

TASTING TABLE

COLLECTION

Chefs' HOLIDAY *Recipes*



INTRODUCTION

Ever wonder what chefs eat for the holidays?

What are their tricks for the moistest holiday roast beef, the crispest latkes, the most decadent French toast? In our brand-new Chefs' Recipes Edition Holiday Collection, a special 24-recipe holiday recipe compilation, we present beloved dishes straight from the home kitchens of some of our favorite chefs.

Bryan Voltaggio, of Range in Washington, D.C., contributes his family's favorite cranberry compote. Latin-cooking authority Maricel Presilla offers her party-ready pisco-spiked bread pudding.

From John Currence's Southern oyster-cornbread dressing to the Tasting Table Test Kitchen's classic buttery Parker House Rolls, our free digital book offers plenty of tasty ways to spread good cheer.



Editors' Favorites



Here at Tasting Table, our favorite holiday meals mix familiar dishes with new ones.

So in addition to our collection of new Chefs' Recipes tested by Tasting Table's Test Kitchen, we had each of our editors pick his or her favorite holiday recipe from the Tasting Table archives.

And because this time of year is as much about the past as it is the future, we unearthed childhood photos of each editor to accompany their chosen recipes.

Nothing quite like feeling like a kid again.



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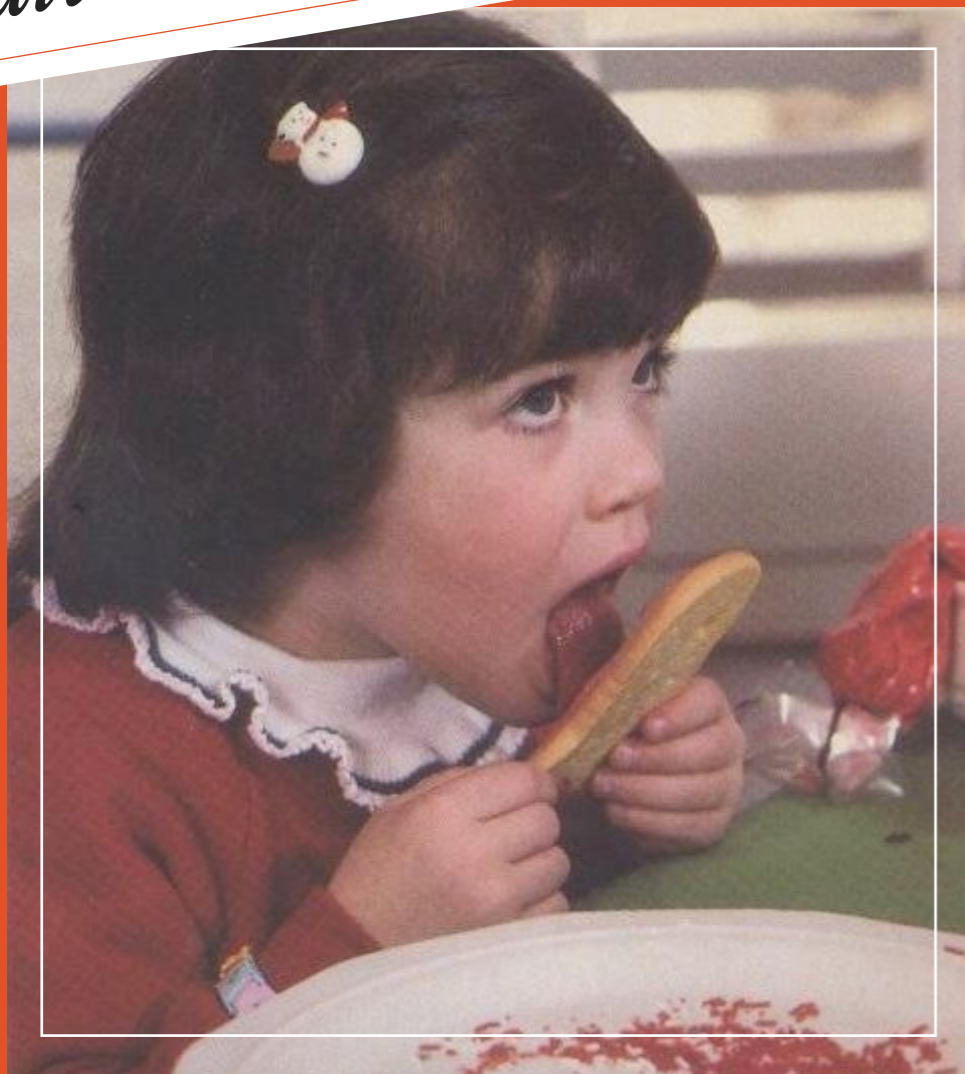
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Editors' Favorites



“Forget Christmas cards or presents: I’ve known from the age of three that seasonal energies are best spent on Christmas cookies. My parents first took notice when a basic recipe for tree-shaped sugar cookies became not just every meal, but every tree ornament and gift as well.”

Erin Hartigan

Washington, D.C. Editor

Ever since an ill-fated Thanksgiving potluck when nearly everyone brought bagged supermarket dinner rolls in lieu of the main components, I’ve taken on the role of baker. These savory scones are the ultimate crowd-pleasers. They smell like the pastry equivalent of French onion soup, and are equally appealing at breakfast, staving off afternoon hunger pangs or standing up to the main course. They’ve even dethroned pie as my family’s favorite day-after breakfast.

SEE THE RECIPE



Gruyère-and-Caramelized Onion Scones

Recipe adapted from Alyce Shields, Pronto by Bar Bambino, San Francisco, CA

Yield: 10 scones

Cook Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces, plus 1 tablespoon, divided
- 2 small yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour plus extra for shaping
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 4 ounces Gruyère cheese, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 1 cup)
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/4 cup honey
- Flaky sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. In a medium skillet set over low heat, melt 1 tablespoon of butter. Add the onions and cook,



stirring occasionally, until they are deep brown, 30 to 40 minutes. Set aside to cool.

2. While the onions cool, in a medium bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder and baking soda. Stir in the kosher salt and transfer to a food processor. Add the remaining butter pieces and pulse until the mixture is crumbly with butter pieces no larger than a small pea, six to eight 1-second pulses. Turn the butter mixture out into a large bowl and stir in the Gruyère cubes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the buttermilk and honey. Add the caramelized onions and gently stir the buttermilk mixture into the dry ingredients, mixing just to combine (a few dry spots are okay). Turn out onto a clean, lightly floured surface and gently pat into a 1 1/2-inch-thick circle. Use a lightly floured 3-inch round cutter to stamp out circles and place them 3 inches apart on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Gather the scraps and press together and stamp to make more scones. Sprinkle with sea salt and pepper and bake



until the scones are deep golden-brown and the cheese is melted and bubbly around the edges, 20 to 23 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool slightly before serving.

About the Chef

Alyce Shields is the pastry chef for both Bar Bambino and Pronto by Bar Bambino in San Francisco, California. Previously, Shields completed a stage at Café Boulud in New York City before moving to San Francisco, where she spent one year working at Firefly Restaurant and Waterbar.

***Pronto by Bar Bambino**, 2931 16th Street, San Francisco, CA;
415-701-8466 or pronto.barbambino.com*



Fuel Up for the Holiday with These
Healthful Muffins

GOJI-POPPY BRAN MUFFINS

From the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Bran muffins pretend to be healthy: While filled with fiber, they're also usually filled with fat. In this updated version, our Test Kitchen trimmed the fat by making a velvety base of Greek yogurt, skim milk, maple syrup and a smidgen of grapeseed oil. Sweetness and texture come from antioxidant-rich goji berries and crunchy poppy seeds, while aromatics and lemon zest make the muffins holiday-season appropriate. They're worth waking up for.

SEE THE RECIPE



Goji-Poppy Bran Muffins

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 12 muffins

Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- *Nonstick cooking spray*
- *1 cup goji berries*
- *¾ cup water*
- *3½ tablespoons poppy seeds, divided*
- *1 cup wheat bran*
- *1 cup whole wheat flour*
- *¾ cup all-purpose flour*
- *¾ teaspoon ground ginger*
- *½ teaspoon ground cinnamon*
- *1½ teaspoons baking powder*
- *½ teaspoon kosher salt*
- *½ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt*
- *2 tablespoons skim milk*
- *⅓ cup maple syrup*
- *2 tablespoons grapeseed oil*
- *1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest*
- *1 large egg*

- *2 teaspoons turbinado sugar*

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Spray a 12-cup standard muffin tin with nonstick spray.
2. In a medium saucepan set over medium heat, combine the goji berries and water. Bring to a simmer then remove the pan from the heat and set aside for 10 minutes. Transfer the berries to a blender and purée until completely smooth.
3. While the goji berries soak, toast 3 tablespoons poppy seeds in a small skillet set over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the poppy seeds are toasted, 4 to 5 minutes.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together the wheat bran, whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, toasted poppy seeds, ginger, cinnamon, baking powder and salt. In a large bowl, whisk together the goji purée, yogurt, milk, maple syrup, grapeseed oil, lemon zest and egg. Gently fold the dry mixture into the wet mixture until just combined. Divide the batter evenly between the muffin cups, mounding each slightly in the center.
5. In a small bowl, combine the turbinado sugar with the remaining ½ teaspoon untoasted poppy seeds. Sprinkle the muffins with the poppy-sugar mixture and place in the oven. Bake until the muffins are browned and resist light pressure, 15 to 18 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and set aside to cool slightly. Remove the muffins from the pan and serve warm or at room temperature.



Editors' Favorites



"One morning when my sister was still young enough to believe in Santa Claus, we awoke on Christmas morning at our home in Vermont and looked out our windows to see eight deer standing in our meadow. For real. It was pure magic."

Jessica Battilana

Senior Editor

Though soufflés aren't difficult to make, they're exceptionally festive. These individual blue cheese soufflés are an outstanding companion to prime rib; throw them in the oven while the meat rests, then serve straightaway, while they're still puffy and gorgeous. If you're serving vegetarians, pair the soufflés with a salad and serve as the main course.

SEE THE RECIPE



Blue Cheese Soufflés

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 6 servings

Cook Time: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 4 tablespoons finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, divided
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups whole milk, at room temperature
- 4 large eggs, separated
- 6 ounces blue cheese, crumbled
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- Ground white or black pepper, preferably white
- 1 large egg white
- Kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter. Brush six 6-ounce ramekins with the melted butter and sprinkle each ramekin evenly with 2 tablespoons of the



Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Place the ramekins on a baking sheet and set aside.

2. In a medium saucepan set over medium-low heat, melt the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter. Whisk in the flour and cook, whisking constantly, until the flour is golden, about 3 minutes. Slowly whisk in the milk, then bring the sauce to a simmer, whisking constantly until thick, 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the egg yolks, blue cheese, the remaining 2 tablespoons of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, mustard powder, cayenne and nutmeg. Season with white pepper. Transfer the mixture to a large mixing bowl.
4. In another large mixing bowl, whisk together the egg whites and a pinch of salt with a whisk or handheld mixer until soft, glossy peaks form. Using a large spatula, gently fold the egg whites into the cheese mixture in 3 additions until no streaks remain.
5. Carefully spoon the mixture into the prepared ramekins and use a damp cloth to wipe away any excess batter on the rims. Bake until puffed and golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Serve immediately.



A Party Staple Worth Reviving



PICKLED-PEPPER CHEESE BALL

From the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

With the holidays right around the corner, we dipped into our holiday entertaining arsenal to rethink the kitschy—yet lovable—party staple: the cheese ball. We combined cream cheese, sharp cheddar and just a bit of blue, but you can substitute any combination of mild and sharp cheeses. Finely chopped pickled Peppadew peppers pack a pimento cheese-style twang and a hint of festive color. Pair with water crackers and cross off one more item from your holiday party to-do list. For even more cheese ball action, [click here to view a step-by-step cheese ball-making video from Tasting Table.](#)

[SEE THE RECIPE](#)



Pickled-Pepper Cheese Ball

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: Serves 12

Cook Time: 5 minutes (plus 2 hours for chilling)

INGREDIENTS

- 8-ounce package of cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1½ cups grated sharp cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup crumbled mild blue cheese (such as Maytag Blue)
- ¾ cup finely chopped pickled peppers (such as Peppadew peppers)
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ cups walnuts
- Crackers for serving (such as water crackers)

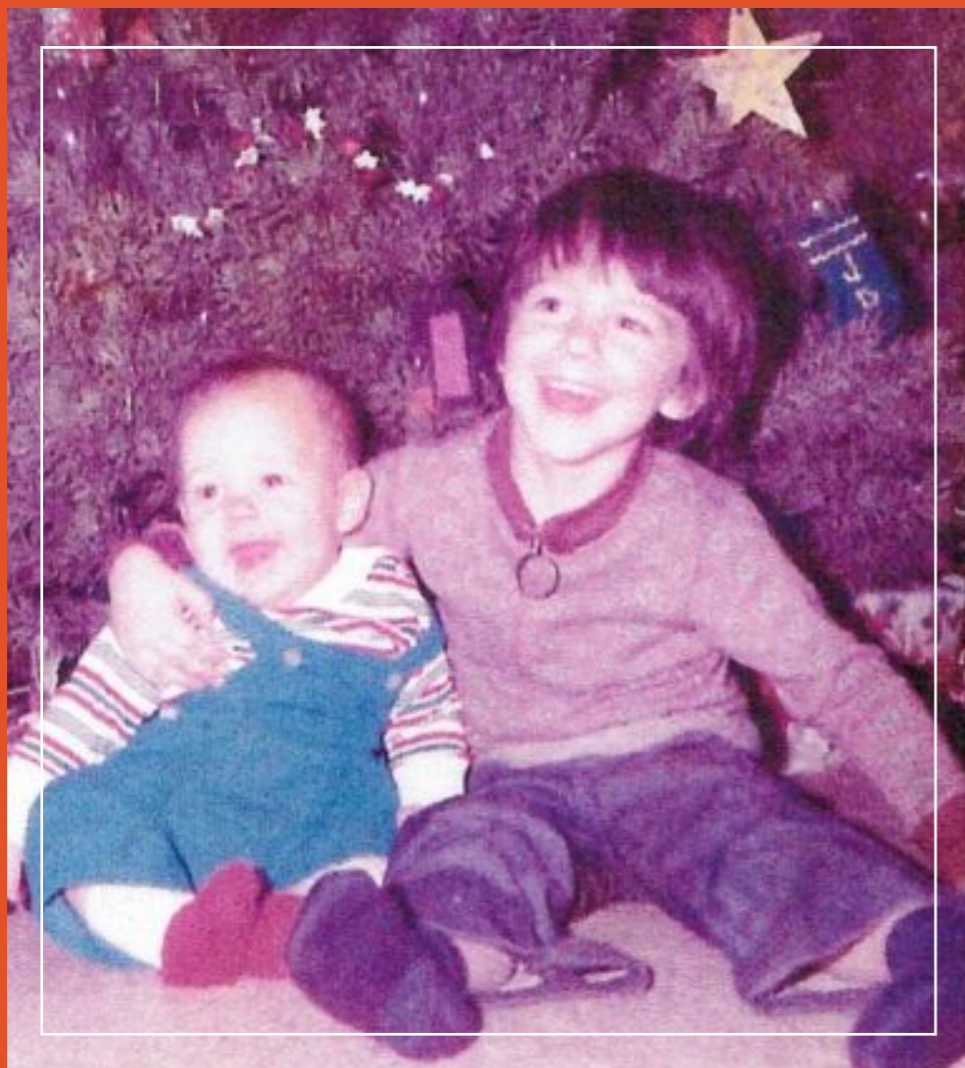
DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, use a rubber spatula to stir together the cream cheese, cheddar cheese, blue cheese, pickled peppers, lemon juice, garlic powder, salt and pepper.

2. Scrape the cheese mixture onto a sheet of plastic wrap, and use the plastic wrap to help shape it into a ball. Refrigerate the cheese ball for at least 2 hours (or overnight).
3. Preheat oven to 350°. Place the walnuts on a rimmed baking sheet and toast until lightly browned and fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and transfer the walnuts to a large cutting board. Once the walnuts are cooled, finely chop.
4. Remove the cheese ball from the refrigerator, unwrap it and then gently roll it in the nuts until the entire surface is covered. Serve with crackers.



Editors' Favorites



"Here I am rocking the bowl cut—and not for the last time."

Jonathan Kauffman

San Francisco Editor

Serving Dungeness crab at holiday feasts, during its peak season, is a San Francisco tradition that dates back generations. Some families even skip the turkey at Thanksgiving in favor of cracked crab. And crab dip always goes over well at a party—especially this great recipe, lightened with crème fraîche and spiked with lemon zest. The question isn't "Will my guests eat all of it?" It's "How early in the evening will the bowl be cleaned out?"

SEE THE RECIPE



Crab-Crème Fraîche Dip

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Toasts

- 1 baguette, cut into 1/2-inch thick slices
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- Flaky sea salt

Dip

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large shallots, finely chopped (about 3/4 cup)
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Finely grated zest from 1 medium lemon
- 1 pound jumbo lump crabmeat, picked through for shells
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped chives
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Make the toasts: Preheat the oven to 350°. Brush the baguette slices with the melted butter and sprinkle with flaky sea salt. Place on a baking sheet and bake until golden and crisp, about 10 minutes.
2. Make the dip: In a medium skillet set over medium heat, warm the olive oil. Add the shallots and cook until soft and translucent, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the cream cheese, crème fraîche, mustard, cayenne and lemon zest and cook, stirring, until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Stir in the crabmeat and chives and season with salt and pepper. Heat until the mixture is warmed through, about 1 minute. Transfer the dip to a bowl, garnish with black pepper and serve warm with the toasts.



Editors' Favorites



“Helping my mom in the kitchen was (and remains to this day) a favorite childhood activity of mine. Soon after this photo was taken, I climbed up on the counter for a more advantageous cookie-scooping/batter-tasting angle.”

Rebekah Pepler

Food Editor

Growing up in the Midwest, the holiday table (or any dinner table for that matter) wasn't complete without a kitchen towel-lined basket filled to the tipping point with piping hot dinner rolls. While the origins of these fluffy, pull-apart Parker House Rolls are based in Boston, they're equally reminiscent of the very best holiday tables of my childhood. The dough itself includes plenty of butter, but I can't resist adding a pat (or two) to the steaming center the moment I break one open—for nostalgia's sake, of course.

SEE THE RECIPE



Parker House Rolls

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 24 rolls

Cook Time: 25 minutes plus 3 hours rising and resting

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons warm water (105° to 110°)
- 1 package (2¼ teaspoons) active dry yeast
- 4 tablespoons honey, divided
- 3 cups bread flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1¾ teaspoons kosher salt
- 1¼ cups warm whole milk
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided and at room temperature
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- Flaky sea salt

DIRECTIONS

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment, whisk together the water and yeast, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm spot until the yeast blooms, about 5 minutes. Stir in 3 tablespoons of the honey.



2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the bread flour, all-purpose flour and salt. Stir the warm milk into the yeast mixture, then add the flour mixture. With the mixer on low speed, combine the mixture for 30 seconds. Cut 6 tablespoons of the butter into small cubes and add them, a little bit at a time, until the butter is completely incorporated and a smooth, soft dough forms, about 10 minutes.
3. Use a tablespoon of the butter to grease a large bowl. Add the dough ball to the buttered bowl, gently turning the ball once to coat the dough with butter. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel or plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place until the dough doubles in size, about 1½ hours.
4. Use a tablespoon of the butter to grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and use your hands to punch the dough down slightly. Use a pastry cutter or sharp knife to divide the dough into 24 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a smooth ball, covering the rolled balls with a kitchen towel or plastic wrap while you



work so they don't dry out. Arrange the balls snugly in the buttered baking dish. Cover with a kitchen towel or a piece of plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place to rise until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

5. Preheat the oven to 350°. Use the back of a knife to make a deep crease down the center of each roll and cover again for 5 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan set over medium heat, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, swirling the pan occasionally. Add the thyme and set aside for 15 minutes. Remove and discard the thyme, rewarm the butter and whisk in the remaining 1 tablespoon of honey.
6. Use a pastry brush to dab the rolls with the honey-thyme butter, then sprinkle with the flaky sea salt. Bake until the rolls are puffed and golden brown, about 20 to 25 minutes. Cool them in the pan for 5 minutes before serving.



French Toast Elvis Would Love



“My parents used to let me and my two older brothers stay up until midnight on Christmas Eve, and we would have a late-night feast of raclette (slowly melted cheese), pickles, cured meat, pâté and terrines, cheeses, toasted rustic bread and boiled potatoes. I think that they started the tradition because almost everything is cold and prepared in advance, but we came to associate it with a festive midnight meal. It makes me hungry just thinking of it.”

BANANA-BACON-STUFFED FRENCH TOAST WITH HAZELNUT-CHOCOLATE

From Chef Brad Farmerie



Every holiday season, New York City- and Napa-based chef Brad Farmerie blends batches of homemade chocolate-hazelnut spread, and his wife, Jocelyn, packages it as holiday gifts for friends and family. Farmerie is keen on adding the addicting mixture to his banana-and-bacon-stuffed French toast. We

wholly support this tack, but we're just as likely to be found scooping it straight from the jar.

SEE THE RECIPE



Banana-Bacon-Stuffed French Toast with Hazelnut-Chocolate

Recipe adapted from Brad Farmerie, The Thomas, Napa, CA

Yield: 4 servings

Cook Time: 50 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Hazelnut-chocolate spread

- 1 cup hazelnuts
- ½ pound milk chocolate, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup demerara or light brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

French toast

- 8 bacon strips
- 8 thick slices of sourdough bread (about 1 medium loaf)
- 2 large ripe bananas, peeled and thinly sliced, divided
- 4 large eggs
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- Confectioners' sugar
- Maple syrup (preferably Grade B)

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the hazelnut-chocolate spread: Preheat the oven to 350°. Place the hazelnuts on a rimmed baking sheet. Toast in the oven until the nuts are fragrant and golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Wrap the nuts in a kitchen towel and rub to remove as much of the skins as possible. Add the warm nuts, chocolate, sugar and salt to a food processor and purée until smooth, adding the oil in a slow and steady stream until well combined. Transfer the hazelnut-chocolate spread to an airtight container and keep at room temperature. (It will thicken over a few days. To loosen to a slightly more spreadable consistency, heat in microwave for about 5 seconds.)
2. Make the French toast: In a medium skillet set over medium heat, add the bacon and cook until the strips are browned and crisp on both sides, about 8 minutes total. Use a pair of tongs to remove the slices from the pan and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.
3. Lay the sourdough bread on a cutting board. Evenly coat each bread slice with the hazelnut-chocolate spread (reserve extra hazelnut-chocolate spread for serving).
4. In a medium bowl, use a fork to smash together about half of the bananas slices until a chunky mash forms. Spread the mashed bananas over 4 of the hazelnut-chocolate spread bread slices. Coarsely chop the bacon and sprinkle over the banana mash. Place the sliced bananas on top of the bacon and cover with the remaining 4 hazelnut-chocolate spread slices, pressing down lightly so they stick together. Place the sandwiches in a single layer in a large, ovenproof baking dish.
5. In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs until frothy. Whisk in the milk. Pour the egg-milk mixture over the sandwiches and carefully turn them over to coat evenly with the egg-milk mixture.



6. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat and add 2 tablespoons of the butter. Once the butter is melted, add two of the sandwiches and cook until golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Carefully flip and cook the other side until golden brown, about 5 minutes more. Transfer to a cutting board and repeat with the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and sandwiches. Halve the stuffed French toast on a bias, dust with confectioners' sugar and serve with maple syrup and additional hazelnut-chocolate spread on the side.

About the Chef

After studying physics for two years at Penn State, Brad Farmerie left to pursue his culinary aspirations. He worked at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxford, England, and assisted Gordon and Anna Hansen in opening The Providores and Tapa Room in London, England. In 2003, Brad returned to the States to head the kitchen at the Michelin-starred restaurant Public in New York City. He is currently the executive chef at Saxon & Parole in New York City and The Thomas, in Napa, California.

*The Thomas, 813 Main St. Napa, CA; 707-226-7821 or
thethomas-napa.com*



Editors' Favorites



“Clearly, I was trying to bang open my cookie tin as my brother and I, as toddlers, lounged under Christmas stockings made by our aunt. My mom still hangs those same stockings every year.”

Karen Palmer

Good Taste Editor

My favorite meal of the year is served on Christmas Eve, when my family celebrates the Feast of the Seven Fishes. The whole-roasted branzino, stuffed with pickled and sautéed fennel and then topped with a vibrant salsa verde, is not only easy to share, it’s a light main course after we’ve already downed shrimp, steamed clams, *baccalà* and more. And the fish can be picked at as we laze around the table in a well-fed stupor.

SEE THE RECIPE



Branzino with Pickled Fennel and Salsa Verde

Recipe adapted from Brendan McCall, Mani Osteria & Bar, Ann Arbor, MI

Yield: 2 servings

Cook Time: 25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Pickled fennel stalks

- *1/2 cup Champagne vinegar*
- *1 cup fresh lemon juice*
- *6 tablespoons granulated sugar*
- *4 star anise pods*
- *Fennel stalks and fronds (see Branzino below), stalks sliced 1/4-inch thick*

Salsa verde

- *1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped*
- *1/3 cup fresh oregano leaves, roughly chopped*
- *3 garlic cloves, finely chopped*
- *2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice*
- *1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil*
- *Kosher salt*

Branzino

- *One 1 1/2-pound whole branzino or sea bass, scaled and gutted*



- *1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil*
- *Kosher salt*
- *2 medium fennel bulbs, cored and thinly sliced (stalks and fronds removed, see Pickled fennel stalks above)*
- *1 small red onion, halved and thinly sliced*
- *1/4 cup Taggiasca olives or other mild green olives, pitted and roughly chopped*

DIRECTIONS

1. **Make the pickled fennel stalks:** In a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat, combine the Champagne vinegar, lemon juice, sugar and star anise and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add the sliced fennel stalks and simmer until the stalks begin to turn translucent, about 5 minutes. Set aside to pickle and cool in the liquid.



2. Make the salsa verde: In a small bowl, combine the parsley, oregano, garlic and lemon juice. Gently stir in the olive oil and season with salt.
3. Make the branzino: Preheat the oven to 425°. Rub the branzino with the olive oil and season the inside and outside liberally with salt. Place on a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet and roast until the fish is just cooked through and flakes easily, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.
4. In a medium skillet set over medium-high heat, cook the sliced fennel and red onion until they begin to soften, about 4 minutes. Drain the pickled fennel stalks and add to the fennel-onion mixture along with the olives. Gently stuff the branzino with the fennel mixture; top with salsa verde and serve immediately.

About the Chef



After graduating from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Brendan McCall spent several years working in Detroit restaurants before moving back to Ann Arbor to be the sous chef at the now-closed Eve the Restaurant. In 2007, he launched the now-closed Everyday Cook, a quick, casual lunch restaurant. McCall is now the chef at Mani Osteria & Bar in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Mani Osteria & Bar, 341 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104; 734-769-6700 or maniosteria.com



Your Holiday Centerpiece Roast



“My wife, Julie, and I feel that family is more important than anything in our lives. We come from big families, and we all get together for the holidays and have a great day of cooking and eating.”

SPICED TENDERLOIN ROAST

From Chef James Petrakis



This festive, simple and utterly over-the-top roast tenderloin is one of chef James Petrakis’s indispensable holiday dishes, though he often makes it with venison instead of beef. Petrakis co-owns The Ravenous Pig in Winter Park, Florida, with his wife, Julie Petrakis, the restaurant’s pastry chef, and admits that her desserts have become “the most essential part” of their annual feast.

SEE THE RECIPE



Spiced Tenderloin Roast with Wild Mushrooms

Recipe adapted from James Petrakis, The Ravenous Pig, Winter Park, FL

Yield: 6 servings

Cook Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes (plus overnight marinating)

INGREDIENTS

Tenderloin roast

- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1½ cups extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 2 teaspoons whole black peppercorns plus 1 teaspoon freshly ground black peppercorns, divided
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 4 fresh bay leaves
- One 2-pound beef tenderloin roast (preferably center cut)
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt

Mushrooms

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cups wild mushrooms, trimmed into evenly sized pieces
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 fresh bay leaf

- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the marinade for the tenderloin roast: In a small saucepan set over medium heat, add the garlic and olive oil and cook until the garlic becomes golden, about 15 minutes. Turn off the heat.
2. In a medium skillet set over medium heat, toast the coriander seeds, whole black peppercorns and fennel seeds, shaking the pan often and cooking until the peppercorns are fragrant and the fennel seeds are golden, about 2 minutes. Turn off the heat and transfer the spices to a blender. Add the poached garlic and oil, chopped thyme and bay leaves and purée until smooth. In a resealable plastic bag, add the purée and the tenderloin roast. Seal the bag and use the bag to massage the herbed marinade into the meat. Refrigerate overnight.
3. The next day, preheat the oven to 350°. Remove the tenderloin roast from the bag, use paper towels to blot dry, then season with the salt and pepper. Heat a grill pan over high heat for 2 minutes, add the roast and sear on all sides until marked, 2 to 3 minutes per side (you can also sear the tenderloin roast on a charcoal or gas grill until marked on all sides). Transfer the roast to the oven and cook to your preferred degree of doneness, 22 to 25 minutes for medium rare (120° on an instant-read thermometer). Remove from the oven and set aside for 30 minutes to rest. Slice the roast crosswise into ¼-inch thick rounds.
4. While the roast rests, make the mushrooms: In a large skillet set over high heat, add the oil and heat until it begins to smoke, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms, stir once, and



cook without stirring until they begin to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the thyme, bay leaf and garlic and then add the salt and pepper. Toss to combine. Add the butter, stir until melted, then serve the mushrooms over the steak.

About the Chef

Before opening The Ravenous Pig in Winter Park, Florida, with his wife and Ravenous Pig's pastry chef, Julie Petrakis, James Petrakis worked at the now-closed Atelier in New York City and Luma on Park in Winter Park. In 2012, the couple opened their second restaurant, Cask & Larder. *The Ravenous Pig: Seasons of Florida* cookbook was published in 2012.

*The Ravenous Pig, 1234 N. Orange Ave., Winter Park, FL;
407-628-2333 or theravenouspig.com*



Editors' Favorites



“My brother, Neal (on the right), and I decided that the toy box itself was more fun than the toys that lived in it. So we regularly dumped out the toys and climbed into the empty box. It was fun, I swear.”

Scott Hocker

Editor in Chief

For me, a standing rib roast represents the best of the season. It is a blowout centerpiece: grand but simple; impressive minus the kitchen pressure. A two-pronged mushroom assault and glug of brandy complement the beef, and should you crave an indulgent finish, shave a blizzard of black truffles over the roast. Optional, sure. A good idea? Oh, yes.

SEE THE RECIPE



Prime Rib Roast with Mushroom Sauce

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: Serves 4 to 6

Cook Time: 2 hours (plus 1 hour, 5 minutes for the roast to rest)

INGREDIENTS

Prime rib

- *One 5- to 6-pound prime rib roast*
- *Flaky sea salt*
- *Freshly ground black pepper*
- *2 ounces dried porcini mushrooms*
- *1½ cups warm beef broth or stock*
- *1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter at room temperature, cut into tablespoons*
- *7 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves picked and stems discarded, divided*
- *10 large shallots, quartered*
- *6 garlic cloves, smashed*
- *3 dried bay leaves*

Mushroom sauce

- *1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil*
- *1 tablespoon unsalted butter*
- *1 garlic clove, finely chopped*



- *1 pound cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced*
- *¾ cup brandy*
- *¾ cup beef broth or stock*
- *1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice*
- *1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley*
- *Salt and freshly ground black pepper*

DIRECTIONS

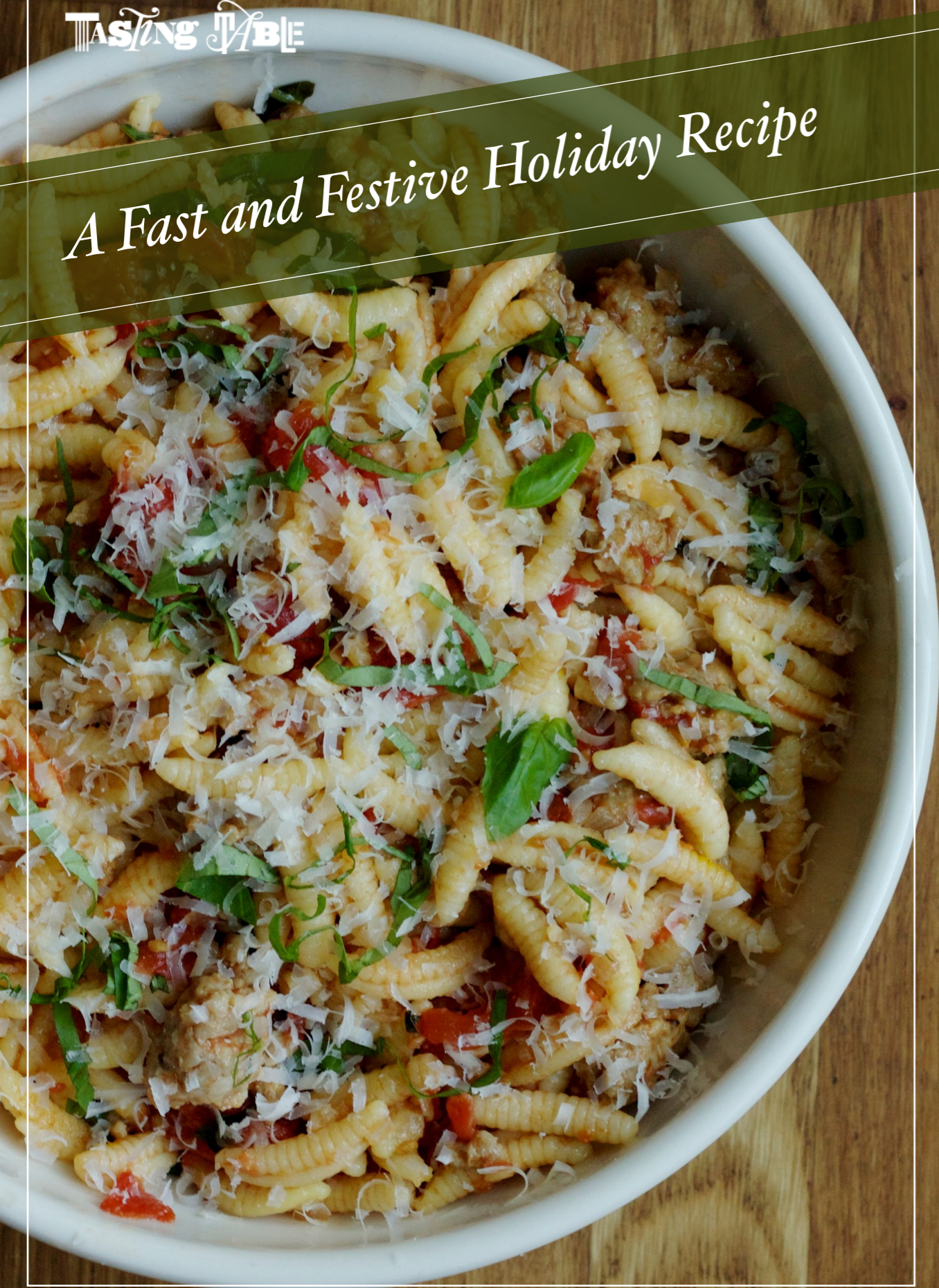
1. **Make the prime rib:** Preheat the oven to 500°. Liberally season the prime rib roast with flaky sea salt and pepper and set aside at room temperature for 45 minutes.
2. In a medium bowl, add the dried porcini. Pour the hot beef broth over the porcini and set aside for 20 minutes. Remove the porcini and set aside. Pour the broth through a paper coffee filter or paper towel-lined sieve. Reserve the broth.



3. In a small bowl, combine the butter and three-quarters of the thyme leaves and mix until well combined. Rub 6 tablespoons of the thyme-butter evenly over the roast and set aside.
4. In a large roasting pan, combine the shallots, garlic, bay leaves, rehydrated porcini and the remaining thyme. Dot with the remaining 2 tablespoons thyme-butter and place the roast on top of the mixture.
5. Roast the prime rib until the top of the meat is browned, about 15 to 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325° and roast, basting the prime rib every 30 minutes with the pan drippings, until a thermometer inserted in the center of the roast registers 125° to 130° for medium-rare, about 1 to 1½ hours. Remove the roast from the oven, transfer to a cutting board and loosely tent with aluminum foil. Set aside for 20 minutes. Use a spoon to skim off the fat from the pan drippings. Discard the bay leaves and any burnt bits.
6. Make the mushroom sauce: In a large skillet set over medium heat, warm the olive oil and butter until the butter is melted, about 1 minute. Stir in the garlic and cook until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the cremini mushrooms and cook, without stirring, until the mushrooms darken and the liquid from the mushrooms begins to evaporate, about 10 minutes. Add the brandy and simmer until reduced by half, about 4 minutes. Stir in the reserved vegetables and pan drippings. Cook until the liquid has reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Stir in the beef broth and reserved porcini soaking liquid and boil until the liquid is reduced by half, 5 to 7 minutes. Whisk in the lemon juice and parsley, season with salt and pepper and keep warm.
7. Remove the aluminum foil and carve the roast crosswise into thin slices. Serve the roast warm with the brandied-mushroom sauce.



A Fast and Festive Holiday Recipe



"In my family, New Year's Eve was the one time of the year when we all ate together. I remember the preparation and excitement that surrounded that meal."

MALLOREDDUS WITH SAUSAGE, TOMATOES AND BASIL

From Chef Massimiliano Conti



Massimiliano Conti, chef of San Francisco's La Ciccia, keeps the beloved *malloreddus* (a ridged cavatelli-shaped durum wheat pasta) on the menu year-round, but says that in his native Sardinia, where the recipe originated, it's a staple of the holiday table. "Traditionally, this pasta was made in the late fall and winter, after the annual pig slaughter," says the chef. Conti recalls watching his grandmother, aunt and mother make it together for New Year's Eve dinner. By serving the comforting, pork-rich dish at his own restaurant, he's carrying on the family tradition.

SEE THE RECIPE



Malloreddus with Sausage, Tomatoes and Basil

Recipe adapted from Massimiliano Conti, La Ciccia, San Francisco, CA

Yield: 4 servings

Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups strained, whole canned tomatoes (preferably Italian tomatoes)
- 1 pound malloreddus (or penne or fusilli)
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 3/4 pound mild Italian sausage, casing removed and sausage roughly chopped
- 8 basil leaves, roughly chopped
- Pinch dried red pepper flakes
- Pinch saffron
- 1 cup finely grated Pecorino cheese, divided

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, roughly break up the tomatoes using your fingers.

2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and 1 tablespoon of salt and cook, following the package instructions, until al dente. Drain the pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of pasta cooking water.
3. While the pasta water comes to a boil, start the sauce: In a large skillet set over medium heat, add the olive oil, onion and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until the onion is tender and translucent, 4 to 6 minutes. Stir in the sausage, increase the heat to medium-high, and cook, stirring often, until the liquid in the pan evaporates and the sausage browns, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes, basil, red pepper flakes, saffron, remaining 1 teaspoon of salt and the reserved pasta cooking water and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook until the sauce is thick, about 35 minutes. Taste and season with more salt if needed.
4. Add the pasta to the sauce along with 1/2 cup of the Pecorino. Toss to combine and divide among 4 bowls. Sprinkle with the remaining Pecorino before serving.

About the Chef

Massimiliano Conti, a native Sardinian, is the chef of La Ciccia in the Noe Valley neighborhood of San Francisco, California. After moving to the United States in 1993, Conti worked as a sommelier at the now-closed Galileo in Washington, D.C., and in San Francisco at Palio d'Asti and Acquerello. He opened La Ciccia in 2006 with his wife, Lorella Degan.

*La Ciccia, 291 30th St., San Francisco, CA; 415-550-8114
or laciccia.com*



Editors' Favorites



“Christmas is without a doubt my favorite holiday, and I have no shame about making my sartorial decisions based on the colors red and green throughout the month of December. Clearly, it was ingrained early on—I think I’m about 2 years old in this photo.”

Kaitlyn Goalen

National Editor

As a kid, I spent every Christmas in Texas with my mother’s side of the family. My grandparents loved to cook; they also loved (and taught me to love) barbecue! So when the candied pork recipe from Underbelly in Houston came across our desks, it felt like a holiday card from my childhood. The meat is glazed in bourbon and brown sugar, then slow-roasted in the oven. The result: all the juicy flavor of barbecue, without having to stand outside in the cold.

SEE THE RECIPE



Candied Pork

Recipe adapted from Chris Shepherd, Underbelly, Houston, TX

Yield: Serves 6

Cook Time: 5 hours, 30 minutes (plus 45 minutes to rest)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon hot or sweet smoked paprika (*pimentón*)
- 1½ teaspoons dried red pepper flakes
- 1½ teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
- One 4-pound bone-in pork shoulder
- 2½ cups loosely packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup bourbon

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 275°. In a small bowl, whisk together the smoked paprika, red pepper flakes, cayenne, salt and black pepper. Rub the mixture all over the pork shoulder and set aside for 30 minutes.
2. Set the pork on a rack-lined roasting pan and cook until the flesh is fork-tender and the bone moves around easily with no resistance, about 5 hours.



3. When the pork has about 15 minutes cooking time left, make the glaze: In a medium saucepan set over medium heat, bring the brown sugar and bourbon to a simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced by one-quarter, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Remove the pork from the oven and brush one-third of the glaze all over the shoulder. Continue to roast for 30 minutes longer, reglazing every 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to rest for 15 minutes before breaking the meat apart into big pieces. Serve.



About the Chef



Chris Shepherd worked in various country clubs before joining the team at Brennan's in Houston. He opened Underbelly and Haymarket in Houston, Texas in 2012.

*Underbelly, 1100 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX;
713-523-9800 or underbellyhouston.com*





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A Second Generation Dressing

"We have had oyster dressing at Thanksgiving for as long as I can remember. I don't remember the first time I tasted it, but I can't remember a holiday without it. These days my family gathers in Mississippi for a big spread at our place in the country."

OYSTER DRESSING

From Chef John Currence



Studded with oysters and flavored with thyme, bay leaves and sage, John Currence's cornbread dressing is a holiday mainstay. "This dressing and wild duck stew were two of the first things I remember my mom making," says the Oxford, Mississippi-based chef. "Mom took her cooking very seriously, so when she hit the jackpot on a recipe, you could count on it being delicious." He notes that the plump bivalves add moisture to a dish that, if not handled deftly, can be dry. For tips on shucking oysters, watch a video with Tasting Table's Good Taste editor, Karen Palmer, and chef Edward Lee.

SEE THE RECIPE



Oyster Dressing

Recipe adapted from John Currence, City Grocery, Oxford, MS

Yield: 6 servings

Cook Time: 50 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature, divided
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 large celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 large red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 large green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, very finely chopped
- 24 oysters (such as Blue Point), shucked
- 3 dried bay leaves
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon dried sage
- 2 teaspoons dried red pepper flakes
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 8 cups crumbled cornbread
- ½ to ¾ teaspoon hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt

- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Use 1 tablespoon of the butter to grease an 8-inch baking dish.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil, onion, celery, red bell pepper, green bell pepper and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until the garlic and onions are transparent and the vegetables are tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, oysters, bay leaves, thyme, black pepper, sage and red pepper flakes and cook until the edges of the oysters begin to curl, about 3 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the oysters to a plate. Pour the white wine into the skillet and bring to a simmer, stirring up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Cook until the liquid is almost evaporated, about 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, cool and discard the bay leaves.
4. Preheat the oven to 375°. Transfer the onion mixture to a food processor and blend until the mixture becomes chunky, about 30 seconds. Add the cornbread, hot pepper sauce and salt and pulse to combine. Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl and stir in the eggs, Parmigiano-Reggiano and the reserved oysters. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish and bake until the dressing is browned and set, about 35 minutes. Remove the dressing from the oven and let cool slightly before serving.

Test Kitchen Note: If you ask your fishmonger to shuck the oysters for you, be sure to cook them within 30 minutes of shucking.



About the Chef

John Currence is the chef and owner of the City Grocery Restaurant Group in Oxford, Mississippi. Since opening his first restaurant, City Grocery, in 1992, the City Grocery Restaurant Group has also opened City Grocery Catering Company, Bouré, Big Bad Breakfast and Snackbar.

*City Grocery, 152 Courthouse Sq., Oxford, MS; 662-232-8080
or citygroceryonline.com*



Kick the Can for this Saucy Side



“When I opened my own restaurant in 2008, I said to myself that my staff and I would never have to cook over the holidays. I want to be home with my family—and they do too.”

CRANBERRY-RIESLING COMPOTE

From Chef Bryan Voltaggio



Bryan Voltaggio nearly ruined Thanksgiving for hundreds of people. True, he was only 16, but when he slow-cooked dozens of turkeys to the perfect point of underdoneness, he was nearly fired. Instead, young Voltaggio was given a second chance, and for that he is thankful: He probably wouldn't have continued working as a cook if he had been booted. These days, Voltaggio always brings his saucy, fresh cranberry compote to the Thanksgiving table. The secret to its bright flavor is orange juice, sweet Riesling and a low, slow simmer with lots of stirring to ensure the cranberries don't scorch.

SEE THE RECIPE



Cranberry-Riesling Compote

Recipe adapted from Bryan Voltaggio, Range, Washington, D.C.

Yield: 4 cups

Cook Time: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- *½ cup granulated sugar*
- *1 cup sweet Riesling*
- *2 pounds fresh cranberries, cleaned and picked through (any wrinkled or discolored cranberries discarded)*
- *1 medium orange, quartered and seeded*
- *½ cinnamon stick*
- *2 whole allspice berries*
- *1 dried bay leaf*
- *¼ teaspoon fine sea salt*

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat a medium saucepan over medium heat and add the sugar and wine. Stir to combine, cooking until the sugar dissolves and the mixture simmers with thick, slow bubbles, 6 to 8 minutes (the temperature will be between 234° and 240° on an instant-read thermometer).
2. Add the cranberries, stir to combine and reduce the heat to low. Cook for 3 minutes, then squeeze the juice from the orange quarters into the pan and add the squeezed orange

quarters along with the cinnamon stick, allspice berries, bay leaf and salt. Cook, stirring often, until the cranberries begin to burst and the sauce thickens, 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside to cool for 10 minutes. Remove and discard the orange quarters, cinnamon stick, allspice berries and bay leaf, and set the compote aside to cool completely. The cranberry compote can be left as is or transferred to a blender and puréed until smooth. Store the compote in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

About the Chef

Bryan Voltaggio's Range in Washington, D.C. (slated to open in late December), will be an American-Southern Eataly-style shopping and eating mecca boasting seven minikitchens, a coffee bar, wine bar and in-house bakery. Voltaggio opened his first restaurant, Volt, in 2008, followed by Lunchbox in 2011 and Family Meal in the summer of 2012, all in his hometown of Frederick, Maryland. He cooked under Charlie Palmer at New York City's Aureole and at Charlie Palmer Steak in Washington, D.C. He cowrote the cookbook *VOLT ink.* (Olive Press) with his brother Michael, the chef-owner of Ink and Ink.sack in Los Angeles.

Range, 5335 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, D.C.; voltrange.com



Editors' Favorites



"I'm five years old and gearing up to tear into a big gift Santa brought me."

Trina Sargalski

Miami Editor

Even though I am a Miami native and I should be used to it, it's always a letdown when the thermometer reads 85 degrees on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day. Those of you up north wearing six layers of clothes may cringe at my ingratitude, but crisp, cool days are a novelty in Miami. So when the weather fails, there's always food. The aroma and taste of creamy butternut squash puts me in a proper holiday mood. This recipe is comforting and elegant all at once.

SEE THE RECIPE



Butternut Squash with Honey and Almonds

Recipe adapted from Mark Mendez, Vera, Chicago, IL

Yield: Serves 4

Cook Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

- *1 medium butternut squash (about 3 pounds)—halved lengthwise, seeds removed and discarded*
- *2 whole cloves*
- *1 cinnamon stick, broken in half*
- *3 tablespoons heavy cream*
- *2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature*
- *1 tablespoon light brown sugar*
- *1 tablespoon honey*
- *2 tablespoons marcona almonds, coarsely chopped*
- *Flaky sea salt*

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Lay the squash cut-side down on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Tuck 1 clove and ½ cinnamon stick under each squash cavity and place the squash in the oven. Roast the squash until very soft and fork-tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Remove the squash from the oven and set aside until cool enough to handle.
2. Heat the cream in the microwave until warm.



3. Scoop out the flesh from the squash halves (discard the skin) and place in a blender. Purée with the warm cream, butter and brown sugar until silky smooth. Serve on plates with a drizzle of honey, marcona almonds and flaky sea salt.

About the Chef



Mark Mendez, a Chicago native, worked at Spiaggia in Chicago and then at the now-closed Patria in New York. He returned to Chicago to work at Gioco and Carnivale before opening Vera in 2011.

*Vera, 1023 W. Lake St., Chicago, IL;
312-243-9770 or verachicago.com*



A Classic Side Gets Nutty



HAZELNUT MASHED POTATOES

From the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Here in the Tasting Table Test Kitchen, we all agree that the best holiday table is the one where there is the occasional blissful silence, when the guests are too busy eating to discuss embarrassing stories. The cause of that quiet this year will be these buttery, decadent mashed potatoes. We boosted the spuds with toasty browned butter, complementing that butter with the deeply caramelized flavor of hazelnuts. We like to sprinkle the browned nuts over the mashed potatoes, but if you're more of a smooth operator, squirrel the hazelnuts away and use them for embellishing green beans or a green salad.

SEE THE RECIPE



Hazelnut Mashed Potatoes

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 6 servings

Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- *1/3 cup hazelnuts*
- *1 3/4 sticks (14 tablespoons) unsalted butter*
- *1 tablespoon plus 1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt, divided*
- *3 large Russet potatoes (about 1 1/4 pounds)—peeled, halved and each half quartered*
- *3/4 cup heavy cream*
- *2 tablespoons whole milk (or more heavy cream)*

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. On a rimmed baking sheet, add the hazelnuts and toast in the oven until the hazelnuts' skins begin to curl away and the hazelnuts are fragrant, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and transfer to a kitchen towel-lined bowl. Cover the nuts with the corners of the towel so the nuts are completely enclosed and set aside for a few minutes to steam. Rub the nuts inside the towel to remove the skins, then transfer the skinned hazelnuts to a cutting board and roughly chop.
2. To a medium saucepan set over medium heat, add the butter. Once the butter is melted, add the chopped hazelnuts and

cook, swirling the pan often, until the hazelnuts are a rich, brown color and the butter is very fragrant, 12 to 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and use a slotted spoon to transfer the hazelnuts to a paper towel-lined plate. Sprinkle the hazelnuts with 1/4 teaspoon of salt.

3. While the hazelnuts toast in the butter, bring a large pot of water set over high heat to a boil. Add the potatoes and 1 tablespoon salt, reduce the heat to medium and boil the potatoes until a paring knife easily slides into the center of a piece and the potatoes are tender but not mealy around the edges, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain the potatoes.
4. While the potatoes are still warm, press them through a potato ricer and into a large bowl (a food mill or a potato masher work, too, but the latter will yield less creamy mashed potatoes). Drizzle the hazelnut-browned butter over the potatoes, using a fork to fluff and stir the mixture in.
5. In a small saucepan set over medium-high heat, add the cream, milk and remaining 1 teaspoon of salt and bring to a simmer. Drizzle the cream mixture over the potatoes, using the fork to fluff and stir it in. Transfer the mashed potatoes to a serving bowl, sprinkle with the salted hazelnuts and serve. (If making the potatoes in advance, add half of the cream mixture and wait to add the remaining hot cream until just before serving.)



Editors' Favorites



“Here I am hamming it up in front of the Christmas tree in one of my favorite outfits of the time (not pictured: matching leggings and an attached skirt, also with a dancing cat motif). After the picture was taken, I likely went into the kitchen to stick my fingers in pots and give my mother grief for not sufficiently mashing the potatoes. Even at 8, I was quite bossy when it came to cooking.”

Heather Sperling

Chicago Editor

I’ve long loved potato salad in any form: mayonnaise-doused and topped with paprika-dusted hard-boiled eggs, as my grandmother made every summer, or dressed with a punchy, mustardy vinaigrette. But when the holidays roll around, mashed potatoes are the fallback. Stifle a potato-induced yawn no longer. This sophisticated, bold potato salad makes spuds a centerpiece rather than an afterthought. And it’s just as good come summer, too.

SEE THE RECIPE



Austrian Potato Salad

Recipe adapted from Bernhard Mairinger, BierBeisl, Beverly Hills, CA

Yield: 4 servings

Cook Time: 30 minutes (plus 30 minutes to rest)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fingerling potatoes
- 2 lightly smashed garlic cloves
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- Pinch caraway seeds
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt plus extra for serving
- 1/3 cup beef broth or stock
- 1/2 medium white onion, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sunflower oil
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon tarragon mustard (moutarde à l'estragon) or 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard plus 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh tarragon leaves
- Freshly grated nutmeg
- Finely ground white pepper
- Finely chopped fresh chives



DIRECTIONS

1. Fill a medium pot with cold water. Add the potatoes, garlic, rosemary, thyme, caraway seeds and 2 teaspoons salt. Cover, then bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook the potatoes until a paring knife easily slips into the center of one of the larger potatoes, 10 to 12 minutes. Strain through a colander or fine-mesh sieve and discard the garlic, rosemary and thyme. Once the potatoes are cool enough to handle, slice into 1/4-inch-thick rounds and place in a large bowl.
2. Meanwhile, in a small skillet set over high heat, add the beef broth and onion. Bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and pour the hot broth-onion mixture over the potatoes.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, sunflower and olive oils, and mustard, then pour over the potatoes and gently stir to combine. Finish with a pinch of salt, some grated nutmeg and white pepper. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are at room temperature, about 30 minutes. Sprinkle with chives and serve.



About the Chef



Bernhard Mairinger, an Austrian native, is the executive chef at BierBeisl in Beverly Hills, California. At age 23, Mairinger moved to Los Angeles where he worked at Nick & Stef's and Patina, both under the Patina Restaurant Group.

BierBeisl, 9669 Little Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA; 310-271-7274 or bierbeisl-la.com



The Key to Crisp Latkes



“I’ve been known to make turchetta for the holidays—a boned, brined turkey breast that I slather with a lardo-herb butter, then roll and tie like porchetta. It makes turkey edible.”

LATKES WITH QUINCE CONSERVA

From Chef Craig Stoll



These duck fat-fried latkes have been served at Delfina in San Francisco every year during Hanukkah since the Italian restaurant opened, a nod to chef-owner Craig Stoll’s Jewish heritage. “Except for frying them in duck fat,” says Stoll, referencing a twist on the recipe that creates a particularly rich, savory and incredibly crisp potato pancake, “these are classic latkes, the ones I crave. My only trick is not to be tricky.”

SEE THE RECIPE



Latkes with Quince Conserva

Recipe adapted from Craig Stoll, Delfina, San Francisco

Yield: 12 latkes (plus 3 cups quince *conserva*)

Cook Time: 45 minutes (plus overnight to chill the potatoes)

INGREDIENTS

Latkes

- 3 large Russet potatoes (about 2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely grated
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 cups duck fat (or vegetable oil)

Apple-quince conserva

- 1 pound tart apples (such as Granny Smith or Gravenstein)—peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 pound ripe quince—peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 whole star anise
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 cup Vin Santo
- 4 cups water
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Add the potatoes to a large pot; fill the pot with enough cold water to cover the potatoes by a couple of inches. Bring to a boil, then immediately turn off the heat, drain the potatoes through a colander and transfer to a plate. Refrigerate the potatoes overnight.
2. Make the apple-quince *conserva*: In a large saucepan, add the apples, quince, star anise, cloves, Vin Santo and water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the fruit completely breaks down, 20 to 25 minutes. Return the heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently until the fruit thickens and takes on a deep red hue. Add the sugar, season with salt and stir to combine. Return the mixture to a boil and cook until the sugar dissolves and the texture of the *conserva* is thick. Place a fine-mesh strainer over a medium bowl and use a rubber spatula to press the mixture through the sieve. Refrigerate in an airtight container.
3. The next day, peel the potatoes with a paring knife and use the large hole side of a grater to grate the potatoes (or use the large hole shredder attachment on a food processor). Add the salt. Add the grated onion to a fine-mesh sieve and set over a medium bowl. Use a spatula to press the water out of the onions and discard the water. Add the onions and the egg to the potatoes and use a fork to mix. Sprinkle in the flour and mix gently until there are no dry patches of flour remaining.
4. Preheat the oven to 325°. In a large, wide pot, heat the duck fat until it reads between 350° and 370° on an instant-read thermometer.
5. Gently form a good handful of the potato mixture into a latke (about ¼ cup of potatoes per latke), using your hands to compress it into a ¼-inch-thick disc, leaving the edges a bit loose and scraggly.



6. Gently transfer a few latkes to the hot duck fat, leaving plenty of space around each one. Cook until both sides are golden, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Use a frying spider or metal spatula to transfer the latkes to a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Keep warm in the oven while you fry the rest of the latkes. Sprinkle with kosher salt and serve warm with apple-quince *conserva*.

About the Chef

In 1998, Craig Stoll and his wife, Annie, opened Delfina in the Mission District of San Francisco. Since then, the duo have opened two Pizzeria Delfina locations, as well as the Roman-inspired restaurant, Locanda.

*Delfina, 3621 18th St., San Francisco, CA; 415-552-4055
or delfinasf.com/restaurant*



Editors' Favorites



“My great-grandmother Elma introduced me to baking. She had the barest-bones kitchen, but it didn't stop her from baking intricate labor-intensive delicacies during the holidays, like her from-scratch lefse (Norwegian flatbread) rolled with lingonberries. I still have her handwritten recipes tucked into her original recipe box. It's one of my absolute greatest treasures.”

Raquel Pelzel

Senior Food Editor

Cooking with my great-grandmother in her low-fi kitchen instilled a deep-seeded love for low-drama, highly delicious food. Even now, I gravitate toward recipes that can be made with one hand tied behind my back. That's why these super simple chocolate peppermint cookies are one of my favorites. All you need is a mixing bowl, a spoon and a saucepan—though you can even zap the chocolate in a microwave. Crushed candy canes give the cookies a festive spirit and a crunch. For a super dark cookie, try substituting half of the cocoa with black cocoa powder.

SEE THE RECIPE



Chocolate Candy Cane Buttons

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 3 dozen

Cook Time: 45 minutes (plus 1 hour to chill dough)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 sticks (16 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- 8 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped (or semisweet chocolate chips)
- 1¼ cups light brown sugar
- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons Dutch-processed cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons dark molasses
- ¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
- 20 mini candy canes
- 1 cup plus 1 teaspoon confectioners' sugar, divided
- ¼ cup heavy cream

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, add the butter, chocolate and brown sugar. Fill a medium saucepan with 1 inch of water and bring to a



boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and place the bowl on top of the saucepan (make sure the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water). Stir the mixture often until the butter and chocolate are completely melted and the mixture is smooth, about 2 minutes. Remove the bowl with the chocolate-butter mixture from the saucepan.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt until well combined.
3. Into the chocolate-sugar mixture, whisk in the eggs, followed by the molasses and peppermint extract. Add the flour mixture and use a wooden spoon to stir to combine. Cover the bowl and refrigerate the dough until chilled and malleable, 1 to 2 hours.
4. Preheat the oven to 350° and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Shape the dough into small balls, about 2 tablespoons of dough per ball (about the size of a Ping-Pong ball). Place them



1 inch apart on the baking sheet. Bake until the cookies are set around the edges and still soft in the center, 12 to 14 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Repeat with the remaining dough.

5. Into the bowl of a food processor, add the candy canes and pulse 3 to 4 times for a coarse grind (you can also place the candy canes in a resealable plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin or using the bottom of a heavy pan or pot). Scrape the candy canes into a medium bowl and stir in 1 teaspoon of confectioners' sugar (to help keep the candy canes from clumping).
6. Add the remaining 1 cup confectioners' sugar to a fine-mesh sieve set over a medium bowl and sift the sugar into the bowl. Whisk in the heavy cream until the mixture is completely smooth. Once the cookies are cooled, spread a generous spoonful of icing over the top of the cookie, letting the excess drip off the sides. Sprinkle with the candy canes and set aside for the icing to set up, about 20 minutes, before serving. (The cookie dough can be refrigerated for up to 5 days before baking; the iced cookies can be stored in an airtight container for up to 3 days.)



A Cake Fit for Celebrating



“I love the holidays. I’m a huge fan of a standing rib roast, and I also tend to eat around three to four pounds of lemon bars before the season is over.”

BUTTERMILK CAKE WITH RIESLING-POACHED PEARS

From Chef Tory Miller



Tory Miller, the chef of L’Etoile in Madison, Wisconsin, says the state’s best pears arrive in late fall. Those prime specimens provided inspiration for this buttermilk cake topped with wine-poached Bartletts. An alternative to the heavy, spice-laden desserts that dominate the season, it’s the ideal end to

Miller’s favorite holiday feast: standing rib roast, root vegetable gratin and a side of gnocchi with brown butter, sweet potatoes and sage, eagerly spooned up by Miller’s young son Remy.

SEE THE RECIPE



Buttermilk Cake with Riesling-Poached Pears

Recipe adapted from Tory Miller, *L'Etoile, Madison, WI*

Yield: One 9-inch cake

Cook Time: 40 minutes (plus 2 hours cooling time)

INGREDIENTS

Poached pears

- 3 cups sweet white wine (such as Riesling)
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- One 3-inch strip orange zest, any white pith scraped away
- 3 whole star anise pods
- 6 medium, ripe Bartlett pears—peeled, halved and cored
- 1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise

Cake

- 1 stick plus ½ tablespoon unsalted butter (8½ tablespoons) at room temperature, divided
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Zest of 1 lemon
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup light brown sugar

- 4 large egg yolks
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ⅔ cup buttermilk, shaken

Vanilla crème fraîche

- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup crème fraîche
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS:

1. Make the pears: To a large saucepan set over high heat, add the wine, water, sugar, orange zest, star anise pods and pear halves. Lay the vanilla bean halves on a cutting board and use the tip of a paring knife to scrape away the seeds; add the seeds and vanilla bean halves to the pan and bring to a boil, turn off the heat and cover the pan. Set the pears aside to cool completely, about 1 hour (a fork should slide easily into the pears). Transfer the pears and liquid to an airtight container and refrigerate.
2. Make the cake: Preheat the oven to 350°. Set a 9-inch round cake pan on top of a piece of parchment paper and trace a circle around it. Cut out the circle. Grease the cake pan with ½ tablespoon of the butter, place the parchment circle in the pan, press it down, then lift and turn it over so both sides of the parchment circle are buttered. Place a fine-mesh sieve over a medium bowl, add the flour and baking powder and sift into the bowl. Add the salt and lemon zest and whisk to combine.
3. To the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, add the remaining 8 tablespoons of butter and the granulated sugar and brown sugar. Beat on medium-high speed until the mixture is light and airy, about 2 minutes. Add



the egg yolks one at a time, beating well between additions and scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary, then mix in the vanilla extract. Reduce the mixer speed to medium and alternate adding the flour mixture and buttermilk in three additions, starting and ending with the flour mixture. Use a rubber spatula to scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and bake, rotating the pan halfway through baking, until the center of the cake resists light pressure and a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Transfer the cake in the pan to a wire rack and let sit 20 minutes. Run a paring knife around the edges of the cake and invert it onto a parchment paper-lined plate or baking sheet and cool completely.

4. While the cake cools, make the vanilla crème fraîche: Lay the vanilla bean halves on a cutting board and use the tip of a paring knife to remove the seeds. Place the seeds into a medium bowl. Add the vanilla extract and the crème fraîche. Set a fine-mesh sieve over the bowl and sift the confectioners' sugar through the sieve. Use a rubber spatula to gently combine the mixture.
5. Slice the cake into 12 equal-size slices and serve each slice with a pear half and some of the sweetened crème fraîche.

About the Chef

Before becoming the chef-owner of L'Etoile in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2005, Tory Miller worked as chef de cuisine for former L'Etoile owner, Odessa Piper. Prior to his arrival in Wisconsin, Miller cooked in New York City at Eleven Madison Park and the now-closed Judson Grill. He is also the executive chef of Graze in Madison.

*L'Etoile, 1 South Pinckney St., Madison, WI; 608-251-0500
or letoile-restaurant.com*



Editors' Favorites



“I’m standing on my favorite chair licking the beaters for my 2nd birthday cake —chocolate with pink icing—and ignoring my mother’s constant pleas to stay away from the hot pans.”

Tressa Eaton

New York City Editor

Ginger smells like my childhood: Fat rounds of candied ginger served on my grandmother’s coffee table, ginger-studded chocolate cookies and heavy mugs of ginger tea after ice skating. So around the holidays, I reach for this recipe for Gingerbread Cake with Cognac Glaze. The gingery batter is spiked with freshly brewed coffee, cloves and cinnamon, the final result delivering holiday drama.

SEE THE RECIPE



Gingerbread Cake with Cognac Glaze

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 1 cake

Cook Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

Cake

- *Nonstick pan spray*
- *¾ cup unsulfured molasses*
- *½ cup freshly brewed coffee*
- *1 cup hot water*
- *1 teaspoon baking soda*
- *3 cups all-purpose flour*
- *1 tablespoon natural cocoa powder*
- *2 teaspoons ground ginger*
- *1½ teaspoons baking powder*
- *1 teaspoon ground cinnamon*
- *¼ teaspoon ground cardamom*
- *⅛ teaspoon ground cloves*
- *½ teaspoon kosher salt*
- *⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper*
- *2 large eggs*
- *¾ cup dark brown sugar*



- *½ cup granulated sugar*
- *1½ tablespoons finely grated fresh ginger*
- *Finely grated zest of 1 medium lemon*
- *⅓ cup grapeseed oil*

Cognac glaze

- *2 cups confectioners' sugar*
- *3 tablespoons water*
- *2 tablespoons cognac*
- *1 vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped out*
- *Pinch of kosher salt*

DIRECTIONS

1. **Make the cake:** Preheat the oven to 325°. Spray the bottom and sides of a Bundt pan with nonstick pan spray.



2. In a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat, bring the molasses, coffee and water to a boil. Remove from the heat and carefully whisk in the baking soda. Set aside to cool slightly, 15 to 20 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, ground ginger, baking powder, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, salt and pepper.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, brown sugar, granulated sugar, fresh ginger, lemon zest and grapeseed oil. Gradually whisk in the reserved molasses mixture and flour mixture a third at a time, alternating until the batter is just combined.
5. Pour the batter into the prepared Bundt pan and bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Place the cake on a wire rack and let cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Carefully turn the cake out onto the wire rack and cool completely.
6. Make the cognac glaze: In a small bowl, whisk together the confectioners' sugar, water, cognac, vanilla-bean seeds and of salt until smooth. Pour the glaze over the cooled cake and serve.



Hot Chocolate Meets Its Match

SALTED SIPPING CARAMEL

From Chef Autumn Martin



Hot chocolate has long had a monopoly on steamy cold-weather sips. But hot cocoa has a newfound competitor in Autumn Martin's sipping caramel. Martin, the founder of Hot Cakes Molten Chocolate Cakery in Seattle, Washington, spikes the rich beverage with mezcal (a distinctive smoky liquor distilled from fermented juice of the agave plant), tipping the drink into adult-only territory. The smoky addition cuts through the thick, salty-sweet caramel, promptly welcoming the sipping caramel into our winter beverage repertoire.

SEE THE RECIPE



Salted Sipping Caramel

Recipe adapted from Autumn Martin, Hot Cakes Molten Chocolate Cakery, Seattle, WA

Yield: 4 servings

Cook Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Salted caramel sauce

- *¾ cup heavy cream*
- *¾ cup granulated sugar*
- *1 teaspoon unsalted butter, at room temperature*
- *½ teaspoon kosher salt*

Sipping caramel

- *½ cup heavy whipping cream*
- *1 cup half-and-half*
- *2 tablespoons mezcal*
- *Flaky sea salt*

DIRECTIONS

1. **Make the caramel sauce:** In a small saucepan set over medium heat, add the cream and heat until warm. In a separate medium saucepan set over medium heat, add the sugar and cook until the sugar is melted and turns light gold in color, 7 to 10 minutes. Gradually whisk in the heated

cream, a little at a time, whisking after each addition to avoid any lumps. Once all the cream is incorporated, remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the butter and salt. Cool the caramel slightly or, if using later, cool the caramel completely and transfer to an airtight container. Store the caramel in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

2. **Make the sipping caramel:** In a medium bowl, add the cream and whisk until soft peaks form. In a small saucepan set over medium-low heat, add the prepared caramel sauce and the half-and-half. Cook, whisking constantly, until the caramel is melted and the drink is hot and frothy. Stir in the mezcal.
3. **Pour the sipping caramel into 4 small heat-safe glasses and top with the whipped cream, sprinkle with sea salt and serve warm.**

About the Chef

Autumn Martin worked in Seattle, Washington, as the pastry chef at Canlis and then was the head chocolatier for Theo Chocolate. She founded Hot Cakes in 2008.

Hot Cakes Molten Chocolate Cakery, 5427 Ballard Ave. NW, Seattle, WA; 206-420-3431 or getyourhotcakes.com



Editors' Favorites



"Me, being toasted at my first-ever family holiday meal."

Willy Blackmore

Los Angeles Editor

My aunt always said that intensely chocolaty desserts made her eyebrows sweat. I still can't figure out what, exactly, that meant, but it was clearly a count against chocolate. But my sweet holiday memories always involved chocolate: the chocolate-iced chocolate cake my dad and I made for my mom's birthday, licking the chocolate frosting off the leftover Boston cream pie he baked for my birthday another year. And whenever a family friend would bring a dense, dark bowl of mousse over, I would jump at the chance to whip up a bowl of cream—mainly because I wanted to surreptitiously lick the beaters when I was finished. The floral touch of elderflower liqueur in this recipe will surely become a nostalgic favorite for the next generation.

SEE THE RECIPE



Elderflower-Chocolate Mousse

Recipe from the Tasting Table Test Kitchen

Yield: 6 servings

Cook Time: 30 minutes (plus 3 hour chilling)

INGREDIENTS

- 6 ounces ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) finely chopped semisweet chocolate
- 2 ounces ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) finely chopped bittersweet chocolate
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 large eggs, separated
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided
- Kosher salt
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy cream, divided
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
- 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar
- 6 tablespoons (about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup) elderflower liqueur, such as St.-Germain
- Cacao nibs

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, combine the semisweet chocolate, bittersweet chocolate and butter. Place the bowl over a larger saucepan filled with 2 inches of simmering water (don't allow



the bottom of the chocolate bowl to touch the water). Stir until melted. Carefully remove the bowl from the heat and set aside to cool slightly.

2. In a medium bowl, use a hand mixer to whisk together the egg yolks with the brown sugar and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the granulated sugar until pale and frothy, 5 to 7 minutes. Carefully fold into the melted chocolate mixture.
3. In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat together the egg whites with the remaining 2 tablespoons of the granulated sugar and a pinch of salt until stiff peaks form, about 5 minutes. Carefully fold the egg whites into the melted chocolate mixture.
4. In a separate medium bowl, use a hand mixer to whisk 1 cup of the heavy cream and 1 teaspoon vanilla until stiff peaks form. Carefully fold the whipped cream into the melted chocolate mixture until there are no streaks. Cover the bowl



with plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, at least 3 hours and up to overnight.

5. In a medium bowl, whisk the remaining 1½ cups heavy cream with the confectioners' sugar, the remaining ½ teaspoon vanilla and the elderflower liqueur. Continue whisking until soft peaks form.
6. Remove the chilled mousse and divide between bowls. Top with elderflower whipped cream and garnish with cacao nibs.



A Sweet Crowd Pleaser



“When I was very young, I remember being on my family’s farm in Cuba and sitting under a quenepe tree one dark, starry night. The tree was full of light bugs—I looked up and the tree was lit up just like a Christmas tree!”

PUMPKIN AND PISCO-PRUNE BREAD PUDDING

From Chef Maricel Presilla



In her recently released magnum opus, *Gran Cocina Latina* (Norton), chef and restaurateur Maricel Presilla shares a recipe for a custardy Cuban-style flan-inspired pumpkin bread pudding studded with Pisco-plumped prunes. The generous recipe serves 10 to 12 people and can be made a day in advance, so the dish is ideal for holiday dessert. If you can find it, the chef recommends using fragrant *pisco Italia*.

SEE THE RECIPE



Pumpkin and Pisco-Prune Bread Pudding

Recipe adapted from Gran Concina Latina (Norton) by chef Maricel Presilla

Yield: 12 servings

Cook Time: 2 hours

INGREDIENTS

Prunes

- 1 cup pitted prunes, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup pisco (preferably pisco Italia)

Pumpkin custard

- 1 cup whole milk
- One 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- Two 12-ounce cans evaporated milk
- ½ cup finely grated brown loaf sugar (such as panela, chancaca or piloncillo; dark brown sugar can be substituted)
- 8 allspice berries
- 5 whole cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 teaspoon whole anise seeds
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- One 16-ounce can solid-pack pumpkin purée
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 large egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 1 medium 2-day-old loaf of bread (preferably Cuban, French or Italian), cut into ¾-inch cubes (about 15 cups)

Caramel

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 cup crème fraîche

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the prunes: In a small bowl, add the prunes and pisco. Soak for at least 1 hour, then drain the prunes through a fine-mesh sieve, reserving the prune-infused pisco for another use.
2. While the prunes soak, make the pumpkin custard: In a medium saucepan set over medium heat, stir together the milk, condensed milk, evaporated milk, brown loaf sugar, allspice, cloves, cinnamon sticks, anise seeds and salt. Bring to a simmer, stir in the pumpkin purée, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until the mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, 8 to 10 minutes. Set a fine-mesh sieve over a medium bowl and force the mixture through the sieve, using the back of a spoon or a rubber spatula to push the mixture through. Add the butter and vanilla to the warm, strained pumpkin mixture and stir until the butter melts. Add the egg yolks and stir gently until combined. Add the bread cubes and set the mixture aside until the bread is softened and has absorbed the custard, about 20 minutes. Stir in the reserved prunes.
3. Make the caramel: While the bread is soaking, to a small saucepan set over medium-high heat add the sugar and water and bring to a boil. Cook, carefully swirling the pan every few



minutes, until the liquid turns a light caramel color, about 8 minutes. Pour the caramel into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, tipping and tilting the pan to coat it. Set the pan aside to let the caramel cool.

4. Preheat the oven to 350°. Add the reserved bread mixture to the caramel-coated baking dish. Place the pan in a larger baking dish (or roasting pan) and pour in just enough hot water to come halfway up the sides of the outer pan. Place the pans in the oven and bake until the custard is just set and jiggles slightly in the center, about 50 minutes. Remove the bread pudding from the water bath, wipe off the excess water with a kitchen towel and invert the hot bread pudding onto a serving platter. Use a sharp knife to cut the bread pudding into squares and serve the bread pudding warm or at room temperature with the crème fraîche.

About the Chef

Maricel Presilla is a culinary historian, specializing in the foods from Latin America and Spain. In addition to running two pan-Latin restaurants, Zafra and Cucharamama, in Hoboken, New Jersey, Maricel most recently opened, Ultramarinos, a Latin American-focused store which sells hard-to-find ingredients and prepared meals. She has written *The New Taste of Chocolate: A Cultural and Natural History of Chocolate with Recipes* (Ten Speed Press, 2001) and most recently published *Gran Cocina Latina: The Food of Latin America* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2012).



A top-down view of a wooden cutting board. On the left, a chef's knife with a wooden handle and a metal blade lies diagonally. The blade has Japanese characters engraved on it. To the right of the knife, several slices of white onion are scattered. In the top left corner, there are fresh green herbs, possibly thyme. A single green leaf is also visible near the bottom left of the cutting board. The background is a dark, textured surface.

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