so don't overdo the liquid. You can just use water, but I prefer the added flavor from prepared beef stock, or I'll add a couple of beef bouillon cubes to the water.
- Bring the stew to a boil over high heat.
- Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let it simmer.
- After the potatoes are cooked through - an hour or so - mash a few of them in the pot to thicken the stew.
- The stew is done at that point, but it's better the longer it cooks.

Spare Rib Sauce

My mother always made this sauce to eat with Spare Ribs or Pork Chops. It's sweet and tangy and better than any bottled sauce.

Ingredients:

1 20oz can Crushed Pineapple
½ cup Dark Brown Sugar
½ cup Red Wine Vinegar or Apple Cider Vinegar (to taste)
1 tsp Mustard Powder (Coleman's is best, but use what you have)
1 Tb Cornstarch (maybe - see below)

Method:

- Open the can of pineapple and heat it in a pot until boiling.
- Add the brown sugar and mustard powder and stir to dissolve.
- Add in the vinegar - you might not need the entire amount, so add half of it and taste - you can always add more.
- Return to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer.
- Mix the cornstarch with water to make a medium-thick slurry.
- Slowly drip the cornstarch into the sauce, a little at time, stirring all the time. The sauce will thicken quickly - when it's as thick as you like (I like it slightly thicker than maple syrup), stop.
- I usually mix up some more hot mustard powder with water or vinegar, and put it in a small cup for people to add as they like.

Spiedies

Spiedies are a Southern Tier variation on Shish Kabob.

Ingredients:

2 pounds of meat, cut in 1-2" cubes - beef, chicken or lamb
8 bay leaves (crumbled up)
4 teaspoons (20 ml) oregano
8 small cloves of fresh garlic, minced
1/2 cup (120 ml) lemon juice
1/2 cup (120 ml) salad oil or fruity olive oil (preferred)
3/4 cup (180 ml) vinegar (any variety)
1 teaspoon (5 ml) pepper
3 teaspoon (15 ml) salt (or to taste)
(If using lamb, try adding a couple of mint leaves)

Method:

- Mix all of the ingredients, and marinate the meat overnight.
- Grill the meat on skewers until done.
- Serve the spiedies on split French or Italian Bread.

Spaghetti Sauce

My grandmother Sadye made only Jewish food - her recipes are elsewhere in this book. On the other hand, Grandma Rose made some of the best Italian food - not that she was Italian, she just liked cooking Italian. This is her recipe for Spaghetti Sauce. It works equally well over any sort of pasta, and you can also use it in Lasagna (page 19).

Ingredients:

- 1-2 Tb oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 5-6 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
- 1 Green Bell Pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 Tb Oregano
- 1 Tb Basil
- 1 20oz can of Tomato Puree or Crushed Tomatoes
- 1 lb Ground Beef (80-85% lean is fine) or ground turkey
- 1 lb Italian Sausage, cut into 1" pieces (optional - I like it hot)

Method:

- Heat oil in frying pan over medium-high heat until shimmering
- Cook onion until translucent
- Add garlic and peppers, cook until green peppers are soft.
- Add ground meat and cook until brown and broken up.
  (Note: if you use turkey as a lower calorie option, it won't brown like beef does. Just cook it until it doesn't look raw.)
- Add tomatoes, sausage pieces and herbs and spices.
- Bring to a boil, then lower heat to low and simmer for at least half an hour - an hour wouldn't be too much.

This sauce freezes well, so make lots and freeze it for later.

Spare Ribs (or Pork Ribs in general)

I love pork spare ribs. You can cook them on the barbecue or campfire, bake them in the oven or roast them in a roaster.

Ingredients:

- Pork Ribs - "Baby Back Ribs" are the uppermost part of the ribs, next to the spine; "Spare ribs" or "St Louis Ribs" are from further down the side.
- Garlic Powder

Method: Rub the ribs with garlic powder, then cook the ribs to a temperature of 140° on a barbecue or in a 325° oven or under a broiler. Serve with Spare Rib Sauce (page 31).

Chicken Soup with Matzo Balls

A traditional Jewish comfort food, chicken soup has been called "Jewish Penicillin". Matzo Balls just add to the goodness…

Soup Ingredients:

- 1 Chicken - pick one which is about 3-3½ pounds
- 2-3 Carrots, peeled and cut into 1" lengths (or ~12 baby carrots)
- 2 Parsnips, peeled and cut into 1" lengths
- 2 Turnips, sliced into ½" thick slices
- 8-10 small onions, peeled (remove the papery outside)
- 2-3 stalks of celery, cut into 1" lengths
- ~1 gal Water or Chicken broth or stock or Chicken Bullion Cubes
- 3-4 stalks of Fresh Dill, chopped, or 1T dried Dill (fresh is better)
- Salt and pepper to taste (note - prepared stock probably has salt)

Matzo Ball Ingredients:

- Box of Matzo Ball Mix (I like Manischewitz brand)
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil

Method:

- Prepare the vegetables and add to a large soup pot
- Cut the chicken in quarters (see the note about food safety)
- If you want, you can get mesh cooking bags for the chicken
- Put the chicken quarters in the pot
- Add liquid to more than cover - you are making soup, not stew
- Bring the soup to a boil over high heat
- Reduce heat to simmer
- Cover the pot and let it cook for an hour or more (more is better)
- Add the contents of one packet of matzo ball mix, the eggs and the oil to a bowl and stir with a fork until evenly mixed.
- Cover and chill the bowl in refrigerator until the chicken soup is ready - the mix needs at least 15 minutes to cool.
- After at least an hour's cooking, check the chicken. It should fall off the bones. If not, then cook longer. If it's ready, take the chicken quarters out of the soup pot with tongs (very hot!), and remove the bones. Return the meat to the pot.
- Add salt and pepper to taste, if needed.
- Check the vegetables at this point, too - they should be soft.
- Form the matzo ball mix into roughly 1" balls - you can use a melon baller or roll in your hands (more fun)
- Make sure the soup is just simmering, and drop the balls in.
- Cook for about 20 minutes, until the matzo balls are cooked.
- Add the fresh dill and serve.

Chiles Rellenos

My version of Chiles Rellenos (pronounced "ray-yay-nose") is more of a casserole than the traditional fried stuffed chile recipe you'll find in a Mexican restaurant.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 pound Chorizo sausage (you could use ground beef)
4 poblano chiles or 6 Anaheims - Hatch is better, but rare
- cut in half, remove stems and seeds.
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
1 teaspoon oregano
1 tablespoon cilantro
¾ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (or more, if you want more heat)
1 tablespoon Chili Powder
1 20-ounce can of crushed or diced tomatoes
2 cups Mexican Mix shredded cheese (or Montery Jack)

Method:

- Heat oven to 450 degrees.
- Heat oil in skillet over medium heat until shimmering.
- Add onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
- Stir in chorizo, breaking up meat into small pieces, and cook until no longer pink, 8 to 10 minutes.
- Using slotted spoon, transfer beef mixture to paper towel–lined plate.
- Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from skillet.
- Put the chorizo back in the pan, stir in garlic, cumin, salt, oregano, cilantro, pepper and cayenne.
- Cook until fragrant, about a minute.
- Use some oil or butter to grease a 13x9" baking dish
- Put the chiles in the bottom of the pan.
- Fill the chiles with the chorizo mixture.
- Mix the chili powder and the tomatoes.
- Pour the tomatoes over the chorizo-filled chiles
- Put the cheese on top.
- Bake until cheese is melted and top is browned, about 15-20 minutes.

- put them all in separate bowls except for the habañeros and garlic which can go together.
- Chop the sausage into half-inch pieces.
- Mix the salt, thyme, oregano, Gumbo File, and the white, black, and cayenne peppers together in a cup and set it to one side (you'll need your hands free later).
- Put the chicken stock into a large soup pot and bring it to the boil, then reduce the heat to a low, slow simmer and leave it on the back burner
- You're going to make a roux, now (see page 24). Using a medium to medium-high heat, melt three-quarters of a cup of butter in a large, heavy skillet until it starts to bubble.
- Gradually add the flour using a whisk and stir constantly until the resulting roux is a dark-ish, red-ish brown. Remove the skillet from the heat, but keep on stirring until it's cooled down enough so that the mixture won't stick to it and burn.
- Maintain the stock at a low simmer and add the roux, stirring it in one spoonful at a time, and waiting for each spoonful to dissolve before adding the next.
- Clean the skillet, put it on a medium-high to high heat, and melt a chunk of butter. Stirring all the time, saute the celery for one minute, add the bell peppers and saute for one and a half minutes, add the onions and saute for one and a half minutes, then add the scotch bonnets and garlic along with the mixture of herbs, salt, and pepper and saute for one more minute. Finally, add a slosh of sherry and keep stirring until it's all evaporated, then chuck the whole lot into the pot with the stock.
- Break the bacon into half-inch pieces and toss them into the stock, followed by the sausage, the Worcestershire Sauce and the bay leaves.
- Cover the pot and leave on a low simmer.
- Return the skillet to a medium-high to high heat and melt another chunk of butter. Saute the mushrooms until they're golden brown and squealing for more, then use them to swell the contents of the soup pot.
- Simmer the whole mixture (stirring often) for at least one hour.
- Add the shrimp, scallops, and fish. Bring to the boil then return to a simmer. Maintain the simmer until the seafood is cooked (around fifteen minutes).
- You can serve the Gumbo alone, or over rice or with French bread.

Seafood Gumbo

Gumbo is a Cajun or Creole dish from New Orleans, featuring fish and meat and veggies and, of course, Gumbo Filé (see page 7). It's warming, filling, full of flavor and a bit hot. This is one of the most complicated recipes I make, and there are lots of special ingredients, so I don't do it very often. When I do decide to make some Gumbo, it's always worth the time and effort. This recipe serves six to eight people - if there is some left over, it freezes well for later.

Ingredients: Vegetables:

- 2 cups onions, diced
- 1½ cups green bell peppers, diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 2 cups button mushrooms, halved
- 3 large cloves garlic, finely minced
- 2 habañeros (hot peppers), finely diced (only one for less heat)

Ingredients: Meat and Fish:

10 thick-cut bacon slices
1 pound Andouille (Cajun-style) sausage
1 pound peeled, medium-sized shrimp (you can buy frozen)
½ pound scallops
¾ pound white fish, cut into slices

Ingredients: Other:

5½ cups (1 quart plus 1½ cups) of chicken stock
Lots of butter
¾ cup flour
1 bottle dry sherry
2 bay leaves
½ teaspoon thyme
½ teaspoon oregano
½ teaspoon salt
1½ teaspoons white pepper
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 teaspoons Gumbo Filé
2 teaspoons Worcestershire Sauce (I like Lea and Perrins)

Method:

- Grill the bacon until it's crispy and crunchy, then put it on paper towels on a plate to cool.
- Prepare all of the vegetables, mushrooms, habañeros, and garlic

Chili

I like my chili on the spicy hot side. If you're not as heat-tolerant, use fewer chili peppers and scrape the membranes out of the chilis before you chop them. If you like more heat, consider making the chili somewhat hot and then add hot sauce later on - it's always easier to add heat than to take it out.

Ingredients:

1 20-ounce can of crushed or diced tomatoes or tomato puree
3 cans of beans - mix them up - Black, White, Red, Pinto...
1 pound ground beef (80-85% lean is fine). Use ground turkey or ground chicken for a lower-calorie alternative.
1 Green Bell pepper, seeded and chopped
2-3 each of three different kinds of chili peppers. Use more types if you like - see what you can find at your local market. I use jalapeño, serrano, long hot, poblano and habaneros, mostly.
1 large onion, chopped
5-7 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
2-3 Tb Chili Powder (lots – adds flavor, not heat)
1 Tb Basil
1 Tb Oregano
2 Tb Cilantro (or 1 cup fresh Cilantro leaves, chopped fine)
1 Tb Dried Red Pepper or 1-2 tsp Cayenne (to taste)
Salt to taste
1-2 Tb oil
1 bag Mexican mix shredded cheese, if you like

Method:

- Slice the chilis and bell pepper in half and remove seeds, then chop them up into ¼-½" pieces. If you prefer a less-hot chili, remove some or all of the membranes from the hot peppers before you chop them.
- Heat the oil in a pan, then cook onions until translucent.
- Add garlic and peppers, cook until green peppers are soft.
- Add ground meat and cook until brown and broken up.
- Add tomatoes, beans and herbs and spices.
- Cover and simmer for at least half an hour (one hour is better), until all the flavors have run together and the beans are nice and soft. From time to time, taste and add chili powder or cayenne/red pepper or salt as needed.
- When it's done, serve with shredded cheese as a topping.

Cole Slaw

This is a quick and easy side dish, as made by my grandmother Rose. Cabbages vary widely in size, so you'll start with whatever you have, then add the liquid ingredients accordingly.

Ingredients:

One head of cabbage
A couple of carrots
Miracle Whip
- if you can't get that, use Mayonnaise and a bit of lemon
Red Wine Vinegar or Apple Cider Vinegar

Method:

- Chop the cabbage and carrots. It's up to you how large you like the pieces of slaw - personally, I like it kind of chunky. If you have a food processor, that's a good way to chop the cabbage and carrots - but don't go overboard. This is supposed to be a salad, not a soup.
- Stir in equal amounts, by volume, of Miracle Whip and vinegar. Start with a cup of each and see how it turns out. If that's not enough, add a half cup of each, stir and repeat.

Hamburgers

Everyone likes a good burger. Instead of buying pre-made burger patties, I always start with ground beef and make my own. The supermarket will offer ground beef with various percentages of lean meat. Usually, the cheapest is 80-85% lean, going up to 95% for the most expensive. Fat adds flavor, so the cheapest may actually be the most flavorful, while the higher-percentage lean meat may be healthier (and will certainly lose less weight in cooking).

Experiment with adding some or all of these things to your meat before you make and cook the hamburgers:

- Basil
- Worcestershire Sauce (Lea & Perrin's is the original)
- Seasoned Salt (I like Lowry's)
- Dried chopped onion
- Garlic powder

Melt some American cheese on top, add a slice of Vidalia or Sweet Onion, put it in a bun with ketchup… doesn't get better than that!

Sausage Stuffed Apples

I've made these at home, but they're are equally good made in a Dutch Oven over a campfire.

Ingredients:

4 Apples - Red Delicious, MacIntosh, whatever you like
1 tsp Lemon Juice
5 Sausage links - I like Hot Italian or Chorizo, others will do.
1 cup Rice
1 Onion, diced
1 Celery Stalk, diced
3 oz. grated Sharp Cheddar Cheese
1 Tb chopped Walnuts
1 Tb Raisins
2 egg whites, beaten
¼ tsp Allspice
Salt and Pepper to taste

Method:

- Core apples, leaving bottom intact.
- Hollow out the center of each apple, leaving the sides thick enough to hold together while cooking.
- Peel each apple halfway down from the open top, and rub with lemon juice. Set aside.
- Cook the rice - to get one cup of cooked rice, start with 1/3 cup uncooked rice. Boil for approximately 20 minutes - as the time approaches, try a grain of rice to see if it's done. Bite it in half - if it's done, there won't be a white spot in the center. Drain the rice.
- Brown the sausage, drain the fat, chop the cooked links.
- Mix all of the ingredients together.
- Stuff the apples with the mixture, pushing it firmly into the inside of the apples. It's OK if it sticks out of the top a bit.
- Bake at 375° for 15 minutes, or until golden brown.

Cooking is like painting or writing a song. Just as there are only so many notes or colors, there are only so many flavors - it's how you combine them that sets you apart.

Wolfgang Puck

Salsa

Home-made Salsa beats the stuff in jars in every way. You can make your Salsa as hot or mild as you like by varying the kind and number of chili peppers you use. You can also regulate the heat by varying the amount of membrane you leave inside the chilis - since most of the heat is in the membrane, scrape it out before chopping for less heat, or include it all for more heat. Remove the seeds from the chilis, regardless. They don't add much if any flavor and add a hard texture.

The easiest way to make Salsa is with a food processor or blender, but you can do the chopping manually if you don't have one of them.

Ingredients:

- 1-1½ pound Roma or Plum Tomatoes - the firm, egg-shaped ones
- 1 large Onion, chopped fine
- 3-5 cloves Garlic, crushed or minced
- 4-6 Chili Peppers, more or less, to taste - I like to mix things up, using at least three different kinds of chilis. My favorites for Salsa are Jalapeño, Serrano, Habanero, Long Hot and Thai Birdseye, but you can choose peppers which are more or less hot. Use a Green or Orange Bell Pepper for the least heat.
- 1 tsp Cumin
- 1 tsp Kosher Salt
- 1 tsp Black Pepper
- 1 tsp Cayenne Pepper if you like more heat - optional
- ½ cup Lime Juice - squeeze it fresh, or use a bottled product

Method: (food processor)

- Cut the tomatoes in quarters. I usually put half of the tomatoes in the food processor and blend them up smoothly.
- Add the peppers, onion and garlic to the food processor and pulse a few times to break them up.
- Add the lime juice and spices with the rest of the tomatoes and pulse to mix and chop up the tomatoes. That way, half the tomatoes remain chunky in the final Salsa.
- Taste and adjust the salt, heat and lime juice as needed.

If you don't have a food processor, just chop everything by hand as finely as you can and mix together in a bowl with the lime juice and spices.

Heartburn Special

My Scouts named this many years ago. It's a variation on the "Sloppy Joe", with some added heat, bread and cheese. To make this quicker and easier I usually start with a jar of commercial sauce rather than make my own from tomatoes. If the basic recipe seems a lot like my chili or spaghetti sauce, that's because it is. The add-ins differ, but the base is the same.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground beef (any kind - 80% lean is fine)
- 1 jar spaghetti sauce (I like Prego brand)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 5-6 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
- 1 Green Bell Pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2-3 chili peppers, seeded and chopped - whatever sort you like
- 1 T Oregano
- 1 T Basil
- 1 T Chili Powder
- 1 tsp Cayenne Pepper or dried Red Pepper for heat - to taste
- 1 T oil
- Sliced American Cheese (individually wrapped slices will do)
- Sliced white bread - you'll need 3-4 slices, probably, plus some to serve it on.

Method:

- Heat the oil in a skillet until it shimmers
- Cook the onions until translucent
- Add the peppers and cook until the Bell Pepper is soft
- Add the garlic and cook for a minute
- Add the ground beef and cook until brown and separated
- Add the spaghetti sauce and herbs and spices.
- Cook until flavors blend - 15 minutes should do.
- Add some American cheese and stir to melt it
  - 3-4 slices would be a good start, but it's up to you what looks good. Don't forget to remove the plastic wrap...
- Crumble in one slice of white bread at a time, mixing in as it absorbs the liquid and thickens. Add slices until the consistency looks right. You're going for something looser than Play-doh, but thicker than chili.
- Spoon out the mixture onto slices of white bread and serve.

Have some hot sauce available for those who like things spicy.

Jalapeño Poppers

This is a favorite finger food for parties. It's best made in an air fryer, if you have one, but if not you can bake it in an oven or in a broiler. The recipe makes a dozen Poppers.

Ingredients:

6 large Jalapeños, cut in half and seeds removed
8 ounces Cream Cheese (I like Philadelphia brand)
½ tsp Salt
½ tsp Black Pepper
½ tsp Onion Powder
½ tsp Garlic Powder
½ cup Mexican Mix shredded cheese
Optional: 12 strips of bacon or bacon bits

Method:

- Soften cream cheese (microwave 30 sec in a bowl or leave on counter half an hour)
- Add salt, pepper, onion and garlic powder to cream cheese
- Add shredded cheese to cream cheese
- Mix with fork until completely combined
- Fill the jalapeños with the cheese mixture - feel free to overfill
- If you want to make bacon-wrapped poppers, wrap each popper in a strip of bacon. Or, sprinkle some bacon bits on top of the poppers.
- Place the poppers in the air fryer, fry at 390° for 7 minutes. if bacon-wrapped, you may need a bit more time. If you don't have an air fryer, use a broiler or oven and cook until the tops are browned and the peppers cooked.

Roast Beast

"The Whos down in Whoville would feast, on Who-pudding and rare Who Roast Beast - which was something the Grinch couldn't stand in the least!" My beast is usually a cow ("beef", since we always use Norman French terms for cooked meat), but with a few variations the same recipe will work equally well with a leg of lamb. Here's how my mother always made Roast Beef:

Ingredients:

Roast Beef - I usually get Chuck or Round. Sirloin is more expensive and has less fat (and fat equals flavor).
1 head of Garlic - always use fresh garlic. Peel all the cloves.

Method:

- If you have a "rolled roast" held together with string, leave the string in place. You can cut it as you carve the roast.
- Preheat the oven to 450°
- Slice garlic cloves into slivers
- Use a pointed paring knife to cut a series of slits all over the roast
- Insert a sliver of garlic into each slit
- Put the remaining peeled garlic cloves into a roasting pan or oven-proof pan (I usually use a cast-iron skillet), and put the roast on top of the garlic cloves.
- If you have a remote-reading thermometer, put the probe into the roast - the tip of the probe should be centered in the meat - and set the alarm to the desired doneness or temperature.
- Put the roast in the heated oven, and turn the heat down to 325°.
- Cook the roast until it has a temperature of 130° for rare, 140° for medium rare or 145° for medium.
  If you don't have a thermometer (you really should), then you'll have to go by time alone - about 20 minutes per pound.
- When it's done, take the roast out of the oven (careful - the pan is really hot!), put it on a cutting board and let it rest for at least five minutes before you carve. Take the roasted garlic out at the same time, and set it aside to eat with the roast - it's delicious!
- Now, you'll make a roux in the pan (see page 24), using half a stick (4 Tb) of butter and 4 Tb flour. Mix in the juices from the carving board, and you've got your gravy.

Variation for Leg of Lamb: Instead inserting of slivers of garlic, I usually coat the leg with mint jelly and sprinkle with Garlic Powder and Rosemary before roasting. Roast to 135° internal temperature.

Rasta Pasta

Rasta Pasta is a creamy pasta dish with Caribbean-style jerk chicken. I first ate this at a restaurant at the Carousel Mall in Syracuse, where they called it "Rattlesnake Pasta". There are a number of variations out there, but I like this one.

Ingredients:

1 pound pasta - Penne or Rigatoni are traditional
2 Chicken Breasts, cut into roughly 1" cubes
2 Tb vegetable oil
3 Tb Jerk Seasoning
3 Bell Peppers, sliced - preferably, Red, Yellow & Green for color
½ cup Green Onions, sliced
2 cloves Garlic, minced
¼ cup Chicken Stock
½ cup Heavy Cream
½ cup Parmesan Cheese, grated

Method:

- Cook pasta "al dente" according to the instructions.
- Toss the chicken in a bowl with 1½ Tb Jerk Seasoning.
- Cook the chicken in 1 Tb oil until golden and cooked through.
- Remove chicken from pot and set aside for later.
- Heat remaining oil, then sauté peppers and green onions.
- Add the garlic and cook until it's fragrant.
- Add the rest of the Jerk Seasoning to the pot. Stir in.
- Add the heavy cream and stock to the pot, put the chicken in.
- Simmer for a few minutes until the sauce thickens.
- Mix in the parmesan cheese.
- Mix in the cooked pasta.
- Serve hot

Roux

Roux (pronounced "roo") isn't a dish itself. Instead, it's the base for many other dishes, especially in Cajun cooking, and it's the starter for most meat gravies and other sauces.

You make a roux by melting butter in a skillet over medium-high heat, then adding the same amount of flour (in other words, for two tablespoons of butter, you add two tablespoons of flour). Stir constantly as the flour cooks. It will start to get darker in color - the darker it is, the more flavor but the less thickening effect. For gravy you want a light brown roux, Cajun cooking often uses brick red.

Kasha Varnishkes

Kasha is Buckwheat Groats - the hulled seeds of buckwheat, a plant related to rhubarb and one of the oldest known food staples in Eastern European cuisine. Kasha is popular with descendants of Ashkenazi and Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia. The grain is mixed with egg and toasted, then caramelized onions are added and the mixture is steamed in chicken broth. Varniskes are just bowtie noodles.

Ingredients:

2 large onions, sliced in rounds
2-3 Tb butter
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup medium or coarse Kasha (I like Wolff's brand)
2 cups chicken stock or broth
Salt and pepper to taste
¾ lb noodles - bow ties are traditional, my mother used shells
2 Tb parsley

Method:

- Melt butter in a frying pan.
- Saute the onions until golden brown. Remove to a plate.
- Beat the egg in a small bowl, then stir in the Kasha
- Mix, making sure that all the grains of Kasha are coated.
- Turn the heat up to high, put the Kasha in the frying pan.
- Flatten, stir and break up the egg-coated Kasha with a fork or wooden spoon until the egg has dried on the Kasha and the kernels brown and mostly separate. This will take 2-4 minutes.
- Add the liquid (stock or water), salt and pepper, and bring to a boil.
- Add the onions, cover lightly and reduce heat to low.
- Cook over low heat, steaming the Kasha for 10 minutes.
- While the Kasha is steaming, cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package. When they're done, drain the water from the noodles in a colander.
- Remove the cover on the frying pan, stir the Kasha and see if the kernels are tender and the liquid has been absorbed. If not, cover and continue steaming for 3-5 minutes more.
- When the Kasha is ready, combine with the noodles, sprinkle with the parsley, and serve.

Kofta Kebabs

Kofta (or Kefta) is a Middle Eastern meat dish, usually in the form of a hamburger or large meatball or a small meatloaf. I usually eat them with a yogurt sauce or tzatziki and a side of Basmati Rice, or you can eat Kofta in a slice of Pita Bread.

Ingredients:

1 lb ground beef (ground lamb is also a possibility)
3-5 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
¼ cup chopped fresh Cilantro or 1 Tb dried Cilantro
2 Tb plain yogurt (full-fat is best)
1 tsp Cumin
1 tsp Paprika
1 tsp Curry Powder
a pinch of Turmeric
1 tsp Tomato Paste
1 Tb Hot Salsa (or medium salsa, to taste)
Salt and pepper to taste

Yogurt Sauce:

½ cup plain yogurt (since you're not cooking it, low fat's OK)
½ cup chopped fresh Dill, or 2 Tb dried Dill Weed

Method:

- Mix everything together in a bowl.
- Form into six loaf-shaped patties or large meatballs or four hamburgers (which is what I usually do)
- Broil or fry the Kofta to desired doneness, turning once.
- Serve with yogurt sauce and a side of rice

This recipe comes from a cookbook I bought in Israel. It notes that it's common to find this in the Old City of Jerusalem used as a filling for baked potatoes. I haven't tried it that way, but it sounds good. The method for that is:

- Boil or steam medium sized potatoes until tender yet firm.
- Hollow out the insides of the potatoes, leaving a ¾" wall.
- Fill the hollow in each potato with the Kofta mix, pack tightly.
- Place the stuffed potatoes in a baking dish, drizzle with olive oil.
- Bake in 375° oven for 25-35 minutes, until potatoes are golden brown and meat is cooked through.

Noodles Romano

My mother and I found this in a cookbook when I was about twelve. I've made it ever since. It's simple and very tasty.

Ingredients:

Half a bag of fine egg noodles (or any other sort of noodles)
4 Tb Butter (that's half a stick)
4-6 cloves of fresh Garlic, crushed or minced
1 Tb Basil

Method:

- Cook the noodles in boiling water according to the instructions.
- While the noodles are cooking, melt the butter in a small pan.
- Add the garlic and basil to the melted butter and cook for a few minutes, until the garlic is soft and the butter is well flavored.
- When the noodles are done, drain them and put back in the pot.
- Pour the butter/garlic/basil over the noodles.
- Serve with Parmesan Cheese.

Omelets

There are many kinds of omelets. Western omelets have ham, green peppers and onions, Italian omelets have sausage, onions and cheese, Mediterraneans, feta and spinach - try your own combinations.

Ingredients: 2 eggs
1 tsp Basil
1 Tb butter
Filling (see below)

Method:

- Break eggs into a bowl.
- Mix in the Basil and beat the egg mixture to combine
- Melt butter in frying pan over medium-high heat.
- Pour eggs into the pan. *Don't stir* - swish the pan around until the eggs cover the bottom of the pan.
- When the top of the eggs starts to show bubbles and the egg is mostly solidified, spread the filling on one side of the pan.
- Fold the egg on the other side of the pan on top of filling and cook until the inside of the omelets is done.

Fillings: Any one or more of these:

Meat: Pepperoni - Ham - Bacon - crumbled or sliced Sausage
Veggies: Green Peppers - Chili Peppers - Salsa - Onions - Broccoli Spinach - Tomatoes - Potatoes - Mushrooms

Noodle Kugel

Kugel is a baked casserole with starch (usually noodles or potatoes), eggs and fat. While that's the base, kugels have many variations, from savory to sweet. This is my Aunt Bea's recipe for a savory Noodle Kugel with mushrooms and onions.

Ingredients:

- 2 medium onions, sliced thin
- 4 Tablespoon butter
- 1 6 ounce can of sliced mushrooms, drained
- ½ pound broad egg noodles
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon breadcrumbs

Method:

- Melt the butter in a frying pan.
- Sauté onions over medium heat until tender (about 10 mins)
- Add mushrooms and sauté another 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- While cooking the onions and mushrooms, cook the noodles in boiling water for five minutes, then drain.
- In a large bowl, beat the eggs lightly.
- Add the cooked noodles to the eggs, onion and mushroom mixture and salt. Mix thoroughly.
- Grease a shallow 1½ quart baking dish with butter.
- Pour the noodle mixture into the baking dish.
- Sprinkle the dish with the breadcrumbs.
- Bake in 375° oven for 50 minutes, or until lightly browned.
- Serve hot

Noodles and Cottage Cheese

This is an easy side dish, and one of my favorites. My mother used to make it with Pot Cheese, which is a sort of dryer version of Cottage Cheese, but I haven't been able to find any of that in stores. It's either a New York City thing, or they just don't make it any more. In any case, regular Cottage Cheese works just as well - use full-fat cheese because the nonfat version just clumps up and doesn't cook.

The ingredients and method is simplicity itself:

- Cook a package of Extra Broad Egg Noodles and drain.
- Mix in a container of Cottage Cheese.

I like to grind some Black Pepper on top, but that's up to you.

Lasagna

This is my mother's recipe for lasagna, except that she used ground beef where I use hot Italian sausage.

Ingredients:

- 1-2 Tb oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 5-6 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
- 1 Green Bell Pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 Tb Oregano
- 1 Tb Basil
- 1 20oz can of Tomato Puree
  - or, you can use one bottle of spaghetti sauce (I like Prego)
- 1 lb hot Italian Sausage (or ground beef)
- 1 tub of Ricotta Cheese
- 1 box of Lasagna Noodles
- 1 package of shredded mozzarella cheese

Preparation Method:

- Heat oil in frying pan until it's shimmering
- Cook onion until translucent
- Add garlic and peppers, cook until green peppers are soft.
- Add hot Italian sausage and cook until brown and broken up.
- Add tomatoes and herbs and spices.
- Cook until flavors blend, 10-15 minutes should do.

Now, build the Lasagna:

- Grease the sides and bottom of a large baking pan with butter
- Use some of the tomato/meat mixture to make a layer.
- Cover the layer with lasagna noodles (no need to cook them)
- Cover the lasagna noodles with a layer of Ricotta
- Cover the Ricotta with a layer of lasagna noodles.
- Do it over again - tomato/meat, noodles, Ricotta, noodles - until the pan is nearly full. The last top layer should be a tomato/meat layer.
- Cover the top with shredded mozzarella.
- Bake for about 50 minutes in an oven preheated to 375°. Cover it with foil for the first 25 minutes, then remove foil and let it cook uncovered for the final 25 minutes.
- Allow the lasagna to rest at room temperature for about 15 minutes before you cut into it. This will let it set up, so that you can remove firm slices of Lasagna.

Latkes (Potato Pancakes)

Latkes are traditionally served during Hanukkah, but really they're a great side dish with dinner any time of year.

Ingredients:

3 medium russet potatoes, peeled
1 large egg, beaten
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon grated or finely chopped onion
½ teaspoon salt, or to taste
¼ cup oil for frying, as needed

Method:

- Slice peeled potatoes and grate or run through a food processor fitted with the grater attachment.
- Place shredded potatoes in a cheesecloth or towel and wring, extracting as much moisture as possible.
- Place 2 cups shredded, drained potatoes into a medium bowl
- Add egg, flour, onion, and salt, and stir until well combined.
- Heat 1/4 inch of oil in a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat.
- Place large spoonfuls of potato mixture into the hot oil, pressing down on them to form ¼"-½" thick patties.
- Cook until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes.
- Flip and repeat on the other side.
- Remove to a paper towel-lined plate to drain while you cook any remaining latkes. Serve hot.

Lemon French Salad Dressing

I first made this dressing for my grandfather when I was about ten, and his doctor put him on a diet. It's simple and good, and if you make it with artificial sweetener, fairly low-calorie.

Ingredients:

1 cup lemon juice (you can squeeze it, but just buy bottled)
1 cup oil (canola oil or corn oil is fine - olive oil tends to solidify)
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp sugar or 1 packet artificial sweetener (I use Sweet'n'Low)

Method:

Put all the ingredients in a jar, shake to combine.

Matzo Brei

Matzo Brei (pronounced "mot-soh bry") is good as a side dish for dinner, but often I'll make it as a meal in itself for breakfast or lunch. This recipe makes one breakfast-sized portion, or two or three sides for dinner - for more portions just add one egg for each matzo.

Materials:

One full Matzo (about 7" square) - I like to use Egg and Onion
One egg

Method:

- Break up matzo into a bowl.
- Put enough water in the bowl to just cover the matzo
- Drain the water after a minute or two
- Break the egg into the bowl, mix with a fork
- Melt some butter in a frying pan
- Scramble and fry the matzo-and-egg mixture until it's cooked through. You'll learn how you like it - I like it dry and brown.
- I like my Matzo Brei with freshly ground black pepper.

As options, you can add some basil or dried onion flakes to the egg and matzo mixture before you cook it. You can even mix in some crumbled cooked bacon or bits of ham (although more observant Jews would shudder at the thought).

Matzo Meal Pancakes

Matzo pancakes are traditionally eaten at Passover. When I was young I'd always dip my pancakes in sugar. As I got older, I learned to dip them in Passover wine (a sweet Concord Grape wine) instead.

Ingredients:

4 large eggs
1/3 cup matzo meal
2 tablespoons milk
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Method:

- Separate 4 large eggs, placing the yolks and whites in two bowls
- Add 1/3 cup matzo meal, 2 Tb milk, 2 tsp sugar, and 1 tsp vanilla extract to the yolks. Whisk until combined.
- Beat the egg whites until soft peaks form, about 4 minutes.
- Fold the egg yolk mixture into the egg whites until combined.
- Spoon out pancakes onto a grill and cook.