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65

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recipes and tips

Southern

# CAST IRON<sup>®</sup>

## ORANGE SWEET ROLLS

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JAN/FEB 2024 VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

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### + IRRESISTIBLE *Chocolate* DESSERTS

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**MUST READ:** 10 CAST IRON COMMANDMENTS

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# BEATS & TREATS

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Live Music

## BLUE CANOE

**Tupelo, Mississippi**

Elvis will always be a big draw in Northeast Mississippi's Tupelo, but for some live music, the Blue Canoe is where it's at. The venue serves up local and regional acts performing original music nightly, along with a menu that ranges from burgers and salads to heartier entrées, like the Pot Roast & Cornbread Waffle. [bluecanoebar.com](http://bluecanoebar.com)

## Shop

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**Southaven, Mississippi**

Born on the Gulf Coast, the beautifully curated boutique that is Magnolia House recently relocated to Silo Square in Southaven, Mississippi. From pillows and candles to art pieces and locally made foodstuffs, this local treasure is sure to have something for everyone. [magnoliahouse.com](http://magnoliahouse.com)



Restaurant

## THE LITTLE EASY

**Natchez, Mississippi**

If you enjoy Sunday morning brunch, just wait until you have it for dinner. The Little Easy serves up brunch favorites all day, and while its menu skews toward South Louisiana flavors (Shrimp Remoulade, Chicken & Andouille Gumbo, and Croissant Beignets), there's a lot of Southern comfort to go around.

[thelittleeasynatchez.com](http://thelittleeasynatchez.com)

## Live Music

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Authentic vibes abound in this small juke joint. Located a short drive from downtown Clarksdale, this no-frills (cash-only) club features live music by local acts nightly. Come and fill your soul with raw, heartfelt music at this locals' favorite establishment, and just make sure you tip generously. 662.627.3166



Restaurant



Museum

## GRAMMY MUSEUM MISSISSIPPI

**Cleveland, Mississippi**

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[grammymuseumms.org](http://grammymuseumms.org)

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## BRENT'S DRUGS

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VISIT  
MISSISSIPPI



Doe's Eat Place | Greenville, Mississippi



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER  
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January/February 2024 Volume 10, Issue 1

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POUND CAKE  
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# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Out with the old and in with the new? Absolutely not, so long as we're talking about our prized collections of cast iron cookware. At *Southern Cast Iron*, we take using and caring for our well-loved pieces as a point of pride, and while a new skillet or Dutch oven can be exciting and all, we're happy to stick with our "old faithfuls" as they've served us well for many years.

With this new year, we do have a handful of tweaks and changes to the magazine to share—all good things! First up, we'll be chatting with cast iron collectors from around the region, starting with Jeffrey B. Rogers (aka, The Culinary Fanatic). His extensive cast iron knowledge brings us tips on how to locate prized pieces, input on the great "soap or no soap" debate, and some background on his collection and how he cares for it. We've got a fascinating group of folks slated for this column throughout the coming year, and we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have. Check out his interview on page 89.

The column formerly known as "Unique & Antique" has received a makeover and will continue as "Rare Finds." Throughout the year, you'll be treated to a glimpse inside Lee Campbell's extensive assortment of cast iron. There are some twists and turns along with pieces from the 1970s and as old as the mid-1800s. Flip to page 97 for the first installment and get ready to have a healthy dose of cast iron envy once you take in the beauty shots of Lee's gorgeous—and very well-used—collection.

Now that we've covered new business, let's get back to some good old-school cooking. Cozy dishes and bakes await, and this issue is packed with everything from crowd-pleasing breads and Bundts to hearty helpings of macaroni and cheese and some of our favorite Southern gravy recipes. A few recipes that need to be called out include the Orange Sweet Rolls (it's what you saw on the cover, and you'll find it on page 86), Shrimp and Grits with Tomato Gravy (page 68), and Mushroom and Sausage Mac and Cheese (page 75).

**WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT IN YOUR PERSONAL STASH OF CAST IRON, WE HOPE THESE STORIES AND RECIPES WILL GIVE YOU GOOD REASONS TO KEEP THEM GOOD AND GREASED UP.**



For daily cast iron recipes, tips, and stories you don't want to miss, be sure to follow us on social media, and show us your cast iron pride by using #southerncastiron.



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**AS MUCH  
Joy AS  
YOU CAN  
PACK IN.**

Turn it up this Mardi Gras season in Lake Charles for an amplified take on Carnival's classic traditions. Starting Feb. 9 with the Merchants' Parade, the streets pulsate with energy and color through to Fat Tuesday.

What sets Lake Charles apart are not just the kaleidoscopic parades but also the traditional Royal Gala on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>. This exclusive event gathers the royalty from all krewes in one venue, a tradition found nowhere else in the state.

If you're a first-timer or a Mardi Gras veteran, Lake Charles guarantees an extraordinary experience complete with live music and mouth-watering local cuisine. Don't miss out on King Cake, a seasonal treat that embodies the spirit of Mardi Gras. Many local eateries take it up a notch, offering King Cake-inspired cocktails and desserts. Tucked inside each cake is a tiny plastic baby, a token of good luck and prosperity for the finder.

No other destination packs in as much authentic flavor and joyous celebration as Lake Charles. So come revel in a Mardi Gras experience that's authentically Southwest Louisiana and unequivocally Lake Charles.

For a complete schedule of events, visit [swlamardigras.org](http://swlamardigras.org).

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Saturday, Jan. 6**

Twelfth Night

**Friday, Feb. 9**

Merchants' Parade

**Saturday, Feb. 10**

Krewe of Omega

Krewe of Barkus

Gumbo Cookoff

**Sunday, Feb. 11**

Children's Parade

**Monday, Feb. 12**

Royal Gala

**Fat Tuesday, Feb. 13**

Motor Gras Parade

Jeeps on Parade

Second Line Stroll

Krewes of Imperial Calcasieu Parade

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### 1. CHOCOLATÁ HOT COCOA MIX



Now is the time of year when many get a hankering for cozy sips of cocoa. Thankfully, Chocolatá in Birmingham, Alabama, has created this rich and magical mix. All that's required is your favorite mug and some warm milk. But whether you keep it all to yourself or share it with family and friends, a scoop or two is sure to keep those chocolate cravings in check all winter long. [chocolatachocolate.com](http://chocolatachocolate.com)



### 2. LEAH'S PRALINES SPICY CAJUN PECAN BRITTLE

This New Orleans-made brittle combines the rich, buttery goodness of traditional Southern brittle with a Cajun-inspired kick. Made with Louisiana pecans and a handful of spices like jalapeño and bird's-eye chili, each batch is a testament to the more than 70 years of traditions this family-owned business holds dear. [leahspralines.com](http://leahspralines.com)

### 3. FREDERICKSBURG CAST IRON CO. NO. 12 SKILLET

The family behind the South's newest cast iron maker has more than three decades of production experience, and now, they're expanding their Texas-made cookware line with the launch of their new 12-inch skillet. This pan's ultraslick and high-quality cooking surface is virtually nonstick even before your first use, making it ideal for first-time cast iron users, and the long, lightweight handle means moving it between the cooktop and oven rack is a breeze. [fbgcastiron.com](http://fbgcastiron.com)



## CAST IRON COOKS WE LOVE

**STEPHANIE MELIM**



A FIRST-GENERATION AMERICAN hailing from a close-knit Portuguese family, Stephanie has spent all her life creating a version of the South that's all her own, especially when it comes to food. Having grown up cooking alongside her Portuguese grandmother, Stephanie cherishes the memories of family meals that effortlessly blended her family's European heritage with their newly found Florida roots. Nowadays, she's bringing "her South" to an ever-growing following with mouthwatering recipes cooked in an array of trusty pieces of cast iron. From spicy shrimp tacos and dry-rubbed barbecue ribs to sugar-topped Dutch babies and flaky buttermilk biscuits, she's always whipping up something delicious and worth adding to your weekly rotation. So, get your cast-iron skillets and Dutch ovens ready because Stephanie's recipe repertoire certainly has plenty to satisfy.

FIND STEPHANIE MELIM'S TASTY RECIPES AT [girlwiththeironcast.com](http://girlwiththeironcast.com) AND FOLLOW @girlwiththeironcast ON INSTAGRAM FOR PLENTY OF CULINARY INSPIRATION.



# Think inside the box.

Tony Chachere's Creole Dinner Mixes are perfect for a quick, one-pot meal loaded with authentic Louisiana flavor! Just add your favorite meat, go vegetarian, or add your own special ingredients to create a new family favorite—in only minutes!



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## 5 Can't Miss Events at the Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival

Attendees at the Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival have plenty of events packed with delicious bites and wonderful sights throughout the weekend to choose from, but here are a few things that everyone should catch.

### 1. GULLAH GEECHEE FOODS AND ARTISAN CRAFTS

Throughout the schedule, visitors have the opportunity to experience the culture and cuisine of the Gullah Geechee people. In 2023, nationally-known chef and cultural ambassador BJ Dennis thrilled guests at Zero Forks Given (at the Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort) event while Gullah-made artisan goods, including sweetgrass baskets, are available at the Saturday Seafood Festival.

### 2. ISLAND EXPERIENCES

In addition to all the incredible cooking and live music, make time for one of the local excursions. The 2023 festival featured an ecology-focused marsh tour with May River Excursions (based in nearby Bluffton), followed by a decadent waterside lunch at Hudson's on the Docks. Additionally, award-winning Santa Fe, New Mexico, Chef Fernando Olea returns in 2024 with the Holy, Mole, and Olea

collaboration dinner with Hilton Head Island's own Chef Tim Nelson of Holy Tequila.

### 3. CULINARY MASTER CLASSES

Indulge your culinary curiosity with our exclusive Culinary Master Classes. From mastering the art of shucking your first oyster to honing your knife skills for savoring delectable pastries, each class is a delectable journey into the world of gastronomy. Led by renowned local chefs and nationally-known tastemakers, these intimate classes offer a week-long exploration of various techniques in the kitchen.

### 4. LOCAL FAVORITE SEAFOOD DELICACIES

While many oyster lovers will be familiar with the ritual of opening a crisp, cold oyster, but likely less acquainted with South Carolina's smaller clustering variety. These hand-harvested clusters are on full display at Friday night's Pig Pickin'

& Oyster Roast at historic Honey Horn, along with all manner of mouthwatering pork preparations, of course.

### 5. TOP TIER SIPPIN'

Throughout the weekend's events, guests are able to sample not only excellent local wine, beer, and spirits, but sample nationally-beloved brands as well. Local favorite distilleries Hilton Head Island Distillery (known for its playful collection of rums) and Lincoln + South Craft Beer are just two players in the spectacular lineup.

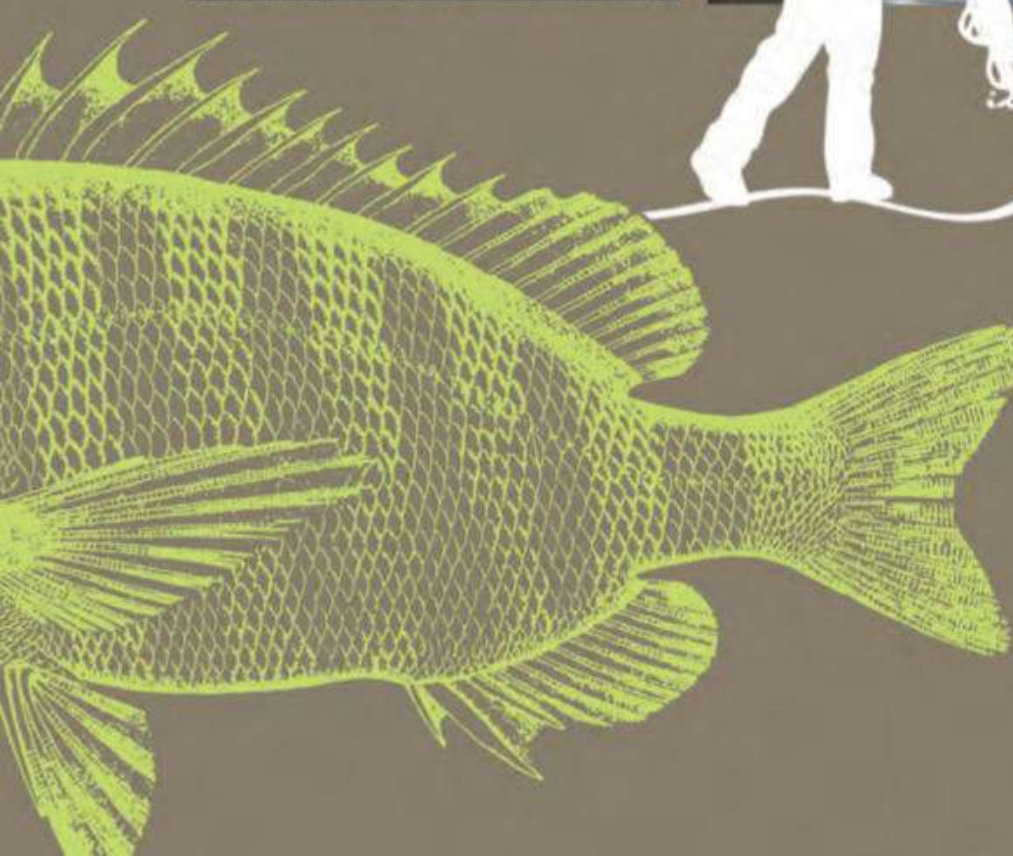
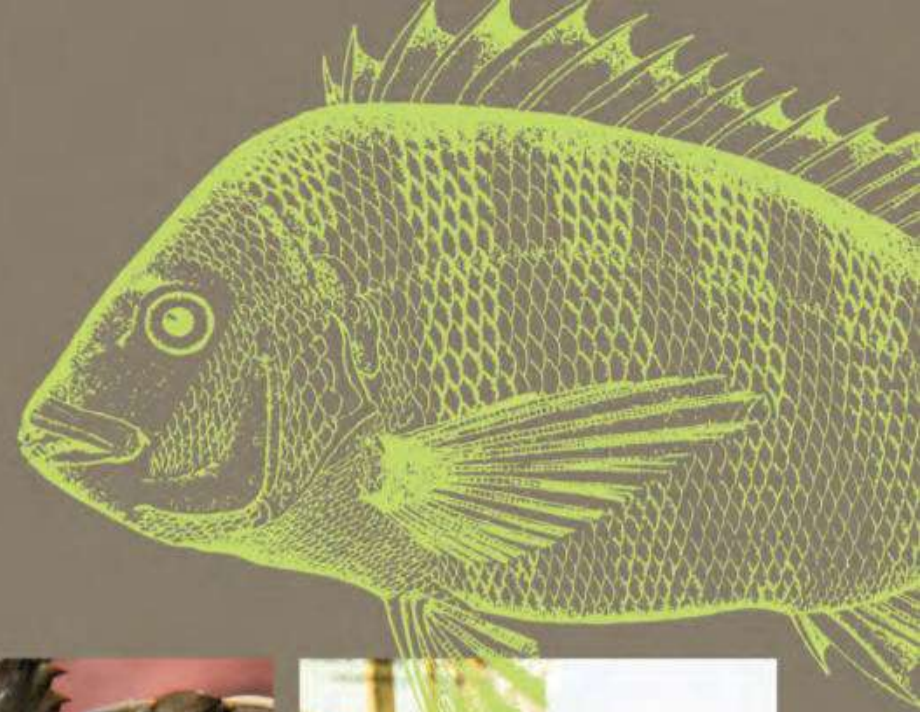
To get your tickets, visit [hiltonheadseafoodfestival.com](https://hiltonheadseafoodfestival.com).



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19-25  
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## HILTON HEAD ISLAND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

At the Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival, we have crafted an exhilarating culinary adventure committed to preserving our distinct, South-inspired culture. With world-renowned chefs crafting delectable seafood specialties, oyster roasts for sustainable consumption, wine tastings and expert mixologists – there's something unique for everyone to enjoy! Discover an unforgettable memory that delivers exceptional culinary delights and leisurely activities all on one gorgeous southern island. [HILTONHEADSEAFOODFESTIVAL.COM](https://www.hiltonheadseafoodfestival.com)



# ROBERT ST. JOHN

THIS MISSISSIPPI ICON'S SIZZLING JOURNEY FROM  
CAST IRON BEGINNINGS TO A SELF-MADE CULINARY EMPIRE

BY DANIEL DUBUISSON



**H**attiesburg, Mississippi, native Robert St. John has had a remarkable life in the culinary world over the last several decades, with his passion for cooking deeply rooted in his Mississippi upbringing and a strong influence from his family. From growing up in his grandmother's kitchen to building his own Southern restaurant empire and spearheading philanthropic efforts, Robert's career has been a fascinating and fulfilling blend of cooking, creativity, and community.

Robert's culinary odyssey began with his grandmother, a masterful home cook whom he credits for sparking his lasting love for food. Robert spent countless hours in her kitchen, perched on a little stool near the window-unit air conditioner, observing her work. He watched her create delicious staples like fried chicken and cornbread in her beloved cast-iron skillet. These moments in early adolescence inspired him to start cooking on his own at a young age.

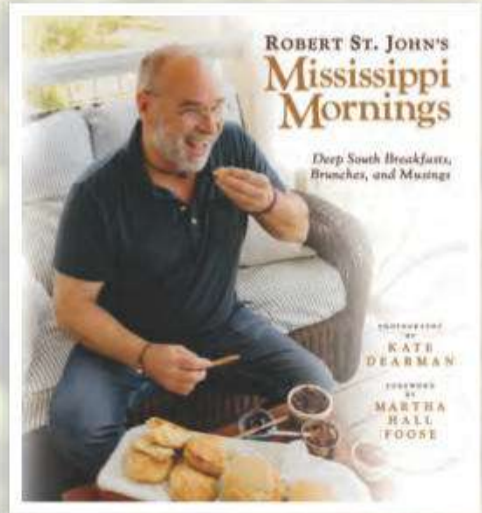
"I asked for and received an Easy-Bake Oven for my sixth Christmas," Robert says. "I guess I got my start cooking with a bit of plastic and a 100-watt light bulb before moving up to cast iron."

Robert moved on from children's toys and began working in bustling professional kitchens after graduating high school, but it wasn't actually his original path. After a brief stint in college that didn't pan out the way he intended, he entered the restaurant industry. There, Robert discovered his true calling: the restaurant world. Eventually, he decided to return to college and earned a degree in hospitality management and then opened his first restaurant.

"I was 26 years old at the time," Robert says. "I was a front-of-house guy, and that Easy-Bake Oven was the extent of my kitchen experience. We fired our chef opening night, so I went back there and started teaching myself the ins and outs from square one. It was one of those things that seemed like it happened at the worst time, but in retrospect, it was something that needed to happen to get me back in the kitchen."

He dedicated his time to learning and developing his skills, shoring up knowledge through round after round of trial and error. It helped that he was eager to replicate dishes he and his wife experienced during their weekend travels to the food mecca that is New Orleans.





CHECK IT OUT

## MISSISSIPPI MORNINGS

BY CHEF ROBERT ST. JOHN

[shop.robertstjohn.com](http://shop.robertstjohn.com)





“We would eat our way around the city,” Robert says. “It’s something I did a lot growing up so close to the city, but I was seeing these foods from a new perspective. I was seeing it all through the eyes of a restaurant owner and was eager to get back to the kitchen and try re-creating them in my own way.”

As his knowledge and confidence in the food venture continued to flourish, Robert took a bold leap and expanded his footprint in Hattiesburg. He opened one new restaurant after another.

“It’s never scared me even when it probably should have,” he says. “I love to create, though, whether it’s creating a job for someone or creating a new restaurant concept. I enjoy the synergy that happens when you’re working with other people to make that happen, especially when you’re committed to never repeat an idea from place to place.”

That commitment to the culinary world goes beyond Robert’s restaurants. He cofounded Extra Table, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing food insecurity and providing healthy, nonperishable foods to those in need across Mississippi.

“We founded [Extra Table] based on two guiding principles,” Robert explains. “Number one is that 100% of the money we raise for food is going to go to purchase food. Number two is that the food has to be healthy. Most of the state’s food pantries operate on canned food drives, which—they won’t tell you—is the most ineffective way to feed those in need. I wanted to make sure we emphasized low-fat proteins, healthy grains, and low-sugar fruits and vegetables to not only help feed people but give them healthier options as well.”

In addition to his philanthropic work, Robert has authored numerous cookbooks through the years. His latest work, *Mississippi Mornings*, celebrates the joy of starting the day with a delicious morning meal. The book features a collection of breakfast recipes that speak to the importance of beginning each day with good food and includes treasured family dishes like his grandmother’s pancakes.

“I’m a breakfast guy and always have been,” Robert shares. “I’ve wanted to do a breakfast book since I started writing, really. My original publisher wasn’t interested at the time, so I sat on the idea for a while. It’s been a long time coming, so I was just excited to finally put the ideas on paper and get it out at the end of last year.”

Robert shared one of the book’s most soul-warming recipes with us. His Butcher’s Skillets are hearty personal feasts on the menu at his Hattiesburg, Mississippi, restaurant The Midtowner and feature hash browns, sausage, bell peppers, onion, and other mouthwatering ingredients cooked in personal-sized cast-iron skillets.

Cast iron cooking, which was deeply rooted in Robert’s upbringing, continues to play a significant role in his work today. His passion for cooking, commitment to addressing food insecurity, and love for creating memorable meals for customers and cookbook readers alike make him a beloved figure in the Mississippi dining scene. Robert’s story is a testament to the enduring influence of family and Southern tradition and the timeless appeal of cast iron cooking.





## BUTCHER'S SKILLETS

Makes 6 servings

If you don't want to make your own homemade hash browns, just use a refrigerated variety. This recipe requires 6 (6-inch) cast-iron skillets. When serving this dish, be sure to warn your guests that the skillets are hot.

- 2 (20-ounce) bags refrigerated shredded hash brown potatoes\* (about 9 cups)
- 7 slices thick-cut bacon, cut into ¼-inch pieces
- ½ pound bulk breakfast sausage
- 1 cup medium-diced yellow onion
- ¾ cup medium-diced red bell pepper
- 1¾ cups diced ham
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Melted unsalted butter, for brushing
- 2½ cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Prepare potatoes according to package directions. Divide and shape potatoes into 12 (6-inch) patties (about ¾ cup each). Cover and keep warm until ready to use.
3. In a large cast-iron skillet, cook bacon over medium heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon, and let drain on paper towels. Drain off excess fat.
4. In same skillet, cook sausage, onion, and bell pepper over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until sausage is browned, about 10 minutes. Stir in bacon, ham, salt, and black pepper.
5. Brush 6 (6-inch) cast-iron skillets with melted butter or spray with cooking spray. Place 1 potato patty in bottom of each skillet. Divide sausage mixture evenly among skillets. Sprinkle half of cheese evenly over sausage mixture in skillets. Top each with remaining potato patties, and sprinkle evenly with remaining cheese.
6. Bake until cheese is melted, about 5 to 7 minutes. Serve immediately. 🍴

\*We used *Simply Potatoes Shredded Hash Browns*.





# GEORGIA BRUNSWICK STEW

**AN OLD-FASHIONED FAVORITE THAT'S RIGHT AT HOME IN YOUR DUTCH OVEN**

Brunswick stew—sometimes referred to as “camp stew”—is a classic dish with a disputed origin story that’s tied to several states in the South. Virginia and North Carolina claim to be the stew’s birthplace; however, Georgia is often credited as the home of the most famous version of the dish. It’s said to have been created in the 1800s by either a local African American cook or a Native American using the region’s game meat options, like squirrel or rabbit, local vegetables, and tomatoes. The stew was traditionally cooked in large iron pots, often outdoors, as a favorite of hunting and fishing parties. Over the years, the recipe for Brunswick stew has evolved and gained popularity throughout the region for its easy method and large yields. While the exact origin of Brunswick stew remains a subject of debate, it is no doubt an iconic dish that has become a symbol of Southern comfort food and regional pride.

## GEORGIA BRUNSWICK STEW

Makes 2 quarts

*A fusion of tender meats, tangy barbecue sauces, and more, this hearty dish brings a comforting taste of the South to your table.*

- 4 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 cup finely chopped sweet onion
- 1½ teaspoons minced garlic
- 1½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper

- ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
  - ½ pound smoked chicken, chopped
  - ½ pound smoked pulled pork
  - 1 cup vinegar-based barbecue sauce
  - ½ cup sweet mustard-based barbecue sauce
  - 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
  - 2 cups chicken stock
  - 8 ounces frozen corn, thawed
  - 8 ounces frozen baby lima beans, thawed
  - 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh tomato
  - 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- Cornbread or saltine crackers and hot sauce, to serve

1. In a large cast-iron Dutch oven, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook, stirring frequently, until tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Add garlic to onion; cook until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in Worcestershire, salt, black pepper, and red pepper. Reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes. Add chicken, pork, and barbecue sauces, stirring until combined; cook for 5 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes, stock, corn, lima beans, fresh tomatoes, and paprika; bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour. Serve with cornbread or crackers and hot sauce. ●









# A Prosperous New Year in the Peach State

*Make visiting Georgia one of your New Year's resolutions!*

*For first of the year winter trips and New Year getaways, look no further than the copious quaint towns, charming communities, and stunning cities of the Peach State. Celebrate a fresh future by experiencing local culinary delights, taking in the natural beauty of the South and embarking of plenty of unique adventures indoors or outdoors; cheers to a year of exploring Georgia!*



## COZY COMFORT IN ELLIJAY

Tucked in the foothills of the Southern Appalachians, Ellijay in Gilmer County is the perfect getaway for the whole family. Known as Georgia's apple capital, this picturesque town offers you the chance to escape the ordinary. Explore the great outdoors, antique stores, and local tastes and attractions.

A visit to Ellijay isn't complete without a stop at one of the many orchards. Grown in the cool foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the variety of apples picked here are perfect for making fresh apple pies and warm apple cider. Even when visiting in the winter, several orchards feature bakeries and farmers' markets stocked with plenty of apple goods and provisions year-round.

Don't let this quiet mountain town fool you—Ellijay has culinary options that rival any city. Whether you feel like sampling inventive sushi at Kasei, sipping locally roasted coffee with fun names like "Bigfoot Blend" at Ellijay Coffeehouse, or visiting regional classics like River Street Tavern and Mr. P's, Ellijay's restaurant lineup will have you hungry for more.

Once you've feasted on some of the best food the South has to offer, swing by one of the local vineyards to sample a glass of

delectable homegrown wine. With almost a dozen vineyards and counting, Ellijay is a rising can't-miss destination on every wine lover's list. Want to take your Georgia mountain wine adventure to the next level? Book one of our exciting wine tours today and complete the Ellijay Sips Trail for a chance to win fun prizes.

Ellijay and the surrounding Gilmer County offer numerous outdoor activities that you won't want to miss in the New Year. Crisp yet temperate winters make for the perfect season to go hiking in Ellijay. When you're looking for memorable sites, hit Bear Creek Trail. This hike takes you on a scenic jaunt to the Gennet Poplar, the second-largest tree in Georgia. If you're looking for a more leisurely hike, enjoy a hike along the banks of Georgia's Deepest Lake, Carters Lake, by hiking Tumbling Waters Trail.

After you've spent a brisk late winter day exploring all Ellijay has to offer, there is no better way to finish your day than unwinding at the cabin of your dreams. Whether your perfect evening is spent roasting marshmallows and telling stories by the firepit or sipping cocoa under a warm blanket and watching feel-good movies with your friends, you'll love spending this winter in a cozy Ellijay cabin.



## Raise a Glass to Reconnecting in the Mountains

It's time to move the Girls' Trip out of the group chat and into reality. With an adorable downtown district, unbeatable shopping, vineyards, and over 2,000 cozy cabins, there is no better place to recharge with your favorite ladies than Ellijay, Georgia.



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## AN ESCAPE TO EATONTON

This season, spend a little time in and around the historic city of Eatonton, located in “Georgia’s Lake Country.” Slow down and explore some of Eatonton’s history with its plethora of museums—such as the Georgia Writers’ Museum or the Historic Uncle Remus Museum. Stroll through

downtown Eatonton and get lost in the beautiful Victorian, Gothic, and antebellum-style homes lining the streets. Spend an afternoon among the fragrant flora of Butterflies and Blooms in the Briar Patch, a five-acre volunteer-created green space that is home to many unique flowers, enjoy the perfect afternoon picnic under the trees, and then wander the Briar Patch’s quarter-mile soft walking track that winds through and around the park’s natural water features.

With two lakes nearby, Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair, there is ample opportunity to kayak, paddleboard, jet ski, boat, wakeboard, or even just float around. At Oconee Springs Park you can relax on the lake-front beach or jump around on the on-water inflatables. Set out on the water aboard kayaks, paddle boards, and pedal boats that are available for rent at the park or take aim at the Rock Hawk/Oconee Archery Range.

For an off the water adventure, Rock Hawk Effigy and trails has 15 miles of hiking, biking, and running trails. Learn about the ancient stone effigy from the outdoor interpretive centers and view the effigy and surrounding wetlands from the viewing tower. And as your adventure comes to a close, take home a bit of Georgia at Lake Oconee’s own Artisans Village Art Gallery, which sells local arts and crafts from homegrown creators.

Whether visiting to admire the deep history or looking for an outdoor adventure, Eatonton and its surrounding treasure trove of nature is the perfect getaway!





# Music to your ears



Photo by Ian Rawn

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## ROMANTIC WINTER GETAWAY



Fill the day with fun and celebrate President's Day weekend at the 13th Annual Fire and Ice Chili Cook-off and Craft Beer Festival on February 17 in Downtown Blue Ridge, with amazing displays of ice sculptures, great chili and craft beer, and live entertainment. While you're downtown, shop at Blue Ridge's surprisingly upscale shops and galleries. Go for a brisk hike to a local waterfall or to the start of the Appalachian Trail on Springer Mountain. Wind down and relax at one of seven local breweries or at Bear Claw and Serenberry Vineyards or reserve a table for a romantic dinner at one of Blue Ridge's finest restaurants, like Ferraro's Kitchen, Harvest on Main, or Grace Prime Steakhouse.

Looking for a peaceful escape this winter season? Slow down, rent a mountain cabin, and get away from the hustle and bustle of the big city. Cuddle up to a warm fire in the hearth or relax in the hot tub with a glass of wine, then wake to cool, quiet mornings on the porch with a cup of hot coffee and a gorgeous mountain view. Or enjoy a stay at the Blue Ridge Inn B & B or Hampton Inn Blue Ridge and walk to local shops, attractions, and great places to eat and drink. Sleep in and have brunch at The Black Sheep or Whiskey & Water, treat the family to a big country breakfast at Mercier Orchards, or grab a Big Foot Biscuit downtown to take along on the morning's adventure.





# Get Away Together



GEORGIA'S

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## SAVOR ALPHARETTA

**A**lpharetta's dining scene is a delightful blend of flavors and experiences, making it a culinary destination in Georgia. The city boasts an array of restaurants, from upscale dining to casual eateries, offering diverse cuisines such as Southern comfort food, global fusion, and farm-to-table creations. Visitors can savor locally sourced ingredients at charming bistros and enjoy innovative cocktails at trendy bars. Whether indulging in traditional Southern barbecue, exploring international tastes, or relishing modern culinary artistry, Alpharetta invites food enthusiasts to embark on a journey through its ever-evolving dining landscape. Want to learn some new skills in the kitchen? Register for a class at one of two Alpharetta cooking schools.

**Make Your Alpharetta Playlist.** Music fills the air in Alpharetta year-round. Catch your favorite artists on the big stage at Ameris Bank Amphitheatre. In 2023, greats like Chris Stapleton, Dave Matthews Band and Eric Church wowed the crowds of 12,000 in the venue. Jazz aficionados will love The Velvet Note, winner of *Downbeat Magazine's* Best Jazz Venues Worldwide Award. You'll hear world-class performances inside of the meticulously crafted listening room. Visit Alpharetta during the second weekend of October for the Wire & Wood Alpharetta songwriters festival where attendees can find more than 30 performers across six stages during the FREE music festival. For a more eclectic experience, check out who is playing at Matilda's Music Under the Pines and hear from local and regional artists from the quirky front porch stage.

**Two Wheel Tourist.** Alpharetta, Georgia epitomizes Southern charm, bringing stunning shopping, delectable dining, unique events and 30 awesome accommodations together to create the perfect getaway location. One of the most unique and enchanting parts of Alpharetta is how connected the city is, making getting from one area to another as easy as riding a bike! Designated as a Bike Friendly Community in 2023 by The League of American Bicyclists, Alpharetta is one of less than 500 communities across the United States to boast this distinction. This means that when you are in Alpharetta, exploring the city on two wheels is not just possible—it is one of the best and most enjoyable ways to experience our beautiful community! No matter where you decide to start pedaling, you'll end up in a great location.







*tastes* FOR EVERYONE

*shopping* FOR EVERYONE



**ALPHARETTA**  
HAS *something*  
**FOR EVERYONE!**



*events* FOR EVERYONE



*fun* FOR EVERYONE



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See for yourself why Alpharetta was named one of 2023 South's Best Cities by the readers of *Southern Living*®



# MAKING MEMORIES IN TIFTON



Spend some time in Tifton and enjoy the fruits of your labor—peaches, apricots, and berries, that is! No matter when you make the trip, enjoy year-round fresh, in-season vegetables and produce available at u-pick farms and in markets, such as Berry Good Farms or Rutland Farms.

Looking for a little spice for some mulled wine this holiday season? Satsuma oranges, Christmas trees, and pecans are available on the picking calendar in December. Or perhaps, blueberries and peaches for a summertime sweet treat are what's on the list; skip the grocery stores and pick berries and summer fruits aplenty during the months of May, June, and July!

Stroll down to Tifton in March and enjoy good food and music at the Rhythm & Ribs BBQ Festival. Experience the joy of homegrown fruits, vegetables, and other homemade goodies at the summer Farmers' Markets, and in September, take friends and family to celebrate the Omega Pepper Festival with live music and plenty of peppery products to taste. Then in October, gather the kids and take them to the various pumpkin patches to pick the perfect pumpkin for carving, get lost in the corn mazes at the Rutland Farms Fall Festival, and more!

Can't decide when to plan a trip to Tifton? There are plenty of evergreen activities that are sure to delight the entire family. Enjoy a day at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture, where you can experience farm life in the Wiregrass area in the early 1900s, visit the petting zoo at Rutland Farms, or even catch a fish in one of the many fantastic fishing spots in the area.



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# HOLIDAYS IN ALPINE HELEN



Step into the storybook surrounds of Alpine Helen perched on the Chattahoochee River in the heart of White County. The Old-World architecture, natural beauty, and aroma of Bavarian cuisine wafting through the fresh mountain air is best enjoyed in the winter weather.

Cozy up into one of the adorable local amenities, like the Adventure Lodges of Georgia at Unicoi State Park. They're the perfect place to relax in between activities like slot car racing, laser tag, or the Georgia Mountain Coaster.

Pace your stay in Alpine Helen by strolling along the cobblestone streets. Browse the clothing boutiques, toy emporiums, gift shops, and more; sample the traditional German cuisine at one of many spots. Strudel, schnitzel, pretzels—any decision you make will be a delightful one.



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# ALBANY

Enjoy the relaxing Southern lifestyle of Albany, Georgia, the cultural hub of beautiful Southwest Georgia. Discover the fascinating story of the Flint River and its mysterious blue-hole springs at the Flint RiverQuarium or spend an afternoon at Chehaw and its amazing zoo, home to the black rhino, prairie dogs, and an amazing alligator exhibit!

Listen to the sweet sounds of freedom, from the Freedom Singers, or blend soulful music with history at Ray Charles Plaza, Albany's own beautiful sunny park featuring a life-like bronze statue of Albany-born Ray Charles.

Get ready for an outdoor adventure with a bit of kayaking down the Flint River, bike rides along the Greenway Trails, and picturesque views at one of Georgia's Seven Natural Wonders: Radium Spring Gardens.

*Where Sweet and Savory Meet...*

Visit Albany where pecan pie and perfectly-poured pints bring family and friends together for a mouthwatering experience.



From four course flavor to farm-to-table, Albany's locally owned eateries serve up a true taste of Southern hospitality in Southwest Georgia.



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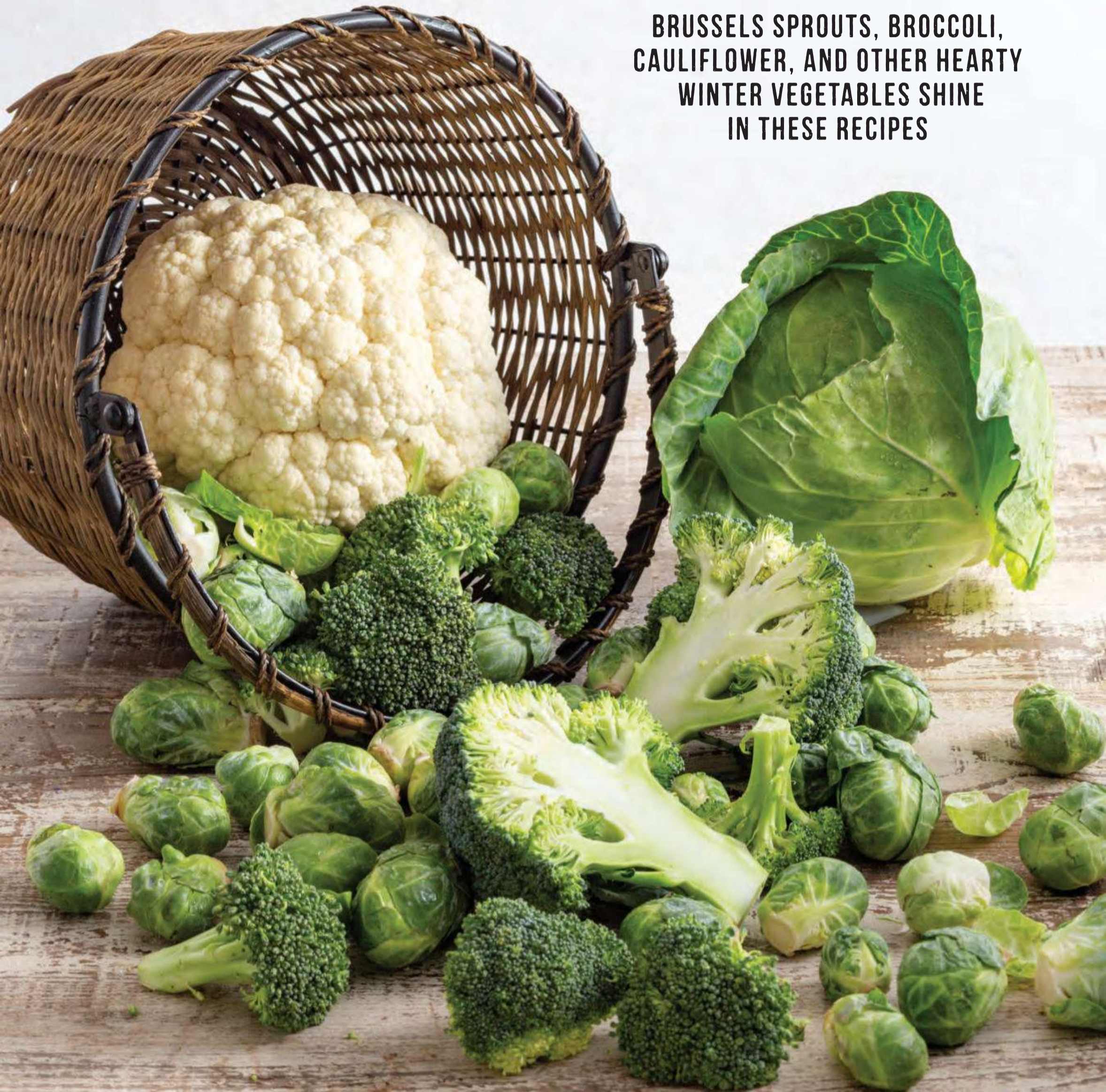


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# CRUCIFEROUS VEGGIES

**BRUSSELS SPROUTS, BROCCOLI,  
CAULIFLOWER, AND OTHER HEARTY  
WINTER VEGETABLES SHINE  
IN THESE RECIPES**





## SHAVED BRUSSELS SPROUTS SALAD WITH HOT BACON DRESSING

Makes 6 to 8 servings

*This crunchy salad with seasonal flavors is perfect to serve during winter months.*

- 1½ pounds fresh Brussels sprouts, trimmed, halved lengthwise, and thinly sliced
- 6 slices thick-cut bacon, chopped
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup thinly sliced shallot
- 1 tablespoon stone-ground mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 Bartlett pears, thinly sliced

1. In a large bowl, place Brussels sprouts.
2. In a medium skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until browned and crispy, about 12 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove bacon and add to bowl with Brussels sprouts.
3. In same skillet, heat vinegar over medium heat, scraping bits from bottom of pan. Let simmer until slightly reduced, about 4 minutes.
4. Add shallot, mustard, honey, salt, and pepper, stirring until well combined. Add oil in a slow and steady stream, whisking constantly. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice.

5. Carefully pour dressing over Brussels sprouts mixture. Add sliced pears and toss until well combined. Serve warm or refrigerate until desired temperature is achieved.

### • KITCHEN TIP •

*These tiny cabbage look-alikes play very well with bacon and roast quickly for a delightful side dish. One thing to remember is that smaller Brussels sprouts will taste slightly sweeter than larger ones.*





ROASTED WHOLE  
CAULIFLOWER WITH  
WHIPPED FETA DIP  
page 34









## ROASTED CABBAGE WEDGES

Makes 6 to 8 servings

*Cabbage haters will soon become cabbage converts when they try this tasty recipe that gets served with a homemade dressing.*

- 1 head green cabbage, cut into 6 wedges (about 3¾ pounds)
  - 2 tablespoons olive oil
  - ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
  - 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
  - ¼ cup panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
  - ½ teaspoon finely chopped garlic
  - 1 tablespoon sliced fresh chives
- Blue Cheese Dressing (recipe follows)**

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil.
2. In a large bowl, toss together cabbage, oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper. Arrange cabbage in a single layer on prepared pan.
3. Bake until cabbage is browned and just tender, about 25 minutes.
4. In a medium skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add bread crumbs, garlic, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt; cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in chives. Let cool slightly. Drizzle Blue Cheese Dressing over wedges. Sprinkle with bread crumb mixture.

### BLUE CHEESE DRESSING

Makes about ¾ cup

- ¾ cup crumbled blue cheese
  - ⅓ cup whole buttermilk
  - 2 tablespoons sour cream
  - 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
  - ¾ teaspoon lightly packed lemon zest
  - 1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice
  - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Garnish: ground black pepper**

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, combine blue cheese, buttermilk, sour cream, mayonnaise, lemon zest and juice, and pepper; process until smooth. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use or for up to 1 week. Garnish with pepper, if desired.

### ◦ KITCHEN TIP ◦

*Make a few extra batches of the homemade blue cheese dressing to serve with salads and wings.*

## ROASTED WHOLE CAULIFLOWER WITH WHIPPED FETA DIP

Makes 6 to 8 servings

(photo on page 33)

*It doesn't get much better than a recipe like this one that looks impressive but is easy to prepare, especially if you make the dip ahead of time.*

- 1 large head cauliflower (about 3½ pounds)
  - ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
  - 2 teaspoons garlic paste
  - 2 teaspoons honey
  - 2 teaspoons kosher salt
  - 1 teaspoon packed lemon zest
  - 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
  - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
  - ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- Whipped Feta Dip (recipe follows)**

1. Position oven rack in center of oven. Preheat oven to 400°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Remove leaves from cauliflower, and trim stem so it sits flat. Place on prepared pan.
3. Bake until slightly tender and lightly browned, about 45 minutes. Set broiler to 425°.
4. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine butter, garlic paste, honey, salt, zest, rosemary, black pepper, and red pepper. Brush surface of cauliflower with butter mixture.
5. Broil until tender and browned, about 4 minutes more. Serve warm with Whipped Feta Dip.

### WHIPPED FETA DIP

Makes about 2 cups

*Reserve the final drizzle of olive oil and garnish until ready to serve.*

- 8 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
  - 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
  - ¾ cup heavy whipping cream, room temperature
  - ½ teaspoon lemon zest
  - 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
  - 1 teaspoon garlic paste
  - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- Garnish: chopped fresh rosemary, crushed red pepper**

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, add cheeses, cream, lemon zest and juice, garlic paste, and black pepper. Process until smooth.
2. With processor still running, add 1 tablespoon oil in a slow and steady stream. Transfer mixture to a small serving bowl. Using the back of a spoon, create ridges in top. Drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Garnish with rosemary and red pepper, if desired. Serve immediately.







## CHARRED BABY BOK CHOY

Makes 4 to 6 servings

While we love cooking with bok choy in Asian-inspired dishes, our version with lemon and a dash of red pepper balances out the slight bitterness of this cruciferous vegetable.

- 1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- ⅛ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 pound baby bok choy, trimmed and halved

- 1 lemon, quartered
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Garnish: crushed red pepper**

1. In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, heat oil, garlic, and red pepper over medium heat; cook until garlic is lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Add bok choy, lemon, salt, and black pepper, tossing to coat. Cook, without stirring, until charred, 3 to 4 minutes. Turn, and cook until charred, 3 to 4 minutes more. Garnish with red pepper, if desired.

## CHEESY BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Classic and comforting, this cheesy, creamy casserole is one you'll want to make on repeat.

- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup chopped sweet onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth, room temperature
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 6 ounces smoked Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme, divided
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground marjoram
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 8 cups small broccoli florets (about 1¼ pounds)
- 1 cup crushed buttery round crackers
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 2-quart baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a large Dutch oven, heat ½ cup butter over medium heat until melted. Add onion and garlic; cook, stirring frequently, until tender, about 5 minutes. Whisk in flour; cook for 2 minutes, whisking constantly. Gradually whisk in broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 1 minute.
3. Remove from heat; whisk in cream cheese, Cheddar, 2 teaspoons thyme, mustard, salt, marjoram, and pepper until smooth. Stir in broccoli and transfer to prepared dish.
4. In a small bowl, stir together crackers, 2 tablespoons melted butter, and remaining 1½ teaspoons thyme; sprinkle over broccoli mixture.
5. Bake until golden brown and bubbly, about 30 minutes, covering with foil after 15 minutes to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. 🍴







# CAST IRON *Cakes*

TURN TO YOUR BUNDT AND LOAF PANS TO  
EXECUTE THESE EXTRA-TASTY SWEETS







BOURBON-CARAMEL  
POUND CAKE  
page 39





## CASHEW BANANA BREAD

Makes 1 (9x5-inch) loaf

*This modern take on a classic quick bread includes salty, creamy cashews and beautiful sliced bananas nestled on top of the golden-brown loaf.*

- ¾ cup sugar**
- ¾ cup cashew butter**
- ½ cup sour cream**
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 cup mashed ripe banana (about 3 small bananas)**

- 2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 cup chopped cashews**
- 1 banana, sliced lengthwise**
- 1 tablespoon honey**
- Cashew butter, to serve**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 9x5-inch cast-iron loaf pan with baking spray with flour.
- 2.** In a large bowl, combine sugar, cashew butter, sour cream, melted butter, eggs, and vanilla. Stir in mashed banana.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Add flour mixture to banana mixture, stirring just until

moistened. Stir in cashews. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Top with banana slices.

- 4.** Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 2 hours. Brush banana slices with honey. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert to remove, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Serve with cashew butter.

## BOURBON-CARAMEL POUND CAKE

Makes 1 (13-cup) Bundt cake

*Topped with a Bourbon Caramel Sauce and infused with bourbon, this buttery cake gets spiked with a hint of cinnamon and orange making it a total showstopper.*

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened**
- 1½ cups firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- ½ teaspoon packed orange zest**
- 4 large eggs, room temperature**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2⅔ cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- ⅔ cup whole buttermilk, room temperature**
- ¼ cup bourbon**
- Bourbon Caramel Sauce (recipe follows)**
- Garnish: chopped candied pecans**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325°.
- 2.** In a large bowl, beat butter, sugars, and zest with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, cinnamon, and baking soda. In a small bowl, whisk together buttermilk and bourbon. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition.
- 4.** Generously spray a 13-cup cast-iron Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Spread batter into prepared pan. Gently tap pan on a towel-lined countertop several times to release air bubbles.
- 5.** Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, about 1 hour. Let cool in pan for 30 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack to remove, and let cool completely.
- 6.** Transfer cake to a serving plate; drizzle with Bourbon Caramel Sauce. Garnish with candied pecans, if desired.



## BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

Makes about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup dark corn syrup
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons whole buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons bourbon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon vanilla extract

**1.** In a small enamel-coated cast-iron Dutch oven, bring brown sugar, corn syrup, buttermilk, butter, and salt to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes.

**2.** Remove from heat; stir in bourbon and vanilla. Pour sauce into a medium bowl, and let cool for 20 minutes before serving.









## ALMOND AND POPPY SEED BUNDT CAKE

Makes 1 (10-inch) Bundt cake

*The combination of lemon and poppy seed is well loved in baked goods, but have you tried it with almond extract instead? We think you'll dig this sweet flavor upgrade.*

- 1½ cups unsalted butter, softened**
- 3 cups granulated sugar**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 2 teaspoons almond extract**
- 5 large eggs**
- 3 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup whole buttermilk**
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds**
- 1½ cups confectioners' sugar**
- 3 tablespoons whole milk**
- ⅓ cup sliced almonds, toasted**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325°.
- 2.** In a large bowl, beat butter, granulated sugar, and extracts with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and baking powder. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Gently stir in poppy seeds.
- 4.** Spray a 15-cup cast-iron Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon batter into prepared pan, smoothing top with a spatula. Run a knife through batter to remove air pockets.
- 5.** Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Let cool in pan for 15 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack to remove, and let cool completely. Invert cake again onto a serving plate.
- 6.** In a medium bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and milk. Drizzle over cooled cake. Sprinkle with almonds.

## CHOCOLATE BUTTERMILK POUND CAKE

Makes 1 (8x4-inch) loaf

*True decadence awaits in this rich dessert, as espresso brings out all the chocolaty goodness.*

- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips, divided**
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour, divided**
- ⅓ cup unsalted butter, softened**



- ⅔ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ⅓ cup plus 4 teaspoons granulated sugar, divided**
- 1 large egg, room temperature**
- 1 egg yolk, room temperature**
- ⅓ cup Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted**
- ⅓ cup graham cracker crumbs**
- 1 teaspoon espresso powder**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder**
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ cup whole buttermilk, room temperature**
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°.
- 2.** In a small bowl, stir together 6 tablespoons chocolate chips and 1 tablespoon flour.
- 3.** In a large bowl, beat butter, brown sugar, and ⅓ cup granulated sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg and egg yolk, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

- 4.** In a medium bowl, whisk together cocoa, graham cracker crumbs, espresso powder, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and remaining flour. In a small bowl, whisk together buttermilk and vanilla. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating until combined. Fold in chocolate chip mixture just until combined.
- 5.** Spray an 8x4-inch cast-iron loaf pan with baking spray with flour. Line with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan. Spread batter into prepared pan; sprinkle with remaining 4 teaspoons granulated sugar.
- 6.** Bake for 40 minutes; sprinkle remaining 2 tablespoons chocolate chips onto cake. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes more. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Using excess parchment as handles, remove cake from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.





## APPLE-CRANBERRY UPSIDE-DOWN QUICK BREAD

Makes 1 (9x5-inch) loaf

*Use your loaf pan in an unexpected way: to reveal a colorful array of sunken seasonal fruit inside this moist cake.*

- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened and divided**
- ⅓ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 2 small Gala apples, peeled**
- 1 cup frozen cranberries, divided**
- 1 cup granulated sugar**
- 2 large eggs, separated**
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour**

- ¼ cup white stone-ground cornmeal**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ½ cup whole buttermilk**
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9x5-inch cast-iron loaf pan with 2 tablespoons butter. Place pan in oven until butter is melted. Sprinkle brown sugar over melted butter.
- 2.** Cut 1 apple into 12 (½-inch-thick) slices. Dice remaining apple into ½-inch pieces; set aside. Arrange apple slices over brown sugar in pan, and sprinkle with ½ cup cranberries. Set aside.
- 3.** In a large bowl, beat granulated sugar and remaining ½ cup butter with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes,

stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.

**4.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition.

**5.** In another medium bowl, using clean beaters, beat egg whites with a mixer at high speed until foamy. Add cream of tartar, and beat until stiff peaks form. Fold egg whites into batter in 3 additions. Stir in diced apple and remaining ½ cup cranberries. Spoon batter over apple slices in pan.

**6.** Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Let cool in pan for 15 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack to remove, and let cool completely.

## BROWN SUGAR BUNDT CAKE

Makes 1 (10-inch) Bundt cake

*Using brown sugar keeps this cake moist, while also imparting a caramel-like flavor.*

- 1½ cups unsalted butter, softened**
- 2 cups firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 1 cup granulated sugar**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 5 large eggs**
- 3 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup sour cream**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325°. Spray a 15-cup cast-iron Bundt pan with baking spray with flour.
- 2.** In a large bowl, beat butter, sugars, and vanilla with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and baking powder. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with sour cream, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Spoon batter into prepared pan, smoothing top with a spatula. Run a knife through batter to break up any air pockets.
- 4.** Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Let cool in pan for 15 minutes. Invert onto a wire rack, and let cool completely. 🍴







A round loaf of bread is nestled in a burlap sack, which is placed on a green cloth. The background is a dark, textured surface. The text 'BREAD BAKING' is written in a stylized, hand-drawn font across the bread.

# BREAD BAKING

**101**

MASTER THE ART OF CAST IRON BREAD BAKING WITH  
OUR HELPFUL TIPS AND MUST-KNOW FUNDAMENTALS,  
AND DISCOVER A VARIETY OF BAKES THAT  
USE OUR VERSATILE MASTER DOUGH





APPLE BUTTER  
SWEET ROLLS  
page 51



## MASTER DOUGH

*This all-purpose dough is good for baking both sweet and savory dishes.*

- 1 cup warm water (105° to 110°)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 (0.25-ounce) package active dry yeast
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. In a medium bowl, stir together 1 cup warm water, sugar, and yeast; let stand until frothy and bubbling, about 5 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine flour and salt. With mixer at low speed, add yeast mixture and melted butter, stirring just until combined. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium speed until dough is smooth and elastic, about 7 minutes.
3. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

## EASY TIPS for BETTER BAKING

Baking is a most delicious science. Follow these helpful hints to ensure your creations bake up perfectly every time.

### MEASURING MATTERS

Using a knife, stir the flour around to fluff it up. Use a measuring cup to scoop the flour, and level off the cup using the flat edge of a knife.



### TEST YOUR YEAST

Combine warm water, yeast, and sugar, and wait 5 minutes until the mixture is frothy and bubbling. If the mixture doesn't froth or bubble, chances are your yeast has expired and you will need to try a new package. Use a fresh package of yeast for the best results. (Tip: 1 (0.25-ounce) package yeast = 2¼ teaspoons yeast).

### KNEAD TO KNOW

Once the dough comes together, you will need to knead it until it's smooth and elastic. This develops the gluten, which gives the bread good structure and a nice chewy texture.

- ➔ By hand: 10 minutes
- ➔ With a stand mixer: 7 minutes

### CRUST PERFECTION

Using an egg wash before baking bread gives the crust a glossy finish. To make an egg wash, beat 1 large egg and 1 tablespoon water until frothy. If you want to sprinkle seeds, wheat, or oats over the loaf before baking, brush the loaf with egg wash first to make sure the toppings adhere. Finally, misting or brushing cold water over the loaf before baking can help crisp up the crust.







## ROSEMARY FOCACCIA

Makes 2 (9-inch) skillets

*With olive oil, fresh rosemary, sea salt, and a crispy golden crust, this skillet focaccia is a warm and fragrant treat.*

**Master Dough (recipe on page 47), olive oil substituted for melted butter**

**6 tablespoons olive oil, divided**

**¼ cup chopped fresh rosemary, divided**

**Garnish: sea salt, ground black pepper**

1. Prepare Master Dough, substituting 2 tablespoons olive oil for melted butter, and let rise as directed.
2. Drizzle 2 tablespoons oil into 2 (9-inch) cast-iron skillets.
3. Lightly punch down dough. Add 2 tablespoons rosemary, kneading until combined. Divide dough in half, and place in prepared skillets. Press dough into bottom of skillets. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 375°. Using your fingertips, press dough to create divots. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons rosemary, and drizzle with remaining 2 tablespoons oil.
5. Bake, uncovered, until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Garnish with sea salt and pepper, if desired.





## UPSIDE-DOWN MONKEY BREAD

Makes about 6 servings

*Upgrade your dessert game with this delightfully sticky-sweet monkey bread, featuring a delicious blend of pecans and cinnamon and baked to perfection in your cast-iron skillet.*

### Master Dough (recipe on page 47)

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons hot coffee
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plus 2 tablespoons chopped pecans, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

1. Prepare Master Dough, and let rise as directed.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add brown sugar and coffee; bring to a boil. Cook, stirring frequently, until sugar is dissolved, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup pecans.
4. In a large resealable plastic bag, combine granulated sugar and cinnamon.
5. Lightly punch down dough; shape dough into 2-inch balls. Working in batches, place dough balls in plastic bag. Shake until coated with sugar mixture. Arrange dough over butter mixture in skillet. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons pecans.
6. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let cool for 2 minutes. Invert onto a serving platter or tray. Serve immediately.



## SANDWICH BREAD

Makes 2 (8x4-inch) loaves

*This homemade loaf's soft texture pairs perfectly with your favorite sandwiches or a simple spread of butter and jam.*

**2** recipes Master Dough (recipe on page 47), all-purpose flour increased by  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup

**1** egg white, lightly beaten

**Garnish:** old-fashioned oats, wheat bran

**1.** Prepare Master Dough, increasing flour by  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, and let rise as directed.

**2.** Spray 2 (8x4-inch) cast-iron loaf pans with cooking spray.

**3.** Divide dough in half; shape halves into 2 loaves, and place in prepared pans. Spray loaves lightly with cooking spray. Loosely cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.

**4.** Preheat oven to 375°.

**5.** Using a sharp knife, score top of each loaf. Brush loaves with egg white. Garnish with oats and wheat bran, if desired.

**6.** Bake until golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on a wire rack.





## APPLE BUTTER SWEET ROLLS

Makes 10

*With a swirl of apple butter, cinnamon, and fresh apple slices, these rolls are a sweet, comforting bake for any occasion—morning, noon, or night.*

### Master Dough (recipe on page 47)

- ½ cup apple butter
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 Pink Lady apple, thinly sliced
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 2 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- to 4 tablespoons whole milk
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Prepare Master Dough, and let rise as directed.
2. Lightly punch down dough. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 14x10-inch rectangle. Spread apple butter over dough.
3. Spray a 12-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray.
4. In a small bowl, stir together brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Sprinkle brown sugar mixture over apple butter; top with apple slices. Starting with one long side, roll dough into a log; pinch seam to seal. Slice into 10 rolls. Place rolls in prepared skillet. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 350°.
6. Bake, uncovered, until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes.
7. In a medium bowl, beat butter and cream cheese with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Add confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla, beating until smooth. Spread glaze over warm rolls. ●











**10**  
**CAST IRON**  
**COMMANDMENTS**

BY DANIEL DUBUISSON

TIPS AND TRICKS TO CARE FOR YOUR FAVORITE  
SKILLETS, DUTCH OVENS, AND SPECIALTY  
CAST-IRON PIECES

Cast-iron cookware is a treasured heirloom, often passed down through generations of family and friends. It's not just a kitchen tool; it's a legacy, a vessel that carries years of flavor and tradition.



**WITH EVERY FEAST OR BAKE,** your chosen pieces of cast iron tell a story that speaks of countless family gatherings, home-cooked meals shared with loved ones, and recipes steeped in history. These workhorses of the kitchen hold within them the essence of Southern cooking, where the sizzle of fried chicken and the aroma of cornbread evoke memories of Sunday suppers and back porch gatherings.



**IF** you've ever had a prized skillet, Dutch oven, or some other rare prize, you know they're worth taking good care of.

Take the time to properly maintain your cast-iron cookware, and it will reward you and your family with generations of loyal service. Follow our team's noteworthy tips to keep your pieces—whether seasoned or enameled iron—in tip-top shape.

## #1 Keep it clean

- Never put your cookware away dirty. For best results, clean pots and pans as soon as they're cool enough to handle.
- Pools of excess oil and stubborn bits of cooked-on food will solidify, making future cleaning difficult. To remove, we recommend adding about ¼ cup kosher salt to the warm cast iron, gently scouring with a folded kitchen towel or the cut side of a potato, rinsing, and then drying completely.

## #2 Keep it dry

- It's crucial to dry your cookware completely. After rinsing, wipe it dry with a clean dish towel or paper towel.
- Store your precious pieces in a warm, dry place when not in use.





### #3 Enameled isn't always easier

☛ The finish on enameled cast iron is delicate, so handle your pieces carefully to avoid chipping. Never use metal utensils since they can scratch the surface.

☛ Unlike seasoned cast iron, enameled cast iron is not a nonstick surface. To avoid sticking, cook over medium heat using adequate amounts of oil or fat. If sticking does occur, use dish soap, water, and a non-scratch scouring pad to clean.

☛ Over time, enameled cast iron can become discolored or stained. To remove stains, soak the cooking surface in hydrogen peroxide mixed with baking soda, and then scrub with dish soap, water, and a non-scratch scouring pad to keep your enameled cast iron looking good.





## #4 Watch acidic foods

- Cooking acidic foods can erode the seasoned layer on your cast-iron cookware, which takes time to develop and enhances the flavors of your dishes. They also increase the risk of rust, potentially damaging the cookware and reducing its life span.
- A quick cook with tomatoes or other acidic foods can be fine, but avoid long-simmered tomato sauces and stews if you want to protect your pan's seasoning.
- Enameled cast iron pans are better-suited for longer acidic cooks, as the coating prevents the acid from interacting directly with the cast iron.

## #5 Fats are your friend

- For seasoned cast iron, cooking with fats is key to preserving and enhancing your seasoning, adding layers of richness and depth to every meal.
- Fats contribute to even heat distribution, ensuring that your dishes cook consistently and thoroughly without hot spots or burning.



## #6 Keep it seasoned

- After drying, apply a thin coat of vegetable oil or cast iron seasoning oil, rubbing it into the pan's surface with a bit of elbow grease. Choose oils with a high smoke point, like vegetable oil or vegetable shortening. Avocado oil is another good choice. Avoid olive oil, butter, and bacon fat, as they have a lower smoke point and can become rancid.
- Heat your pan on the stove over medium-low heat or in the oven at 300° until dry, about 10 minutes. Let cool; wipe the surface with a clean towel, and heat for 5 minutes more.
- The more you use and season your beloved cast iron, the finer its finish becomes.





Southern  
Cast Iron  
Instagram  
Fans Poll

## #7 Water in small doses

☛ Moisture is a sworn enemy of iron, but it's fine for a quick rinse.

☛ Prolonged exposure to water can strip away the piece's seasoning and risk the formation of rust and weaken iron's structure over time,

potentially compromising the integrity of your cast iron cookware.

☛ As to whether or not to use soap during a rinse, we'll leave that up to you. We've found that little bit of soap and a gentle scrub should

leave a well-seasoned cast iron pan in terrific shape. Never (*EVER*) soak your pan, use harsh abrasives like steel wool, or scrub with abrasive cleaners. Unless you plan to strip the seasoning and start again.

### HOW DO YOU CLEAN YOUR CAST IRON?



SOAP  
**41%**

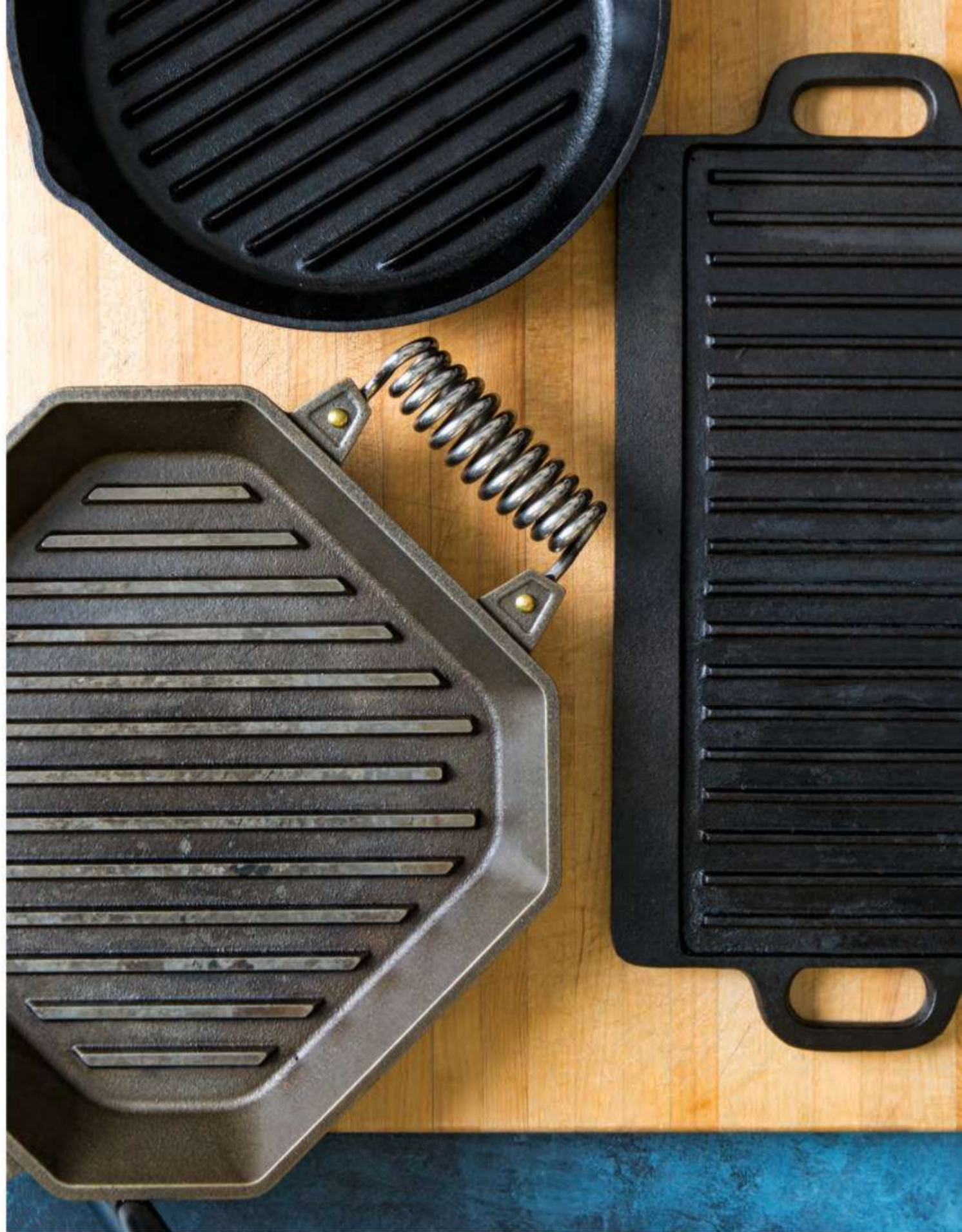


NO SOAP  
**59%**



## #8 Go easy on the grease

- Be conservative when reseasoning pans after each use. Using too much oil can result in a sticky residue.
- Once you apply oil, you'll want to wipe off all of it so only the thinnest layer remains.
- If stickiness sets in, put the cast iron in an oven at 500° and let it bake for 1 hour. The sticky residue should polymerize and become part of the finish. If it's still sticky, stripping your skillet and starting the pan's finish from scratch may be the best option.



## #9 Grill pans get extra love

- Stay away from high heat when cooking meats in a grill pan. A good rule of thumb is the thicker the meat, the lower the heat.
- After using a grill pan, let it cool until it's warm to the touch before filling it with very hot water and letting it sit for 1 to 2 minutes. Do NOT boil water in your grill pan.
- Our go-to tool for cleaning is a non-scratch scouring pad. Folding the pad to fit in between all the grates works very well for most grill pans.







## #10 Remove rust immediately

- ☛ Rust can spread like wildfire on cast iron if left unchecked.
- ☛ Removing rust promptly prevents it from compromising the integrity of the cookware and the food you prepare in it.

☛ A little surface rust on cast iron can often be remedied with steel wool or other handy-dandy products and some elbow grease. For removing more serious rust, check out the step-by-step guide on our website.



## Top Tools



### FINEX Cast Iron Care Kit

This three-piece cast iron care kit guarantees your cast-iron pieces are always in tip-top condition. With a wood scraper ideal for those hard-to-reach edges and grill pan gunk, a chain mail scrubber, and a flaxseed oil eyedropper, it has everything you need to help make sure your collection lasts for generations. [finexusa.com](http://finexusa.com)



### Field Company Cast Iron Seasoning Oil

To complement its cookware collection, Field introduced its own custom-blended seasoning oil. With a natural grapeseed oil, sunflower oil, and beeswax base, the unique formula creates a dry, matte finish without any chemicals. [fieldcompany.com](http://fieldcompany.com)



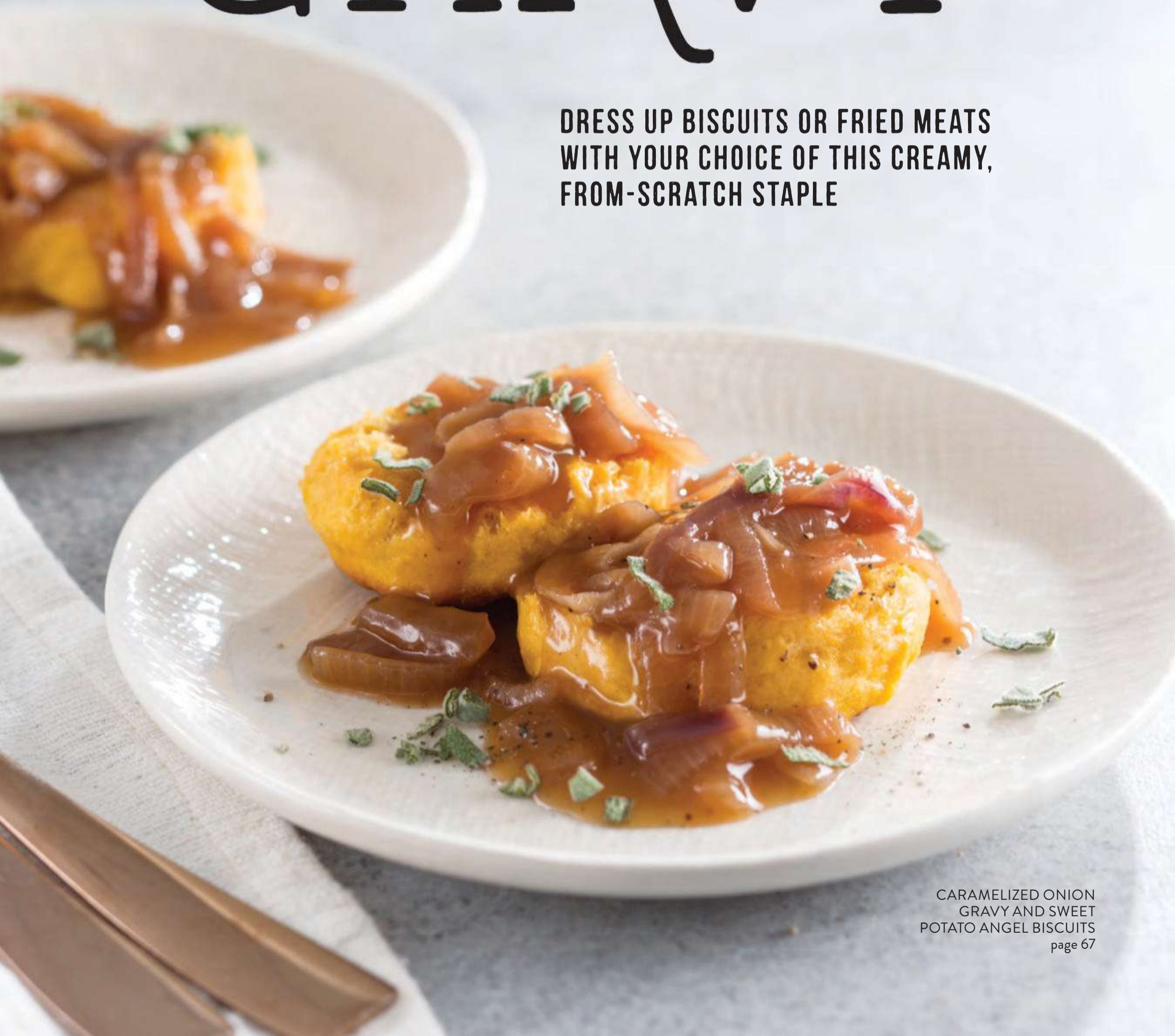
### Lodge Rust Eraser

Do you have a piece of rusted cast iron? It's not a total loss thanks to Lodge's new Rust Eraser. Its simple silicone design and rough carbide edge provide precision when targeting a light buildup of rust. It strips away all signs of tarnish down to the original iron, so be sure to reseason the piece when cleaning is complete. [lodgemfg.com](http://lodgemfg.com)



# GOOD GRAVY

DRESS UP BISCUITS OR FRIED MEATS  
WITH YOUR CHOICE OF THIS CREAMY,  
FROM-SCRATCH STAPLE



CARAMELIZED ONION  
GRAVY AND SWEET  
POTATO ANGEL BISCUITS  
page 67









## HOECAKES WITH SPICY SAUSAGE GRAVY

Makes 4 to 6 servings

*Hoecakes hold up to the hearty, creamy, and spicy gravy.*

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup whole buttermilk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water
- 2 large eggs
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided

### Spicy Sausage Gravy (recipe follows)

**Garnish:** sliced green onion, hot sauce

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together buttermilk,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water, eggs, and 2 tablespoons oil. Add buttermilk mixture to flour mixture, stirring just until combined.
2. In a large cast-iron skillet, heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil over medium heat. For each cake, drop 3 tablespoons batter 1 inch apart into skillet. Cook, turning once, until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Keep warm. Serve with Spicy Sausage Gravy. Garnish with green onion and hot sauce, if desired.

## SPICY SAUSAGE GRAVY

Makes 3 cups

- 1 pound hot Italian sausage
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole milk, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce

1. In a large cast-iron skillet, cook sausage over medium heat until browned, 10 to 15 minutes, using back of a wooden spoon to break into pieces. Add flour; cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Slowly stir in milk and hot sauce. Cook, stirring frequently, until thickened, about 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

## REDEYE GRAVY AND COFFEE BISCUITS

Makes 5 to 8 servings

*Wake up and get caffeinated in all the right ways with this delicious duo. We added a surprising ingredient to a traditional flaky buttermilk biscuit: instant coffee.*

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
  - 1 (6-ounce) package country ham slices
  - 1 cup strong-brewed black coffee
  - 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
  - 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
  - 1 teaspoon sugar
  - 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- Coffee Biscuits (recipe follows)**

1. In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, heat 1 tablespoon butter over medium-high heat. Add ham; cook, turning once, until browned, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Remove from skillet, and let drain on paper towels. Reserve drippings in pan.
2. Add coffee to pan, scraping browned bits from bottom of skillet with a wooden spoon. Stir in broth, paprika, and sugar; cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 4 minutes.
3. Add remaining 2 tablespoons butter, swirling until combined; cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in thyme. Serve over ham and Coffee Biscuits.

## COFFEE BISCUITS

Makes about 10

- 3 cups self-rising flour\*
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons dark-roast instant coffee\*
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cold salted butter, cubed
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plus 2 tablespoons cold whole buttermilk, divided
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon water



1. Preheat oven to 425°. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, and instant coffee. Using a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cold buttermilk, stirring with a fork just until combined. Add remaining 2 tablespoons cold buttermilk, if necessary.
3. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface, and knead several times until dough holds together. Pat dough to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thickness.

- Using a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps as necessary. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pan. Freeze for 15 minutes.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 teaspoon water. Brush egg wash onto dough.
  5. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 14 minutes. Serve warm.

*\*We used White Lily Unbleached Self-Rising Flour and Nescafé Clasico Dark Roast Instant Coffee.*







BISCUITS AND SAUSAGE  
GRAVY COBBLER  
page 67



SHRIMP AND GRITS  
WITH TOMATO GRAVY  
page 68





## BISCUITS AND SAUSAGE GRAVY COBBLER

Makes 8 to 10 servings

Make your morning easy with this one-skillet meal of two Southern favorites. The biscuits can even be made ahead of time so all you have to do is pop them on the gravy before baking.

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 (1-pound) package mild breakfast sausage
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups whole milk
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

### Buttermilk Biscuit Dough (recipe follows)

- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon water

Garnish: chopped fresh thyme

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add sausage; cook, using the back of a spoon to break up meat, until browned, about 6 minutes. Stir in flour; cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Gradually whisk in milk, thyme, salt, and pepper until smooth. Remove from heat. Arrange Buttermilk Biscuit Dough rounds in an even layer on top of gravy.

3. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 teaspoon water. Brush egg wash onto dough.
4. Bake until biscuits are golden brown and gravy is bubbly, 20 to 22 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes. Garnish with thyme, if desired.

## BUTTERMILK BISCUIT DOUGH

Makes about 12

- 2½ cups self-rising flour\*
- ½ cup cold salted butter, cubed
- 1 cup cold whole buttermilk

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, place flour. Using a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Add cold buttermilk, stirring with a fork just until combined.
3. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface, and knead several times until dough comes together. Pat or roll dough to ¾-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch round cutter dipped in flour, cut dough without twisting cutter, reroll scraps as necessary. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pan. Freeze for at least 15 minutes or while making gravy. Biscuits can be stored, frozen, for up to 3 months. (Freeze cut biscuits for 24 hours, and transfer to a heavy-duty resealable freezer bag.)

\*We used White Lily Unbleached Self-Rising Flour.

## CARAMELIZED ONION GRAVY AND SWEET POTATO ANGEL BISCUITS

Makes about 10 servings

(photo on page 61)

Slightly sweet and the perfect combination between fluffy biscuits and yeasty dinner rolls, these sweet potato angel biscuits are just the right vehicle to hold up to a rich gravy and plenty of caramelized onions.

- 6 cups thinly sliced red onion
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1½ tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1½ cups hard apple cider
- 1½ cups vegetable broth
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1½ teaspoons chopped fresh sage
- ¾ teaspoon ground black pepper

### Sweet Potato Angel Biscuits (recipe follows)

Garnish: chopped fresh sage, ground black pepper

1. In a large cast-iron skillet, combine onion, 2 tablespoons butter, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until light golden brown, about 10 minutes. Add brown sugar and remaining 2 tablespoons butter; reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until dark golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together cider, broth, and cornstarch until smooth. Add cider mixture to onions; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in sage, pepper, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Serve over Sweet Potato Angel Biscuits. Garnish with sage and pepper, if desired.

### ◦ KITCHEN TIP ◦

Substitute hard apple cider with apple juice and omit brown sugar, if desired.

### WANT BISCUITS WITHOUT THE GRAVY?

PLACE FROZEN BISCUITS ON A PARCHMENT-LINED BAKING SHEET, BRUSH WITH EGG WASH, AND BAKE AT 425° FOR 15 TO 18 MINUTES.





## SWEET POTATO ANGEL BISCUITS

Makes about 20

- 1/3 cup warm water (105° to 110°)
- 1 (0.25-ounce) package active dry yeast
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 cup canned sweet potato purée
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon water

1. In a small bowl, stir together 1/3 cup warm water and yeast. Let stand until mixture is foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Add yeast mixture and sweet potato purée, stirring with a fork just until combined.
3. Turn out dough onto heavily floured surface, and knead until well combined. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let stand in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until dough is puffed, about 30 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 400°. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. On a lightly floured surface, turn out dough, and pat to 3/4-inch thickness. Using a 2 1/4-inch round cutter dipped in flour, cut dough, rerolling scraps as necessary. Place on prepared pan.
6. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 teaspoon water. Brush egg wash onto dough.
7. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 14 minutes. Serve warm.

## CHOCOLATE BISCUITS WITH CHOCOLATE GRAVY

Makes about 12

(photo on page 62)

Start your morning off in a sweet way with these warm, cake-like biscuits that are perfect drizzled with chocolate gravy.

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3/4 cup cold unsalted butter, cubed

- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chunks

### Chocolate Gravy (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Brush a 12-inch cast-iron skillet with oil. Place in oven until very hot, about 8 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, cocoa, chocolate chips, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Using two forks or a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Gradually add milk and vanilla, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened.
3. On a lightly floured surface, gently knead dough 4 times. Roll dough to 3/4-inch thickness. Using a 3-inch round cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps once. Carefully place in hot pan, overlapping slightly.
4. Bake until tops are set and biscuits are cooked through, about 22 minutes. Sprinkle chocolate chunks over hot biscuits. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Serve warm with Chocolate Gravy.

## CHOCOLATE GRAVY

Makes about 2 1/4 cups

- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups whole milk
- 3 tablespoons semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. In a large saucepan, whisk together brown sugar, cocoa, flour, and salt; whisk in milk. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, whisking constantly. Reduce heat; simmer until thickened and bubbly, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add chocolate chips and vanilla, stirring until chocolate is melted.

## SHRIMP AND GRITS WITH TOMATO GRAVY

Makes 6 to 8 servings

(photo on page 66)

- 1 pound frozen jumbo shrimp, thawed and patted dry
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Creole seasoning\*
- 2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 4 tablespoons salted butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

- 1/3 cup chicken stock
  - 1 (14.5-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
  - 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
  - 1 cup quartered cherry tomatoes
  - 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
  - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
  - 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
  - 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
  - 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- ### Creamy Yellow Corn Grits, to serve (recipe follows)

2. Preheat oven to 200°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
3. Sprinkle shrimp evenly with Creole seasoning.
4. In a medium cast-iron skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Working in batches, cook shrimp until pink and firm, 1 to 2 minutes on each side, adding remaining oil as needed. Transfer shrimp to prepared pan and keep warm in oven.
5. In same skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour until smooth; cook, whisking constantly, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Whisk in stock until smooth. Add diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, cherry tomatoes, Worcestershire, salt, rosemary, paprika, and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 5 to 8 minutes. Top with shrimp and serve immediately with Creamy Yellow Corn Grits.

\*We used Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning.

## CREAMY YELLOW CORN GRITS

Makes about 4 cups

- 3 cups water
- 1 cup stone-ground yellow grits
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1. In a medium enamel-coated cast-iron Dutch oven, combine 3 cups water, grits, cream, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking frequently. Cover with lid, reduce heat to low, and simmer, whisking occasionally, until grits are tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately. 🍴



# MAC + CHEESE

*magic*

A COMFORT CLASSIC FOR A REASON, THESE  
OOEY-GOOEY PASTA RECIPES CAN'T BE BEAT







EXTRA-CHEESY  
MACARONI  
AND CHEESE  
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## MACARONI AND CHEESE WITH SPINACH AND TOMATOES

Makes about 6 servings

*Charred tomatoes add a smoky finish to the dish.*

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 pint grape or cherry tomatoes
- 2 shallots, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (6-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups whole milk
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- 4 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, cubed
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 8 ounces penne pasta, cooked

1. In a medium Dutch oven, heat 2 tablespoons oil over high heat. Add tomatoes; cook, stirring frequently, until tomatoes begin to char, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove tomatoes from pan. Set aside. Reduce heat to medium.
2. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil, shallot, and garlic to pan. Cook, stirring frequently, 2 minutes. Add spinach, stirring just until wilted. Remove from pan. Set aside.
3. In same pan, melt butter over medium heat. Add flour; cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Whisk in milk, salt, red pepper, and oregano.
4. Cook, whisking constantly, until mixture thickens, about 5 minutes. Stir in cheeses until melted. Remove from heat.
5. Stir in cooked pasta, tomatoes, and spinach mixture.

## SKILLET MAC AND CHEESE

Makes 6 to 8 servings

*The crispy-crunchy potato chip topping makes this mac and cheese extra special.*

- ½ (16-ounce) box large elbow pasta
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ½ cup chopped sweet onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups half-and-half
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3 cups shredded Gruyère cheese, divided
- 1 (12-ounce) jar roasted red peppers, drained and chopped
- 2 cups crushed salted kettle potato chips
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1. In a large pot, cook pasta in salted boiling water according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. In a large pot, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic; cook until onion begins to brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Sprinkle in flour and stir about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in half-and-half and broth until smooth. Cook until mixture begins to thicken, 4 to 5 minutes.
4. Add salt, black pepper, and 2 cups cheese, stirring until cheese is melted. Stir in cooked pasta and roasted red peppers. Spoon into a 10-inch cast-iron skillet.
5. In a medium bowl, combine chips, remaining 1 cup cheese, and parsley. Sprinkle evenly over pasta mixture.
6. Bake until cheese is melted and browned, 15 to 20 minutes.











## PORK CHOP MAC AND CHEESE

Makes about 4 servings

*Perfectly cooked pork chops get nestled in a creamy bed of noodles for an all-in-one meal.*

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
  - 1½ cups chopped yellow onion
  - 4 (½-inch-thick) bone-in pork rib chops
  - 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
  - 2 teaspoons ground black pepper, divided
  - 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
  - 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
  - 5 cups whole milk
  - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
  - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
  - 1½ cups shredded whole-milk mozzarella cheese
  - 1 (16-ounce) box cavatappi pasta, cooked according to package directions
  - 2 tablespoons panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
  - ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Garnish:** fresh rosemary

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Remove from skillet. Set aside.
3. In same skillet, heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Sprinkle pork chops with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Add pork chops to skillet; cook until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Remove from skillet. Set aside.
4. In same skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add flour; cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Whisk in milk, remaining 1½ teaspoons salt, remaining 1½ teaspoons pepper, sage, and rosemary. Increase heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low, and cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, 2 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Stir in mozzarella until melted. Stir in cooked pasta. Top with pork chops, overlapping slightly; sprinkle with onion, bread crumbs, and Parmesan.
6. Bake until pork chops are tender, about 25 minutes. Garnish with rosemary, if desired.



## CAJUN MACARONI AND CHEESE

Makes 8 to 10 servings

*Add a little kick to classic mac by whipping up this spicy andouille version.*

- 1 (14-ounce) package andouille sausage, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped green bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard
- ⅛ teaspoon ground red pepper
- 3 cups whole milk
- 2 cups shredded sharp white Cheddar cheese

- 1 cup shredded Gruyère cheese
  - 1 (16-ounce) box elbow pasta, cooked according to package directions
- Garnish:** paprika

1. In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, cook andouille over medium heat until lightly browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Add bell peppers, onion, and garlic; cook until vegetables are tender, about 6 minutes.
2. Sprinkle flour, salt, paprika, black pepper, dry mustard, and red pepper over andouille mixture. Gradually whisk in milk, and cook, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened and bubbly. Reduce heat to low. Add Cheddar and Gruyère; cook, stirring constantly, until cheese is melted and mixture is smooth.
3. Gradually add cooked pasta to cheese mixture, stirring until combined. Garnish with paprika, if desired. Serve immediately.





## MUSHROOM AND SAUSAGE MAC AND CHEESE

Makes 8 to 10 servings

*This hearty one-pan recipe takes the stress out of cooking for your family during the week.*

- 1** pound ground mild Italian sausage, casings removed if using links
- 5** tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- ½** pound fresh cremini mushrooms, stems removed and sliced
- ½** pound fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and sliced
- 1** cup diced yellow onion
- 2** cups shredded fresh collard greens, stems removed
- 2** cloves garlic, grated
- ¼** cup all-purpose flour
- 4** cups whole milk, room temperature
- 6** ounces shredded Gruyère cheese
- 8** ounces shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 4** ounces full-fat cream cheese
- ½** teaspoon kosher salt
- ½** teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼** teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1** pound elbow pasta, cooked according to package instructions
- ¼** cup dry white wine
- Garnish:** sliced green onion

- 1.** Preheat oven to 375°.
- 2.** In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, cook sausage over medium heat until browned and crumbly, 10 to 15 minutes, using the back of a spoon to break up any chunks. Remove sausage using a slotted spoon and let drain on paper towels; reserve drippings in skillet.
- 3.** Add 2 tablespoons butter to drippings in skillet; cook until melted, about 1 minute. Add mushrooms and onion; cook, stirring frequently, until vegetables are tender and onion begins to brown, 7 to 10 minutes. Add collard greens; cook for 3 minutes more. Add garlic; cook for 1 minute more. Using a slotted spoon, remove vegetable mixture from skillet; reserve drippings in skillet.
- 4.** Add remaining 3 tablespoons butter to drippings in skillet; cook until bubbling, about 1 minute. Whisk in flour; cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in milk; cook, stirring frequently, until sauce is thickened and begins to simmer, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat. Slowly add Gruyère, Monterey Jack, cream cheese, salt, black pepper, and red pepper, stirring until cheese is completely incorporated into sauce. Stir in vegetable mixture and sausage. Stir in cooked pasta and wine.
- 5.** Bake until bubbly and lightly browned, 20 to 25 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes. Garnish with green onion, if desired. 🍴

## EXTRA-CHEESY MACARONI AND CHEESE

Makes about 12 servings

*Cheese lovers, unite! This indulgent dish combines three types of cheese.*

- 6** tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½** cup all-purpose flour
- 3** cups whole milk
- 1½** teaspoons kosher salt
- ¼** teaspoon ground white pepper
- ½** teaspoon dry mustard
- ¼** teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2** cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 5** cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese, divided
- 12** ounces processed cheese product,\* cubed
- 1** pound elbow pasta, cooked according to package directions

- 1.** Preheat oven to 450°. Spray a 13x9-inch cast-iron pan or a 3½-quart baking dish with cooking spray.
- 2.** In a large stockpot, melt butter over medium heat. Add flour, whisking well. Cook, whisking frequently, until thickened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add milk, whisking to remove any lumps.
- 3.** Cook until thickened, 5 to 6 minutes. Add salt, pepper, mustard, and nutmeg to milk mixture, whisking well. Add mozzarella, 4 cups Cheddar, and processed cheese to milk mixture, stirring until cheese has melted. Add cooked pasta, stirring well. Pour into prepared dish.
- 4.** Bake for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup Cheddar. Bake until cheese has melted, 4 to 5 minutes more.

\*We used Velveeta.







# Chocolate BOMB

BAKE UP UTTER DECADENCE WITH THESE CHOCOLATY SWEET TREATS





FROSTED  
BROWNIE  
WEDGES  
page 84





CHOCOLATE-FROSTED  
CARROT CAKE  
page 84



• KITCHEN TIP •

*To make sugared carrots, shave assorted tricolor carrots with a Y-shaped vegetable peeler to make 1 cup. In a small pot, bring 1 cup water and 1 cup sugar to a boil for 3 minutes. Add shaved carrot and cook for 10 minutes. Remove shaved carrot using a slotted spoon and lay flat on a wire rack until sticky, about 30 minutes. Toss carrot in additional sugar. Roll each carrot shaving to form a rose.*



## CINNAMON HOT CHOCOLATE DOUGHNUTS

Makes 17 to 19

*Bring the pastry shop to your home with these chocolate-filled, cinnamon-sugar-coated delights.*

- 4½ cups all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups sugar, divided**
- 1½ tablespoons active dry yeast**
- ¼ teaspoons kosher salt**
- 2 large eggs**
- ¼ cups warm whole milk (105° to 110°)**
- ¼ cup warm water (105° to 110°)**
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, softened**
- 4 cups vegetable oil, for frying**
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon**
- Hot Chocolate Filling (recipe follows)**

**1.** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine flour, 1 cup sugar, yeast, and salt. Stir in eggs. With mixer at low speed, gradually add warm milk and ¼ cup warm water, beating until dough comes together. Increase mixer speed to medium-high, and beat for 5 to 7 minutes.

**2.** Switch to the dough hook attachment. With mixer at medium-high speed, add butter, 1 tablespoon at a time, letting each piece fully incorporate before adding the next. Beat until a smooth dough forms, about 3 minutes. (Dough will be sticky.)

**3.** Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, 1 hour and 30 minutes to 2 hours.

**4.** Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface, and gently pat to ½-inch thickness. Using a 2½-inch round cutter, cut dough. Loosely cover with plastic wrap, and let rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

**5.** In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 350°. Working in batches, fry doughnuts until golden brown, about 1 minute per side. Remove from oil, and let drain on a wire rack.

**6.** In a small bowl, stir together cinnamon and remaining 1 cup sugar. Toss doughnuts in cinnamon sugar while still warm. Let cool completely.

**7.** Cut a small X in one side of each doughnut. Place Hot Chocolate Filling in a piping bag fitted with a large round tip, or a resealable plastic bag with 1 corner cut off. Insert tip into X to fill doughnuts. Serve immediately.

### HOT CHOCOLATE FILLING

Makes about ¼ cups

- 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped**
- ¾ cup heavy whipping cream**
- 2 tablespoons drinking chocolate**

**1.** Place chopped chocolate in a medium microwave-safe bowl. In a saucepan, whisk together cream and drinking chocolate until well combined. Heat over medium heat, stirring frequently, just until bubbles form around edges of pan. (Do not boil.)

**2.** Pour hot cream mixture over chocolate; let stand for 1 minute. Using a spatula, begin to stir mixture until smooth. If some chocolate pieces have a hard time melting, place bowl in microwave and heat on high for 10 seconds; stir until smooth. Let cool for 30 minutes.







## CHOCOLATE-CARAMEL SWIRLED BROWNIES

Makes 10 to 12 servings

*Pockets of buttery caramel make these brownies both look and taste good.*

- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- ½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 5 large eggs

- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 (12-ounce) jar caramel sauce\*

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with baking spray with flour.
2. In a medium bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water, combine butter and chocolate; stir until melted. Remove from heat; whisk in sugars. Let cool for 5 minutes.

- Add eggs and vanilla, whisking to combine.
3. In a small bowl, stir together flour, cocoa, and salt. Gently fold flour mixture into butter mixture just until combined. Pour batter into prepared skillet. Spoon caramel over batter. Swirl gently into batter using the tip of a knife.
  4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes.

\*We used Smucker's Hot Caramel Topping.



SKILLET PECAN  
AND CHOCOLATE  
BLONDIES  
page 84







## STRAWBERRY-CHOCOLATE CHUNK SKILLET COOKIE

Makes 1 (10-inch) skillet

*Every bite of this irresistible cookie is packed with several sweet surprises. And the scoops of ice cream are just the “strawberry” on top.*

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon old-fashioned oats, divided
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup chopped fresh strawberries
- ½ cup dark chocolate chunks
- Strawberry ice cream, to serve

**1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray.

- 2.** In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, beating well. Beat in vanilla.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, ½ cup oats, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating just until combined. Stir in strawberries and chocolate chunks. Press dough into prepared skillet. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon oats.
- 4.** Bake until golden brown, 23 to 25 minutes. Serve warm with ice cream.



## FROSTED BROWNIE WEDGES

Makes 8

(photo on page 78)

*Filled, frosted, and sprinkled with chocolate, these brownie wedges are a chocolate lover's dream come true.*

- ½ cup unsalted butter, cubed
  - 6 tablespoons mini chocolate chips, divided
  - 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
  - ⅔ cup granulated sugar
  - ⅔ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
  - 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
  - ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
  - ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
  - 3 large eggs
- Double Chocolate Frosting (recipe follows)**  
**Garnish: mini chocolate chips**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a cast-iron wedge pan with baking spray with flour. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, microwave butter on medium until melted (about 2 minutes). Add 3 tablespoons chocolate chips; stir until smooth.
2. In a large bowl, stir together flour, sugars, cocoa, salt, and remaining 3 tablespoons chocolate chips. Stir in vanilla and butter mixture. Add eggs, one at a time, stirring well after each addition. Spread mixture into prepared pan, smoothing tops. Tap pan on counter twice to release any air bubbles.
3. Bake until tops feel dry to the touch and a wooden pick inserted near outside edge comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Let cool in pan for 30 minutes. Run tip of a knife around edge of brownies; remove from pan. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Spread Double Chocolate Frosting over brownies. Garnish with chocolate chips, if desired.

## DOUBLE CHOCOLATE FROSTING

Makes about 1 cup

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed
- 4 teaspoons half-and-half, divided
- 6 tablespoons mini chocolate chips
- 1½ cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. In a small microwave-safe bowl, microwave butter and 3 teaspoons half-and-half on medium until butter is melted (about 1 minute). Add chocolate chips to hot butter mixture; stir until smooth.

2. In a medium bowl, stir together confectioners' sugar, cocoa, and salt. Add butter mixture, vanilla, and remaining 1 teaspoon half-and-half, stirring until smooth.

## CHOCOLATE-FROSTED CARROT CAKE

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

(photo on page 79)

*You'll love the simplicity of this one-layer beauty that's just as tasty as its counterpart.*

- 1 cup sugar
- ⅔ cup vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon fresh grated nutmeg
- 1½ cups shredded carrots (about 3 medium)
- ¼ cup sweetened flaked coconut
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- ¼ cup chopped crystallized ginger

### Chocolate Frosting (recipe follows)

**Garnish: sugared carrots (see Kitchen Tip, page 79), chopped walnuts, fresh carrot tops**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 9-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, oil, and eggs until well combined. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture, stirring just until combined. Fold in carrots, coconut, pecans, and ginger. Spread batter into prepared skillet.
3. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Top with Chocolate Frosting. Garnish with sugared carrots, walnuts, and carrot tops, if desired.

## CHOCOLATE FROSTING

Makes about 2½ cups

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
- ¾ cup chopped semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

1. In a medium bowl, beat butter and salt with a mixer at medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until smooth and fluffy. Add melted chocolate, and beat until well combined and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Use immediately.

## SKILLET PECAN AND CHOCOLATE BLONDIES

Makes 1 (10-inch) skillet

(photo on page 82)

*Anybody would be happy to round out their meal with this indulgent, oversize cookie.*

- 1½ cups firmly packed light brown sugar
  - 1 cup unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled
  - 2 large eggs
  - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
  - 2 cups all-purpose flour
  - 1 teaspoon baking powder
  - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
  - 1 (4-ounce) bar bittersweet chocolate, chopped and divided
  - 1 cup chopped toasted pecans, divided
- Vanilla ice cream, to serve**

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Spray a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with baking spray with flour.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together brown sugar and melted butter until smooth. Whisk in eggs and vanilla.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add sugar mixture to flour mixture, stirring to combine. Stir in half of chocolate and ½ cup pecans. Spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near edge comes out clean, top is golden brown, and center is set, about 30 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining chocolate and remaining ½ cup pecans. Let cool for 1 hour on a wire rack. Serve with ice cream. ●







*Cover*  
**RECIPE**



# ON A ROLL

## PERFECT THE ART OF BAKING CLASSIC SOUTHERN ORANGE ROLLS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAC JAMIESON / RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY MEGAN LANKFORD  
FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN / STYLING BY COURTNI BODIFORD

These big, billowy, sticky-sweet rolls laden with an orange zest filling and glaze make for a special treat on your breakfast table, and we have a feeling they'll become a Saturday morning family tradition. Orange rolls made headway in Alabama over 50 years ago, and it's safe to say they've become a regional favorite. When it comes to baking yeasted rolls from scratch, there's no need to be intimidated; follow our step-by-step instructions for foolproof, perfectly risen rolls each and every time. And remember, the dough freezes well once rolled and sliced, so you might even want to make a double batch.

### ORANGE SWEET ROLLS

Makes 12

*Consider these luscious rolls a cousin to the ever-popular cinnamon rolls. They're the perfect sweet start to your morning come wintertime when citrus is at its best.*

- 4¼ to 4½ cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- 1⅓ cups sugar, divided**
- 1 (0.25-ounce) package active dry yeast**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1¼ cups whole milk**
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened and divided**
- 1 large egg**
- 2 tablespoons packed orange zest (about 2 large oranges)**

#### Orange-Sour Cream Glaze (recipe follows)

- 1.** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whisk together 1½ cups flour, ⅓ cup sugar, yeast, and salt.
- 2.** In a medium saucepan, heat milk and ½ cup butter over medium heat until an instant-read thermometer registers 120° to 130°. Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; beat at medium speed for 2 minutes. Add egg; beat at medium-high speed for 2 minutes. With mixer

at low speed, gradually add 2¾ cups flour, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl as needed.

- 3.** Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 6 to 8 minutes, stopping to scrape dough hook and sides of bowl as needed. Add remaining ¼ cup flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, if necessary. Dough should pass the windowpane test (see Kitchen Tip on page 87) but may still be slightly sticky.
- 4.** Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, 40 minutes to 1 hour.

**5.** Spray a 13x9-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan.

**6.** In a small bowl, stir together zest, remaining 1 cup sugar, and remaining ½ cup butter until well combined.

**7.** Lightly punch down dough. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and roll into an 18x12-inch rectangle. Using a small offset spatula, spread zest mixture onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border on one long side.

Starting with opposite long side, roll up dough, jelly roll style, pinching seam to seal. Gently shape log to 18 inches long and an even thickness, if necessary. Using a serrated knife dipped in flour, cut log into 12 slices (about 1½ inches thick). Place slices, cut side down, in prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.

**8.** Preheat oven to 375°.

**9.** Bake until lightly golden and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°, 25 to 30 minutes, loosely covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Let cool in pan for 20 minutes. Spoon Orange-Sour Cream Glaze onto rolls. Serve warm.

### ORANGE-SOUR CREAM GLAZE

Makes about 1 cup

- 1⅓ cups confectioners' sugar**
- ⅔ cup cold sour cream**
- 1 teaspoon packed orange zest**
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt**

**1.** In a small bowl, whisk together all ingredients until smooth. Use immediately.

TURN THE PAGE FOR DOUGH STEP-BY-STEP



# DOUGH STEP-BY-STEP

## KITCHEN TIP

### THE WINDOWPANE TEST



*To use the windowpane test to check dough for proper gluten development, lightly flour hands and pinch off (don't tear) a small piece of dough. Slowly pull the dough out from the center. If the dough is ready, you will be able to stretch it until it's thin and translucent like a "windowpane." If the dough tears, it's not quite ready. Beat 1 minute more, and test again.*



### STEP 1: ROLL OUT

Make sure the rolling surface, your hands, and rolling pin are well floured. This will help keep the dough from sticking.



### STEP 4: ROLL UP

Gently nudge the dough into a rectangular shape before starting the roll. This will help the rolls turn out even in size.





### STEP 2: MEASURE OUT

Roll out the dough to an 18x12-inch rectangle.



### STEP 3: SPREAD FILLING

An offset spatula makes spreading the orange zest filling onto the dough a breeze. Leave a ½-inch border on one long side.



### STEP 5: PINCH SEAM

When you're done rolling, gently pinch the seam to help keep the dough from separating as it cooks.



### STEP 6: SLICE ROLLS

To slice the dough log into rolls, cut gently with a well-floured serrated knife. ●





## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

# COLLECTING WITH THE CULINARY FANATIC

JEFFREY B. ROGERS WEIGHS IN ON WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A CAST IRON CONNOISSEUR


BY DANIEL DUBUISSON

### Q&A

**What turned you into a cast iron collector?** Growing up, cast iron was always used in our home, primarily by my father. Because he had such a heavy influence on my cooking, I naturally continued using cast iron in my own home with my wife, Philana. Up until 11 years ago, we only owned a few pieces of Lodge cast iron. One evening, I came across an article about various brands of vintage cast iron, particularly Griswold. I frequented antiques stores a good bit, so I decided to see what I could find on my next visit. While in a store in Atlanta, I spotted what I thought was a Griswold piece. It featured a small logo and was incredibly heavy. Its weight and crude casting should have informed me that the piece was not genuine, but being new to cast iron hunting, I didn't know any better and purchased it. But the experience was so exhilarating that I was hooked from that moment on.

**What types of cast-iron pieces do you have in your collection?** The majority consists of skillets of various brands. Initially, I was a Griswold snob and only looked for that brand. But as I advanced in my collecting, I learned the value of including other manufacturers. So, along with Griswold, I own Birmingham Stove & Range, Favorite, Lodge, Vollrath, Martin Stove & Range, Good Health, Wagner, and others. I am also very fond of what new cast iron manufacturers are currently producing. So, modern cast iron has become a growing part of my collection.



A man with glasses, wearing a brown jacket and blue jeans, is sitting on a large, dark cast iron skillet. He is smiling and has his hands clasped in front of him. The skillet has a circular logo in the center with a cross and the text 'GRIS/OLD' and 'CAST IRON SKILLET' around the edge. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**How large is your collection today?** My collection is probably in the ballpark of 350 to 400 pieces, which is relatively small compared to some collectors I know. It has grown not out of a desire to own so many pieces but because of my love for cast iron restoration. The art of taking a piece that has seen better days and restoring it to its original glory is fascinating, and I have always found it very therapeutic. My love for cast iron restoration is how The Culinary Fanatic was founded, and it has been a great joy to share my experiences with people worldwide on my YouTube channel, social media, and website.





## Q & A: CONTINUED

**Which piece do you use most?** It's got to be my 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch Lodge skillet. It has been one of my favorites for years now. It has excellent weight and is the perfect size for cooking for my family of five. Outside of that, I stand in front of my collection and say, "OK, what are we using today?" Then, I grab whatever. I do have pieces that I gravitate toward more than others, but I do find that I cook more in modern cast iron than in vintage.

**How do you care for your extensive cast iron collection?**

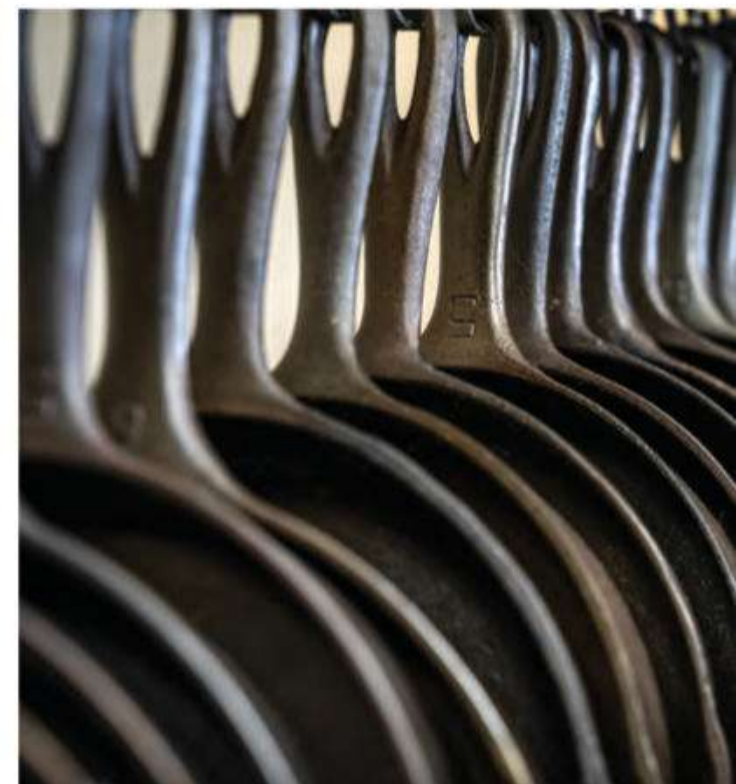
Although it's not essential for successful cooking, how my cast iron looks has always been important to me. I love beautiful cookware. The methods I have developed over the last 10 years not only work well for seasoning and maintaining your cast iron pieces but also keep them looking their best. My seasoning and maintenance methods are detailed on my website, *TheCulinaryFanatic.com*. I use three basic things to clean a skillet: a blue, non-scratch Scotch-Brite scouring pad, a Lodge polycarbonate pan scraper, and kosher salt. Most times, the scouring pad is enough. The other two items are reserved for more stubborn cleanups. I always get my pieces very clean after cooking, and I make sure there is no food or char left on the surface. I believe that inadequate cleaning can eventually lead to flaking. After cleaning it, I warm the skillet slightly, apply a





small amount of vegetable shortening to the inside and out, wipe it all off with a blue Scott shop towel. It is placed upside down over a stove burner on medium-high heat until it smokes lightly. This process usually takes about 10 minutes.

**How do you feel about using soap on cast iron?** You can use soap, but I find it unnecessary. Cooking animal fats in cast iron is a great way to bolster its seasoning. So, I am good with giving the piece a good scrub with hot water only and then wiping it off, leaving a tiny amount of that fat on the skillet. Cleaning a skillet while it is still a little warm makes it easier to remove excess oil without the use of soap. If there is ever a time that I choose to use soap, I always prefer Ivory dishwashing liquid.

**How do you store your collection?** My collection is stored mainly on two heavy-duty steel wire racks. Most of the pieces hang by their handles on steel S-hooks. Storing them this way ensures adequate ventilation around each skillet and makes them easy to access. Some are also stored upright and leaning against one another. This method also provides good ventilation and easy access. I also have skillets stored in other areas of my home. Unless it's a piece like a small cast-iron serving dish, I try to avoid stacking pieces inside one another.





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**Is there a specific piece or “holy grail” item that you’d love to find one day?** Not really. I already have pieces I love that are tied to great experiences, so it is rare now that I look for items. One piece that I treasure is my Lodge 3052D fish fryer with its wild duck lid. The underside of the lid is smooth and not ribbed, which makes it an unusual piece. I had never seen one while hunting, and I first spotted it at an antiques store in North Georgia. Because the price was too steep for me, I decided to leave it behind. Boy, that was a long drive home, and I couldn’t get it off my mind. The following day, I called the store’s owner to see if I could plead for a better price. I found favor with him, and he gave me a deal that I could not refuse. My wife took the long drive back to North Georgia to get the piece, and I’ve since restored it. It’s not the most sought-after cast iron, but it’s one of my favorite pieces.

**What do you think about the new modern cast iron manufacturers and their products?** I think the current market for modern cast iron cookware is very exciting. It takes a lot of effort and skill to produce pieces that are reminiscent of some of the best vintage brands. The new pieces of today will become the heirlooms of tomorrow. I had the opportunity to test and provide feedback on the first prototypes of the first Field Company No. 8 skillet. Being able to be involved gave me a firsthand look into

what it takes to produce a quality product. It’s not easy, and what they have accomplished in the excellence and consistency of their manufacturing has made them one of my favorite brands of cast iron cookware.

**Where’s the best place to find quality, vintage cast iron?** I have always had good luck hunting at out-of-the-way antiques stores. I typically avoid the bidding wars of eBay because my joy in collecting is tied more to the experience of finding the piece in the wild rather than by searching online. I see pieces more in abundance and at better prices outside the city along roads and routes less traveled.

**Is there a limit to the size you’ll grow your collection?** Because of my love for restoration, I don’t ever think there will be a time when I stop collecting. I am also a history buff, so I love the historical aspect of vintage cast iron. A lot of the skillets that I own were used by people who have passed away and who lived during during times when I would have been almost afraid to be alive. I sometimes wonder: If a skillet could speak, what would it say about where it has been? I think about who may have owned the piece and what their life may have been like. For me, all of this plays into the experience of collecting, and I will continue as long as I can. 🔍



# DRIED FRUIT

BY MORGAN CRAWFORD SCOTT

**FILLED WITH ALL THE NUTRIENTS, FIBER, ANTIOXIDANTS, AND HEALTH BENEFITS** that come with eating fresh fruit, dried fruits make for the ultimate snack, cheese board accompaniment, or unexpected component in both savory and sweet dishes. And with their long shelf life, you won't have to worry about buying in bulk to keep your pantry stocked.

## RAISINS

Probably the most well-known and, dare I say, popular of the bunch, this dried fruit's taste, size, and color varies based on several factors. Most grapes in the US come from the green Thompson Seedless variety, although occasionally some are from the Muscat, Flame, and Sultana varieties. If it's brownish black or dark purple in color, it's been sun-dried or air-dried; this is a standard raisin, and it'll be rather sweet and ideal for snacking and savory dishes like stir-fries. If it's yellow or amber in color, it's been mechanically dried in large dehydrators and treated with a preservative to help prevent the skin from browning; this is a golden raisin, and it's going to have a more nuanced flavor and more plumpness, and it's more suitable for sweets, oatmeal, and more.

## CRANBERRIES

Dried cranberries are similar to raisins in size and texture. They are a seasonal fruit made available year-round when dried, and while they contain many of the same nutrients as the fresh product,

dried cranberries usually have added sugar to combat extreme tartness. They pair well with fall and winter produce like Brussels sprouts and squashes, and they're great as a salad topper and when baked into fresh-from-the-oven goodies.

## DATES

Dates are dark brown and oblong, usually about an inch long, and are actually the fruit of the date palm tree. Because of their high sugar content that makes them almost candy-like and reminiscent of maple syrup, dates—most commonly Medjool, although there are other types—are often used as a natural sweetener as opposed to using refined sugar. You'll find them in wholesome sweet treats, typically ones that are plant-based or vegan, because they have a sticky consistency and caramellike flavor. You can also use them to sweeten smoothies and nut milk. Bacon-wrapped dates make for the most delicious salty-sweet appetizer. When buying, pay attention to whether the hard pits have been removed.

## PRUNES

While prunes look like dates, they are a bit different. They come from plums, typically a European variety called 'Improved French' instead of the Japanese variety. They are a bit larger, darker in color, and milder in flavor, though just as chewy and wrinkly in texture as dates. However, their sugar content is lower than that of dates, so they're not as suitable for baking. Prunes have lots of health benefits, most notably their high fiber content, and are often eaten to help promote digestive health.

## CHERRIES

Though not as easy to find in the grocery stores, this tart yet sweet dried fruit is plump and juicy, brimming with vitamin A, and delicious to boot. Most dried cherries in the US are of the Montmorency variety, and they are a treat in baked goods like scones and oatmeal and especially when paired with anything chocolaty.

## FIGS

Because fig season is so short, making use of dried figs is an easy way to enjoy this tasty fruit. There are two types, Black Mission and Turkish; the former are dark purple, almost black, while the latter are dark beige. They have a soft and chewy texture, an earthy sweetness, and a bit of crunch from the seeds on the inside. They are a match made in heaven in cookies, bars, pies, and tarts, and on the savory side of things, they're popular in tagine, a classic Moroccan dish.

## APRICOTS

These little gems are a vibrant yellow-orange and have lots of flavor and natural sweetness. They are slightly chewy and ideal for snacking, but they shine in baked goods while still holding their own in savory dishes, too. Stir them into muffin batter, bake them into bars, but also try them in salads and chicken dishes.

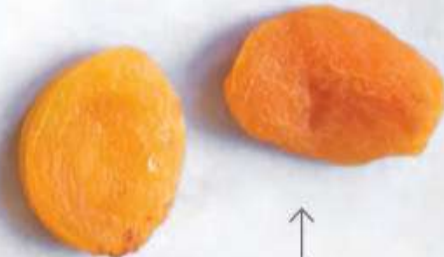


← CRANBERRIES

PRUNES  
↓



DATES  
↓



↑  
APRICOTS





# CAST IRON USE & CARE

If you take the time to properly care for your cast-iron cookware, it will reward you and your family with generations of loyal service. Follow these tips to keep your heirlooms—whether seasoned or enameled iron—in tip-top shape.

## SEASONED

### KEEP THEM CLEAN

Be sure to clean your pans as soon as they're cool enough to handle. Scrub gently with a stiff-bristle brush or a non-scratch scouring pad. Water leads to rust, so avoid submerging your cast-iron cookware. As to whether to use soap—that's up to you. We avoid it when possible to protect the seasoned surface.

### KEEP THEM DRY

After rinsing, it's crucial to dry your cookware completely. Wipe dry with a clean kitchen towel and then rub a very thin coat of vegetable oil all over the cooking surface. Heat on the stovetop over medium-low heat or in a 300° oven until dry, about 10 minutes. Let cool; wipe the surface with a clean towel, and heat for 5 minutes more.

### RESPECT YOUR CAST IRON

Taking care of your cookware means understanding its likes and dislikes. Cooking with fats, cleaning gently, and storing in a clean, dry place are the keys to preserving your pans' seasoning. Harsh abrasives, acidic foods, and moisture can break down the finish or cause rust.

## ENAMELED

### BE GENTLE

The finish on enameled cast iron is delicate, so handle your pieces carefully to avoid chipping. Never use metal utensils since they can scratch the surface.

### GREASE THEM UP

Unlike seasoned cast iron, enameled cast iron is not a nonstick surface. To avoid sticking, cook over medium heat using adequate amounts of oil or fat. If sticking does occur, use dish soap, water, and a non-scratch scouring pad to scrub away the mess. For extra-stubborn, stuck-on bits, try boiling water in the piece with a bit of dishwashing liquid.

### MAKE THEM SHINE

Over time, enameled cast iron can become discolored or stained. To remove stains, soak the cooking surface in hydrogen peroxide mixed with baking soda, and then scrub with dish soap, water, and a non-scratch scouring pad to keep your enameled cast iron looking as good as new.



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## *Resources*

- Page 9:** Photo courtesy of Stephanie Melim (@girlwiththeironcast).
- Pages 13–15:** Photos courtesy of Kate Dearman (Robert St. John, skillet hashes, Robert with quiches, Loblolly Bakery, pancakes); Different Drummer Press (*Mississippi Mornings*); Robert St. John (Ed's Burger Joint).
- Pages 89–92:** Photos courtesy of Patrick H. Rogers (Jeffrey B. Rogers); Jeffrey B. Rogers (cast iron collection).





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