

ALL-NEW RECIPES

taste OF THE south

AUTHENTICALLY SOUTHERN, ALWAYS DELICIOUS

75+
RECIPES
& TIPS
DOUBLE ISSUE

Holiday Candies & Treats, *plus* Festive Christmas Cakes

Red Velvet and
Cranberry Cake
page 81



**BRENDA
GANTT'S**
Family
Favorites
page 15

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024 vol. 21, Issue 6

\$7.99US



DISPLAY UNTIL DECEMBER 24, 2024

**Punches
for a Party**

pages 17 & 123

**Hearty
Holiday Sides**

page 67

**Gifts from
the Kitchen**

page 91

SHARE *the* JOY

These Mississippi gifts will be treasured for years to come



NEILSON'S DEPARTMENT STORE Oxford, Mississippi
 Whether it's home goods, shoes, clothing, or accessories, Neilson's Department Store has served the community of Oxford, Mississippi, from The Square since its beginnings in 1839. No matter the style or occasion, Neilson's (the 16th-oldest operating store in the country and oldest in the South) never disappoints. neilsondepartmentstore.com



LEMURIA BOOKS Jackson, Mississippi
 Whether you're looking for a poppy page-turner or a sought-after signed edition, Lemuria Books has you covered. The shop is about to enter its 50th year of service and has more to offer than ever, considering its slate of live events and First Edition Clubs (focusing on fiction, nonfiction, and children's literature). lemuriabooks.com



HILLYER HOUSE Ocean Springs, Mississippi
 Nestled in the heart of an idyllic beach town, Hillyer House boasts an enviable collection of home goods and art pieces alongside a few Mississippi-made foodstuffs and kitchen tools. This beautifully curated space has served the community for more than 50 years and is a must-stop destination. hillyerhouse.com

MCCARTY'S GALLERY Merigold, Mississippi
 Since 1954, these masters of clay have turned out beautiful art pieces as well as functional creations, ranging from plates and platters to planters and sculptures of all sizes. The studio is conveniently located in the heart of Delta Blues country, a short drive from Clarksdale or Cleveland, and if you come on a Friday or Saturday, you could treat yourself to lunch at The Gallery. mccartypottery.com



THE LUCKY RABBIT Hattiesburg, Mississippi
 For a hearty helping of nostalgia, give The Lucky Rabbit a visit. This local gem packs tons of rare and vintage items into two side-by-side warehouses and is an unbeatable spot for everything from tableware and furniture to unique gifts and more. Throughout the shop, you'll also find vintage arcade games, post-worthy photo displays, and even working phonebooths. theluckyrabbit.com

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In Mississippi, you'll find amazing restaurants tucked away in unexpected places, serving up dishes that range from down-home favorites to sublime culinary masterpieces. Learn more at VisitMississippi.org/Flavors.



VISIT
MISSISSIPPI



Doe's Eat Place | Greenville, Mississippi

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RED VELVET AND CRANBERRY CAKE

(recipe on page 81)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY IZZIE TURNER
FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN
STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS

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EDITOR-AT-LARGE Jean-Paul Bourgeois

SENIOR COPY EDITOR, FOOD Meg Lundberg

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Kaitlyn Shehee

SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER John O'Hagan
PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jim Bathie, Kyle Carpenter,
Stephanie Welbourne Steele

SENIOR DIGITAL IMAGING SPECIALIST
Delisa McDaniel

ADMINISTRATIVE SR. ART DIRECTOR
Tracy Wood-Franklin

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR Cailyn Haynes

ART DIRECTOR Celie O'Meara

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CONTRIBUTING STYLISTS Sidney Bragiel,
Lucy Finney

TEST KITCHEN DIRECTOR Laura Crandall

FOOD STYLISTS/RECIPE DEVELOPERS

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Kathleen Kanen, Vanessa Rocchio, Amanda Stabile,
Izzie Turner

TEST KITCHEN ASSISTANT/PREP COOK
Madison Harvel

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DIGITAL DESIGNER Stephanie Lambert

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EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING OFFICE

2323 2nd Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 995-8860

Editorial Inquiries: tasteofthesouth@hoffmanmedia.com

SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE

Taste of the South, PO Box 5002
Boone, IA 50950
Email: tasteofthesouth@emailcustomerservice.com
Phone: (877) 817-4410

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PREMIUM
INGREDIENTS



All recipes in each issue pass through the hands of the *Taste of the South* test kitchen. Each is flavorful and distinctive and developed with your unique tastes in mind.

Camellia Beans is an official partner of *Taste of the South* magazine and used exclusively in our recipes.



Editor's Letter



EACH YEAR when it comes time for us to plan out the holiday blockbuster double issue of *Taste of the South*, I'm faced with a conundrum. As a team, we throw around ideas for classic recipes and fun twists along with quick-and-easy dishes and more-involved projects, and I wonder how many of them will end up served during all the gatherings great and small throughout the season. So much of our holiday menus revolve around tradition and must-serve dishes (the sweet potato casseroles, the cranberry sauces, and the like) that I hope our annual offerings can earn a spot at the table.

By the end of the process, I am left feeling confident that we've come up with a good enough variety that there will be a few recipes to pique everyone's interest. Most of my cooking skews savory, so side dishes are where I introduce new items to my Thanksgiving and Christmas menus. This year, I'll be serving up some of the Creamy Roasted Cauliflower (page 73), Baked Acorn Squash with Cornbread Topping (page 65) and the Rustic Roasted Fennel (page 73) to amp up the comforting vibes.

It's the sweets, though, that are the uncontested stars of the season, and boy, do we have some good ones for you in this issue. From gifts like barks and brittles to stately centerpieces, we've got it all. For me, the gingerbread spice cake and orange marble cake with chocolate buttercream would be the first two in my oven, but it's a hard choice considering the fact that the pumpkin Bundt and red velvet cake are also in the mix. You'll find all of those and more in our The Icing on the Cake feature, which starts on page 75.

However you like to cook this time of year, we hope you can find some worthy additions to your holiday table. Best wishes for a heartwarming and peaceful holiday season with the ones you love best.

Daniel

Daniel Schumacher
Editorial Director

Gullah — 20 Celebration 25

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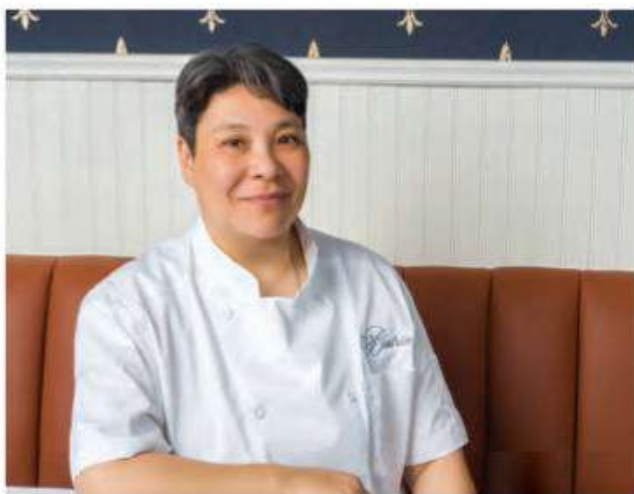


GULLAHCELEBRATION.ORG

dishing with

CHEF MICHELLE CARPENTER gives us the scoop on her favorite holiday meal traditions

BY KAITLYN SHEHEE



CHEF MICHELLE CARPENTER is the chef and owner of Zen Sushi and Restaurant Beatrice in Dallas, Texas—both projects near and dear to her heart and heritage. Environmental stewardship, authenticity, and minimizing waste are all staples that Michelle and her team have put in place, and their efforts haven't gone unnoticed, with accolades and acclaim being rightfully awarded to them. With so much going on, we caught up with Michelle to learn more about her culinary journey.

How did you get started cooking? Gramma's kitchen is the best culinary school in the world. My Japanese obachan and Cajun mammaw brought me into their kitchens when I was a child. So many chefs reference their grandmothers as the reason they love cooking because grandmothers create a loving, learning, nurturing, creative environment where the end result is delicious and nutritious. In that sense, women are egregiously under-recognized for their contributions to the world of gastronomy. These powerful memories in

our grandmothers' kitchens shape who we become. Most chefs will say they cook to re-create memories or feelings of nostalgia. Food transports us to another place, space, and time.

Where did the concept for Restaurant Beatrice come from? I opened my sushi bar, Zen Sushi, in 2007 to honor my Japanese heritage. For most of that time, I had longed to tell the other side of my heritage. I wanted to pay tribute to my Cajun side, so in 2022, I launched a concept named after Beatrice Carpenter, my mammaw. Nearly everything we do at Beatrice reflects the way she lived. She gardened and pickled the surplus every season. She raised livestock, had a worm farm for fishing, and also owned a smokehouse. She practiced whole utilization or nose-to-tail cooking. At Beatrice, we work directly with our farmers and develop our menu based on what my farmers are growing. Our kitchen makes nearly every item from scratch, even most of our condiments like mayo and Creole mustard. We're working directly with a rancher to raise our own pigs now. For most of her life, my mammaw never went to a big supermarket to buy industrialized, processed food and produce that had been flown in from the other side of the globe. My chefs and I source as much as we can from the region.

What are some of your favorite holiday meal traditions? The sides are my favorite part of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. I love Parker House rolls with butter, pommes purée, cornbread dressing with sage, and cranberry chutney. If we don't make pommes purée, then we switch it up with smashed potatoes (boiled, then smashed, and crisped with a little oil in the oven) finished with salt, butter, crème fraîche, and chives. My favorite steak cut is rib eye, so I opt for rib roast with jus and creamy horseradish. I also like to make rolls stuffed with turkey and chutney or cherry and bourbon smoked ham for snacks, as we tend to graze before and after eating our big meal.

Southern Tastemakers We Love



RICKY ALBRIGHT, IRON FIRE COOKING, Troy, Alabama
 @iron_fire_cooking

Ricky Albright has been cooking for as long as he can remember. He learned to grill and prepare and cook wild game from his father and how to bake from his mother and grandmother, and this set Ricky up for amassing quite the following, though he had no idea his social media presence would grow so abundantly. Following the advice of his wife, he started an Instagram account and slowly found his groove with making reels and working with companies to make recipes. With recipes like a rack of venison and deer tenderloin Wellington, Ricky's authentic and imaginative recipes are sure to catch your attention.

Zen Sushi & Restaurant Beatrice | Dallas, Texas
zensushidallas.com | restaurantbeatrice.com

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OUR CHEESES AND
FIND THIS RECIPE



tastes & tools

These pantry items are perfect for gift-giving



1 4 RIVERS BBQ SAUCE

It may not be grilling season, but this Florida barbecue sauce makes the perfect stocking stuffer for the grill master in your life. The 4 Rivers Smokehouse Signature BBQ Sauce shows off the South's best barbecue flavor, and this multiregional recipe created by founder John Rivers provides an ideal combination of sweet and savory with a smoky finish that complements pork, chicken, and beef. 4smokehouse.com

2 DOC BROWN FARM & DISTILLERS BOURBON CREAM

This decadent drink is crafted in Georgia and consists of a luxurious and rich liqueur that blends the creamy, nutty flavors of butter pecan with the warm, smooth notes of bourbon. The harmonious flavor profile cannot be overstated and creates an enjoyable experience when sipped on its own, added to coffee, or swirled into desserts. docbrownfarm.com

3 FERIDIES SALTED VIRGINIA PEANUTS

Cooked in pure peanut oil and lightly salted to maintain the peanuts' distinctive flavor and healthy qualities, these Salted Virginia Peanuts are a gift like no other. Large in size, with a crunchy texture and delicious flavor, these delights will have you coming back and craving more after your first bite. feridies.com

4 RAVEN'S NEST MULLING SPICES

Make the most out of these cold months with Raven's Nest Mulling Spices, a delicious and aromatic blend of cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, orange, and lemon, ideal for creating hot spiced cider or mulled wine. But the fun doesn't stop there—you can check out this South Carolina company's website for flavorful baking and glazing recipes. ravensoriginal.com

— WHITE HOUSE FARMS —



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NEUTRAL GROUND BAR + KITCHEN

McLean, Virginia

This culinary collection of innovative dishes presents new interpretations of American classics in an upscale yet casual atmosphere. The inspiring menu here is a reflection of Chef David Guas' commitment to his community as well as building sustainable relationships with local and regional producers. The restaurant's mission is to preserve the American foodways that define our diverse culture while sharing his own innovative interpretations. Dine with a menu that celebrates small farmers, heritage growers, and fishermen regionally, from the Mid-Atlantic and Virginia to the Gulf Coast. With dishes like Wood Oven Roasted Local Chesapeake Wild-Caught Oysters with Lemon-Garlic-Parm Butter and cocktails grounded in American classics, this spot is a must-try. neutralgroundbarandkitchen.com

MAKAN | Charleston, South Carolina
Chef-owner James Wozniuk first opened Makan in Washington, DC, persevering during the COVID-19 pandemic and becoming a staple in its neighborhood. Now, he's brought the Makan concept to Charleston, South Carolina, and aims for guests to feel fully transported to Malaysia at their table. With a passion for and agility with Asian traditions and ingredients born from his time traveling Southeast Asia, James and his team serve up dishes like Ikan Asam Pedas (local fish curry) and Spicebird (Southeast Asian roast chicken). Transport your taste buds with each mouthwatering dish on this perfectly crafted menu that will have you coming back for bite after delicious bite. makanhs.com



PALETTE 22 | Washington, DC
Described as an exciting fusion of where food, art, and fun meet, this lively neighborhood restaurant is a must-stop destination for market-driven, globally inspired entrées and shareable items. Located in a gallery-like setting in Union Market in Washington, DC, this marks the second opening for the Palette 22 team, who saw great success with their Arlington, Virginia, restaurant. The eatery features a truly one-of-a-kind artist-in-residence program for emerging local artists, with a rotating gallery featuring works handpicked by curator Jamie Farley that are available for purchase during your visit. This vibrant concept is uniquely and impeccably executed, making it a memorable tasting experience unlike any other. dc.palette22.com 

festivals:

NATIONAL PEANUT FESTIVAL

November 1

Dothan, Alabama

Located in the lovely little city of Dothan, Alabama, this festival is loaded with everything you could ever want centered around the beloved crops of peanuts that keep the area's enterprises thriving. And this year, the festival is celebrating its 80th anniversary. This annual tradition has it all; from fair food to pageants and everything in between, there's no shortage of fun to be had.

nationalpeanutfestival.com

CHOCOLATE, WINE & WHISKEY FESTIVAL

November 9

Louisville, Kentucky

Indulge in all things chocolate, wine, and whiskey at this festival in Louisville, Kentucky. From truffles, bonbons, and more to a wide array of wines and whiskeys available to be paired with the sweet treats, this is an event worthy of marking on your calendar.

chocolatewinewhiskey.com

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Family Traditions

Gather your family together and make warm holiday memories

STORY AND RECIPES BY BRENDA GANTT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN | STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS



THANKSGIVING AT OUR HOUSE IS ALWAYS A SPECIAL TIME. We have much to be thankful for, and I always wanted my family here—at home—together on Thanksgiving. All throughout Dallas' and Hannah's childhoods, our Thanksgiving Day routine was similar. George would get up early and stoke

the fire in the woodburning stove. He'd hang the kids' clothes or a robe near the stove so that when they rose from their slumber, he could wrap them in that toasty warm cloth. As he did, he'd snuggle them close. Hannah always stood for a bit longer than Dallas, soaking up the comfort of George's strong hug.

Dallas and George would sometimes go for a walk in the woods on Thanksgiving morning while Hannah and I busied ourselves in the kitchen. Of course, turkey and piping hot dressing, cranberry sauce, and green bean casserole were all on the menu. Pumpkin pie was not—at least not until Hannah and Walt got married and I started making it for him—but a warm pecan pie was usually fresh out of the oven after lunch.

Late November in Alabama can be bitter cold. Wet cold. The kind of cold that sticks to your skin and shivers your spine. Sometimes George and Dallas would come back in from walking in the woods and poor Dallas's teeth would be chattering. He'd knock his dirty boots off at the door and go straight to the front of the woodburning stove. He'd rotate like a rotisserie chicken, warming up each side of his body, and he'd slowly peel off layers of clothes as he thawed out.

That same woodburning stove, a Federal Airtight, warmed our grandchildren's bones, too. Later in life, George would come in from his Thanksgiving walks in

the woods, and he'd stick his cold hands to one of the grandchildren. They'd squeal and squirm, and he'd pull them close, warming them back up as he did. And he and I would sit in the living room and watch the cardinals eat sunflower seeds out of the bird feeders as the north wind scattered the remnants of fall across the yard. We'd sip our steaming coffee, and the heat of the brew tempered the chill coming from the big plate glass window.

Sometimes, the grandkids would get in the yard and play while Walt and Dallas went hunting. Frigid at nightfall, those boys would come into the warmth of the house, seeking refuge from old Jack Frost.

And for supper, we'd eat leftovers from lunch. "Waste not, want not," I always say. No one ever complained about leftovers. The pie would rarely make it through the afternoon. The grandkids would come by, foraging off the buffet like vultures, and the sweets were always the first thing they gobbled up. The dressing was usually the next thing to disappear, and even after everyone ate supper, there was always a little turkey left. That would be OK, though. I always make a big pot of boiling hot turkey gumbo the day after Thanksgiving. And we'd eat it again. And be thankful.

These days, things are much quieter. We still make Thanksgiving a family affair, but it is different. George has passed on, and I miss him so. Dallas and Anna and their family all live in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and most of the grandchildren are in college now. We all still get together, but sometimes, it's in shifts. Life got busy somewhere along the way. But we are never too busy to be thankful.

And I still sip my steaming hot coffee and snuggle under a blanket watching the red birds in the yard. And I am warm. Not because of the coffee or the fire in the woodburning stove but because of a lifetime of memories that fuel the furnace of my heart.

So much to be thankful for. *Thank you, Lord.*

Brenda Gantt is the owner of The Cottle House Bed & Breakfast in Andalusia, Alabama. Follow along on her cooking adventures at Cooking with Brenda Gantt on Facebook and Instagram.



Cranberry Mold

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

- 2 (12-ounce) bags fresh cranberries (coarsely chopped in a food processor)
- 2 large oranges (seeded and chopped in a food processor, peeling and all)
- 1 cup Priester's pecans (chopped)
- 7 celery ribs (finely chopped by hand)

- 1 (16-ounce) can crushed pineapple (drained)
- 1 cup water
- 2 (6-ounce) boxes raspberry gelatin
- 1 (6-ounce) box lemon gelatin
- 1 cup sugar

1. In a large bowl, combine cranberries, oranges, pecans, celery, and crushed pineapple.

2. Pour 1 cup water into a small pot and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and pour in raspberry and lemon gelatin and sugar. Stir until dissolved. Once dissolved, pour into cranberry mixture. Stir well.

3. Pour into a beautiful clear glass bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight. It will last for many days.



BRENDA-ISM

The cup is always full. It's simply a matter of whether we can taste it.

5-Cup Fruit Salad

MAKES ABOUT 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

- 1 (16-ounce) jar maraschino cherries
- 1 (15-ounce) can mandarin oranges
- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple tidbits
- 1½ cups miniature marshmallows
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 cup sour cream

1. Drain cherries, oranges, and pineapple, reserving all juices for 5-Cup Fruit Punch (recipe below).
2. In a large bowl, mix cherries, oranges, pineapple, marshmallows, pecans, coconut, and sour cream, tossing until coated. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

5-Cup Fruit Punch

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- Fruit juices reserved from 5-Cup Fruit Salad (recipe above)**
- 3 tablespoons pink lemonade drink mix
 - 4 cups water

1. Mix all ingredients together. Fill your glass with ice and enjoy the refreshing taste! ❄️





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Hernan and Alberto met at Le Cordon Bleu in Miami, Florida, and built a friendship that culminated in the 2011 opening of Del Sur in Miami. Three years later, they relocated to St. Simons Island, Georgia, and opened Del Sur Artisan Eats, which quickly became a beloved local destination, with a menu that combines Southern and coastal favorites with comforting South American fare. In 2022, Del Sur expanded to offer a Brunswick, Georgia, location with a similar offering of breakfast and lunch items.

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Kegs & Eggs Wrap up the festival with made-from-scratch brunch bites, live music, and local brews.



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Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort Gets a Glow-Up

The renovation has transformed the hotel, blending indoor and outdoor spaces with sophistication and comfort.

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Adorned with curated elements inspired by the sea, the lobby captivates with its blend of natural textures, muted tones, and tasteful nautical accents.

COASTAL COURTYARD

Lush greenery, swaying palm trees, and vibrant blooms create a tapestry of color while meandering pathways beckon guests to explore this enchanting outdoor space.

OUTDOOR SANCTUARY

With a seamless blend of modern comfort and coastal aesthetics, the renovated balconies provide the perfect vantage point for panoramic views and spectacular sunsets.

By LAND & by SEA

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SCAN ME!

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Slow It Down

This is a busy season, and nothing comforts quite like a cozy meal ready and waiting for you at the end of the day. Save your biggest cooking efforts for upcoming holiday festivities, and let your slow cooker do the heavy lifting with these hearty weeknight meals.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY VANESSA ROCCHIO | FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN | STYLING BY COURTNI BODIFORD





White Bean
and Kale Soup
page 23



White Bean and Kale Soup

MAKES 10 CUPS
(photo on page 22)

- 1 pound dried Camellia Brand Cannellini Beans**
- 8 cups vegetable broth**
- 2 cups sliced carrots (about 4 medium carrots)**
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped**
- 1 cup chopped celery**
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic**
- 2 dried bay leaves**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper, plus more to taste**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper, plus more to taste**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried Italian seasoning**
- 4 cups finely chopped curly kale**
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shaved Parmesan cheese**

- 1.** Rinse and sort beans. In a large stockpot, combine beans and water to cover; let stand for 8 hours or overnight.
- 2.** Drain and rinse beans. Add to a 6-quart slow cooker. Add broth, carrots, onion, celery, garlic, bay leaves, salt, black pepper, red pepper, and Italian seasoning. Cover and cook on high until beans are tender, 6 to 8 hours. (If you want a creamier soup, using the back of a wooden spoon, slightly mash half of beans against the side of slow cooker.)
- 3.** Stir kale into beans mixture; cover and cook on high until kale is tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in lemon juice. Season servings to taste with black pepper and red pepper, and top with Parmesan. Serve with bread.

KITCHEN TIP

Add leftover ham or smoked sausage along with the kale for an even heartier soup.

Curry Chicken

MAKE 5 SERVINGS

- 10 small boneless skinless chicken thighs**
- 1 yellow onion, thinly sliced**
- 2 (13.5-ounce) cans coconut milk**
- 1 (4-ounce) jar green curry paste**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon lime zest**
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger**
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper**
- 2 red bell peppers, thinly sliced**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- 1 tablespoon water**
- Hot cooked jasmine rice, to serve**

Toppings: fresh basil leaves, chopped salted peanuts, lime wedges, and thinly sliced green onion

- 1.** In a 6-quart slow cooker, add chicken and yellow onion.
- 2.** In a medium bowl, whisk together coconut milk, curry paste, garlic, tomato paste, salt, lime zest, ginger, and crushed red pepper. Pour over chicken mixture. Cover and cook on high for 3 hours. Stir in bell pepper.
- 3.** In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch and 1 tablespoon water. Stir cornstarch mixture into curry mixture. Cover and cook on high for 1 hour. Serve over rice with desired toppings.

Slow Cooker Beef Birria

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

- 2** tablespoons olive oil
- 1** large onion, chopped
- 1** (7-ounce) can chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 6** cloves garlic
- 4** dried guajillo peppers
- 2** dried bay leaves
- 1** cup canned crushed tomatoes
- 1** cup chicken stock
- ¼** cup apple cider vinegar
- 1** teaspoon dried oregano
- 1** teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1** teaspoon ground cumin
- 3** pounds boneless chuck roast, cut into 4-inch pieces
- 1** cup beef broth

Charred corn tortillas, chopped fresh cilantro, crumbled cotija cheese, and pico de gallo, to serve

- 1.** In a Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, and cook, stirring constantly, until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Add chipotle peppers, garlic, dried peppers, bay leaves, tomatoes, stock, vinegar, oregano, paprika, and cumin. Cook, stirring frequently, for 20 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool for 10 minutes. Discard bay leaves.
- 2.** Transfer onion mixture to the container of a blender. Remove center piece of lid to let steam escape, and cover with a dish towel to avoid splatters; process until smooth. Let cool completely.
- 3.** In a resealable plastic bag, combine puréed onion mixture and beef. Refrigerate overnight.
- 4.** In a 6-quart slow cooker, add beef mixture and broth. Cook on high until meat is tender, 4 to 5 hours.
- 5.** Shred meat with a fork, and return to cooker. Serve on warm tortillas with cilantro, cheese, and pico de gallo.

KITCHEN TIP

If you have an immersion blender, you can use it to purée the onion mixture in step 2.





Mushroom Meat Loaf

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

- 2 pounds ground beef (80/20)**
- 1 cup chopped fresh baby portobello mushrooms**
- ¼ cup dried bread crumbs**
- ¼ cup whole milk**
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 (8-ounce) package fresh baby portobello mushrooms, quartered**
- 1 cup beef broth**
- 1 (0.87-ounce) package brown gravy mix**
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**

Mashed potatoes and cooked Broccolini, to serve

Garnish: fresh rosemary, ground black pepper

- 1.** In a medium bowl, gently mix together beef, chopped mushrooms, bread crumbs, milk, eggs, tomato paste, and salt. (Do not overmix.) Shape mixture into a loaf to fit into a 6-quart slow cooker.
- 2.** In a 6-quart slow cooker, place a 4-inch-wide strip of foil, letting excess extend over sides of cooker. (You'll use this to lift up the meat loaf when finished cooking.) Place meat loaf in cooker. Top with quartered mushrooms.
- 3.** In a small bowl, whisk together broth, gravy mix, dried rosemary, and pepper. Pour over meat loaf. Cover and cook on high until an instant-read

thermometer inserted in center of meat loaf registers 160°, 3 to 4 hours. Let stand in slow cooker for 30 minutes. Using excess foil as handles, remove meat loaf from cooker.

- 4.** In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add flour, and cook, stirring constantly, for about 1 minute. Add liquid and mushrooms from slow cooker, and cook, stirring frequently, until thickened, about 10 minutes. Serve meat loaf with gravy, mashed potatoes, and Broccolini. Garnish with fresh rosemary and pepper, if desired.

KITCHEN TIP

Meat loaf can be made and shaped the night before and refrigerated until ready to cook.


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Greek Chicken Meatballs and Creamy Orzo

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

- 2 pounds ground chicken**
- ½ cup panko (Japanese bread crumbs)**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley, plus more to serve**
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion**
- 1 large egg**
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 2 teaspoons fresh oregano leaves**
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest**
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin**
- 2 cups canned crushed tomatoes**
- 2 cups chicken broth**
- 1 cup pitted kalamata olives**

½ red onion, thinly sliced

1 cup orzo

3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream

Crumbled feta cheese, pita bread, and lemon slices, to serve

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
- 2.** In a medium bowl, gently mix together chicken, bread crumbs, parsley, chopped onion, egg, garlic, dill, salt, oregano, lemon zest, and cumin. (Do not overmix.) Using a 1½-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop mixture, and roll into balls; place on prepared pan.
- 3.** Bake until browned, about 15 minutes. Place in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Add tomatoes, broth, olives, and sliced onion. Cover and cook on high for 4 hours.
- 4.** Stir orzo into meatball mixture; cover and cook on high until orzo is tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- 5.** Just before serving, stir cream into orzo mixture. Serve with feta, pita bread, lemon slices, and parsley. ■

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Avalon on Ice
Nov. 24–Jan. 20

**Holiday
Hop & Shop**
December 2

Noon Year's Eve
December 31

SPARKLING LIGHTS OF ALPHARETTA

Each winter, Alpharetta, Georgia, transforms into a holiday wonderland that captivates visitors with its enchanting atmosphere and festive spirit. The city comes alive with twinkling lights, charming decorations, and a palpable sense of warmth. Strolling along the illuminated streets, visitors are transported into a festive wonderland, where the spirit of the season abounds.

Holiday shopping in Alpharetta is an experience like no other, offering a blend of charm, variety, and unique finds. With its festively adorned storefronts, the downtown district becomes a picturesque backdrop for your shopping adventure. Start your spree at La Bella Maison, a boutique known for its curated selection of home décor and distinctive gifts, perfect for adding a touch of holiday magic to any living space. For fashion-forward finds, Avalon beckons with its upscale shops, featuring renowned brands like Anthropologie and Kendra Scott. Meanwhile, Queen of Hearts Antiques & Interiors offers a treasure trove of vintage delights, making it an ideal stop for those seeking one-of-a-kind presents with a nostalgic touch. For outdoor

enthusiasts, Mountain High Outfitters is where you can find quality gear and apparel for those who enjoy exploring the natural beauty surrounding Alpharetta. With these must-visit stores, your holiday shopping getaway in Alpharetta promises to be a delightful and memorable experience.

Dining in Alpharetta during the holidays is a culinary journey filled with warmth and flavor. Begin your festive feast at Lapeer Steak & Seafood, a charming restaurant that exudes sophistication. Its seasonal menu showcases locally sourced ingredients, promising a taste of the freshest flavors of Georgia. For an upscale yet cozy ambience, Vinny's on Windward offers Italian-inspired dishes with a modern twist, perfect for indulging in rich, comforting flavors when the weather turns cold. For a truly unique dining experience, don't miss UP on the Roof. When in Alpharetta, this rooftop gem is a must-visit destination for a dining experience that truly elevates the holiday spirit. With a menu designed to tantalize the taste buds, guests can indulge in a diverse range of dishes, from small bites to gourmet entrées, all while enjoying the crisp, cool air under the glow of twinkling lights.

Find even more at: awesomealpharetta.com/holiday-happenings-in-alpharetta.

ALPHARETTA: AWESOME MOMENTS AWAIT

From trendy boutiques and award-winning restaurants to vibrant festivals and live music, there's something for everyone.



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ESCAPE TO BLUE RIDGE TOGETHER

A romantic getaway to Blue Ridge, Georgia, is just what you need when the weather gets chilly and the holidays are near—it's the best time of year to visit the mountains. Plan your escape during the holidays to take advantage of the magic of Blue Ridge at Christmas, or wait until the New Year, when you really need a break after the hustle and bustle of the season.



- 1. Rent a cozy cabin in the mountains.** Search for your own perfect mountain cabin or luxury vacation home at blueridgemountains.com.
- 2. Take time to wind down.** Unpack and explore trails nearby. Or simply find a comfy spot on the porch.
- 3. Cook a meal together.** Bring in a private chef or cook dinner together. Pick up fresh ingredients in town from markets like Mercier Orchards or source locally prepared food from shops and restaurants like the Pasta Market, Chester's Provisions, or Out of the Blue.
- 4. Cuddle up by the fireside.** Cuddle up by the fireside with a glass of wine and a good book or a movie night!
- 5. Explore the mountains.** Hike to the head of the Appalachian Trail, Aska Trails, or Swinging Bridge.
- 6. Take a walk downtown.** Get coffee at Mountain Mama's or Das Kaffee Haus in downtown Blue Ridge, or brunch at The Black Sheep or Big Foot Biscuit at the Dogwood.
- 7. Visit a local winery or brewery.** Spend an afternoon tasting local brews at Mercier's Tasting Room, Bear Claw or Serenberry Vineyards, or one of six craft breweries.
- 8. Have a couple's spa day.** Treat yourself to a couple's massage or other relaxation treatments at Serenity in the Mountains or Teatree Spa.
- 9. Watch the game.** Vacation home rentals come with all the comforts of home, including wifi and big screen tvs.
- 10. Treat yourself to a romantic dinner.** Last but definitely not least, experience a romantic dinner at one of Blue Ridge's finest restaurants, like Ferraro's Kitchen, Harvest on Main, The General Ledger, The Black Sheep, or Grace.

Get Away Together



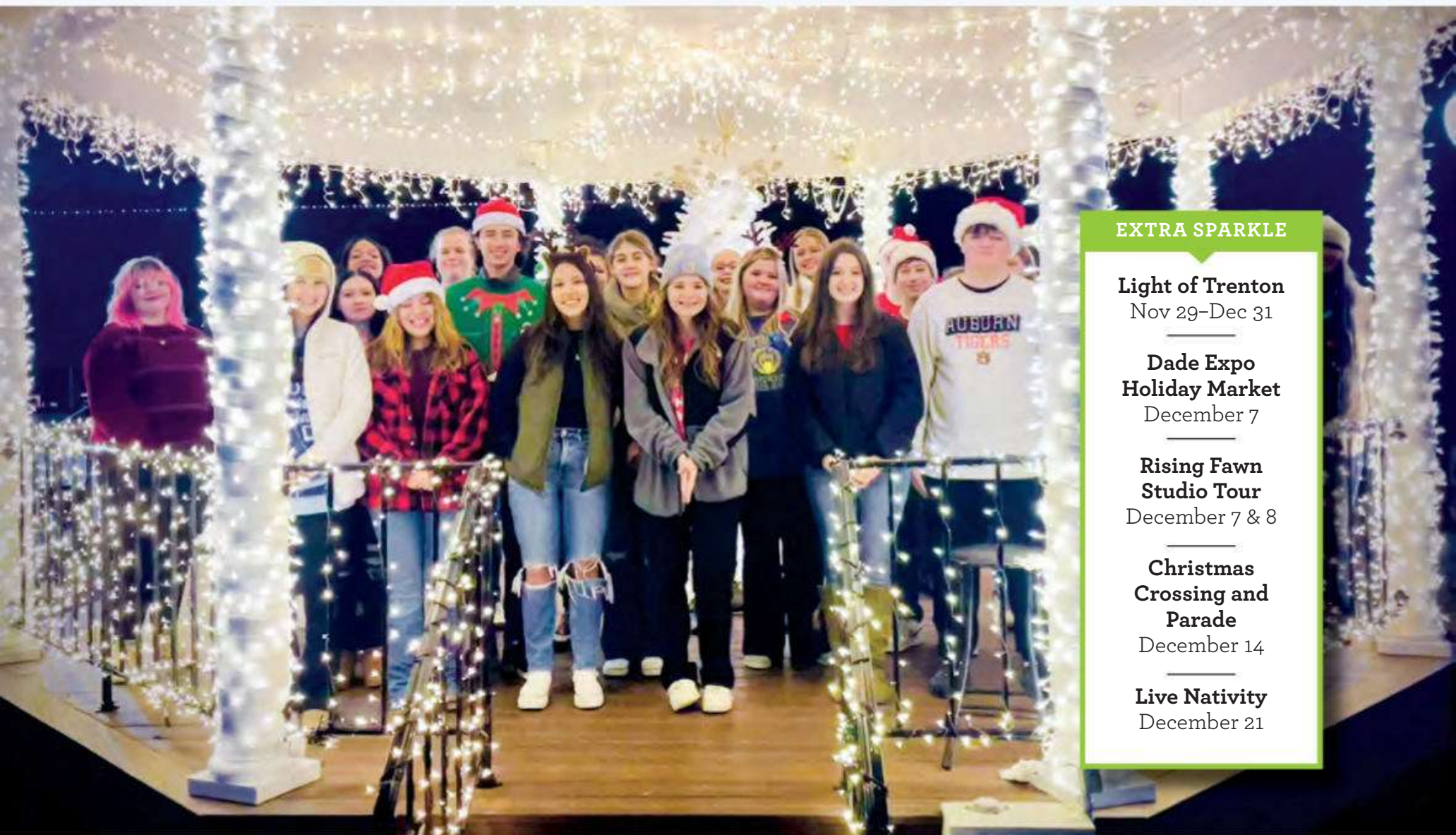
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Blue Ridge

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mountain town

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EXTRA SPARKLE

Light of Trenton
Nov 29-Dec 31

**Dade Expo
Holiday Market**
December 7

**Rising Fawn
Studio Tour**
December 7 & 8

**Christmas
Crossing and
Parade**
December 14

Live Nativity
December 21

TRENTON-DADE SHARES ITS MAGIC

Visiting Dade County, Georgia, during the holiday season is a delightful experience filled with charm, natural beauty, and festive spirit. Nestled in the Appalachian foothills, this small but picturesque county offers a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of larger cities. During the holidays, Dade County transforms into a winter wonderland, with its rolling hills and awe-inspiring mountains, often dusted with snow, and its quaint towns adorned with twinkling lights and decorations.

Experience the magic of Christmas and enjoy the holiday spirit with stunning light displays around the town square during the Saturdays of “Light of Trenton.” You’ll be treated to joyful singing and a live nativity scene celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. There will be cookie decorating, face painting, and a dazzling parade of lighted floats through downtown Trenton. Don’t miss the festive holiday market with a variety of gifts and treats that are perfect for delighting friends and family on Christmas morning. You can even visit with Santa and his elves to make sure he knows everything on your list. Atop of Lookout Mountain, you can visit the Rising Fawn Studio Tour December 7th and 8th. Experience the works of talented artists who open their studios to showcase their work during the holiday season.

While you’re on Lookout Mountain, pay a visit to Cloudland Canyon State Park. The park’s stunning landscapes, including deep canyons and cascading waterfalls, are even more magical in the winter months. Hiking trails are quieter, and the crisp air enhances the breathtaking views.

You’ll experience the magic of the season when you adventure into Dade County, Georgia!



Find even more events at: alliancefordade.com/annual-events.



Make Your Christmas Memories with Us!

Let the sparkle of "Light Up Trenton" get you in the holiday mood with our spectacular light displays around the square. Where singing abounds and a live nativity celebrates our Savior's birth. Enjoy our Holiday Market filled with great holiday gifts and treats sure to help make new memories with family and friends. You can even visit with Santa and his elves to make sure he knows everything on your list! You'll experience the magic of the season when you adventure into Dade! Come Join Us!

706.657.4488
Trenton, GA



SCAN FOR MORE





TAKING IT EASY IN GILMER

Ellijay, nestled in the North Georgia mountains, is the perfect destination for a holiday getaway from Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve. With its cozy cabins, festive lights, and mountain charm, it offers everything you need for a memorable winter retreat.

Start your stay in one of Ellijay's inviting cabins. Whether you're looking for a romantic hideaway or a lodge for the whole family, you'll find the perfect spot to relax by a crackling fire and enjoy the crisp mountain air.

One of the highlights of the season is the Holiday Lights of Ellijay, a stunning walkthrough display open from November 25th to December 31st. Wander through the Lions Club Fairgrounds and marvel at thousands of twinkling lights, festive decorations, and seasonal music. It's an experience that's sure to delight visitors of all ages.

Downtown Ellijay also shines bright with its Christmas Lights display. Stroll through the charming streets, shop for unique gifts, and enjoy the festive atmosphere. The town's cozy cafes and charming boutiques offer the perfect setting to soak up the holiday spirit.

Beyond the lights and festivities, Ellijay provides a serene backdrop for reconnecting with loved ones. Explore scenic trails, visit local shops and restaurants, or simply enjoy the peaceful mountain setting. It's the perfect place to unwind and embrace the true spirit of the season.

In short, Ellijay offers a blend of cozy accommodations, dazzling light displays, and warm mountain hospitality. This holiday season, make Ellijay your destination for a magical and memorable getaway.

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.

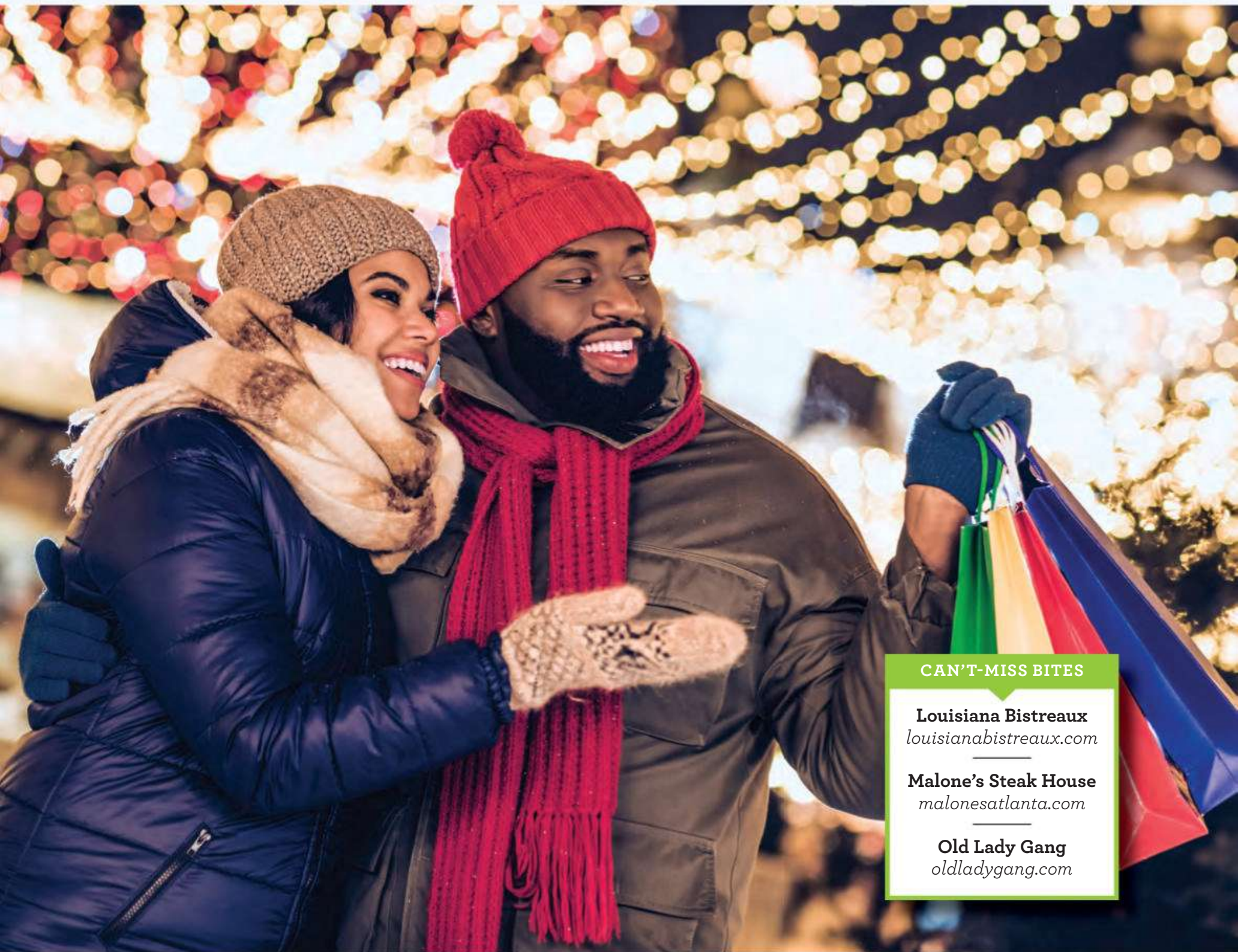


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PICK
ELLIJAY
GEORGIA

FOR OUR DIGITAL GUIDE!



CAN'T-MISS BITES

Louisiana Bistreaux
louisianabistreaux.com

Malone's Steak House
malonesatlanta.com

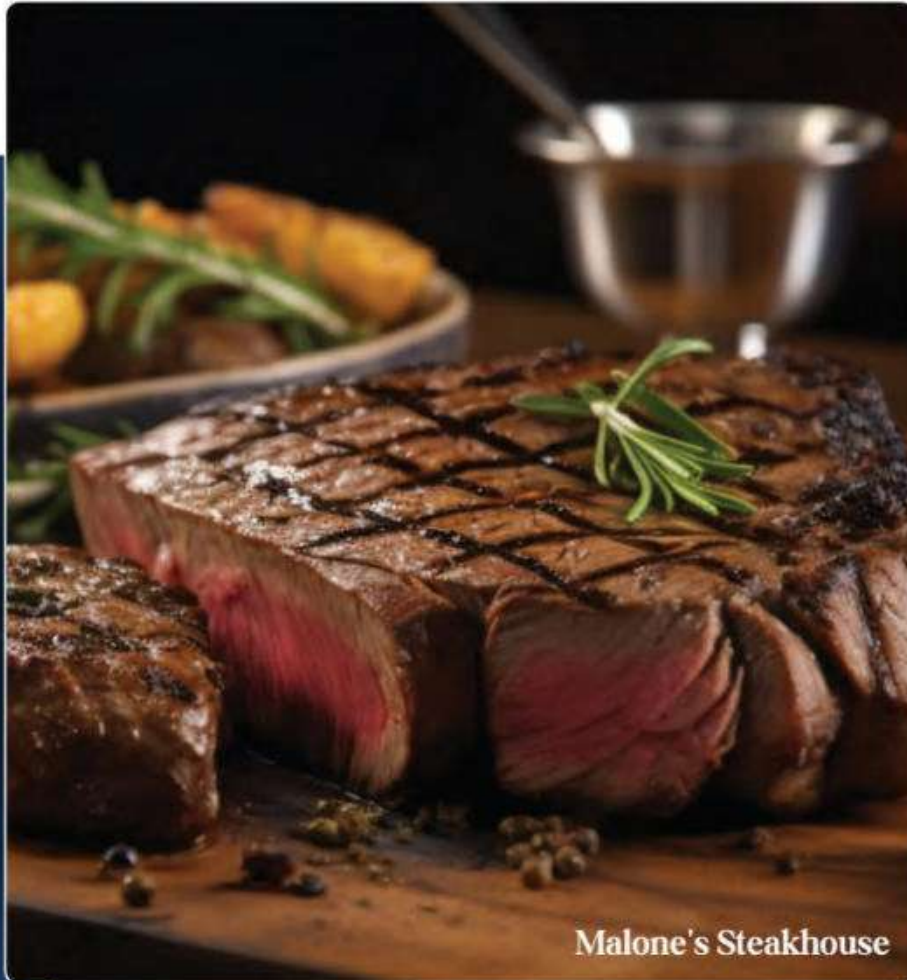
Old Lady Gang
oldladygang.com

ADVENTURES IN EAST POINT

Visiting East Point, Georgia, during the holiday season offers a blend of small-town charm, festive events, and a touch of Hollywood magic. Located just minutes from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, East Point is an ideal destination for travelers looking to experience the warmth and community spirit of a Southern town while maintaining the convenience of being so close to Atlanta.

The city's connection to the film industry adds an extra layer of excitement to the holiday season. As part of Georgia's booming film scene, East Point is minutes from Tyler Perry Studios and has been the backdrop for numerous movies and TV shows, including *The Wonder Years*, *Stranger Things*, and *The Walking Dead*. This cinematic flair is often highlighted during the holidays, with special film screenings and themed events that celebrate the town's role in Hollywood South.

East Point's proximity to Atlanta makes it easy to enjoy both local festivities and broader metropolitan attractions. While in town, be sure to visit some of the locally owned restaurants that add to the city's charm. Enjoy Southern comfort food at This Is It! Southern Kitchen & Bar-B-Q, or try the eclectic menu at Spondivits (known for its expansive seafood selection). For a cozy brunch, stop by Eat My Biscuits, where you can savor freshly baked biscuits, pastries, and festive brunch cocktails. Whether you're admiring holiday lights in East Point's historic downtown or spending the day shopping at Camp Creek Marketplace (which boasts a collection of more than 55 retail shops and restaurants), the city offers a perfect blend of holiday cheer and culinary delights. East Point is a delightful destination for those seeking a festive and culturally rich holiday experience.



Malone's Steakhouse



Louisiana Bistreaux



Old Lady Gang



Spondivits Seafood

WHERE THE WORLD MEETS...AND EATS!

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East Point Convention and Visitors Bureau | 1526 E Forrest Avenue, Suite 105
East Point, Georgia 30344 | (470) 903-2766

HOLIDAYS IN ALPINE HELEN

Traveling to Alpine Helen, Georgia, during the holiday season is like stepping into a Bavarian winter oasis. The town, known for its charming Alpine architecture, truly bursts with festive cheer. The season kicks off with the Lighting of the Village on November 29 at 6 p.m., a magical event where the entire town is illuminated with thousands of twinkling lights. This tradition marks the start of the holiday season, filling the air with excitement and warmth.

One of the highlights of your visit will be Helen's Annual Lighted Christmas Parade on December 14 at 6 p.m., where floats, cars, and even Santa himself make their way through the town, all adorned with colorful lights. The parade is a joyful celebration that captures the spirit of the season, bringing together locals and visitors alike.

Don't miss the Alpine Winter Lights (from November 29 through February 17), a spectacular display that transforms Helen into a glowing wonderland. The lights, combined



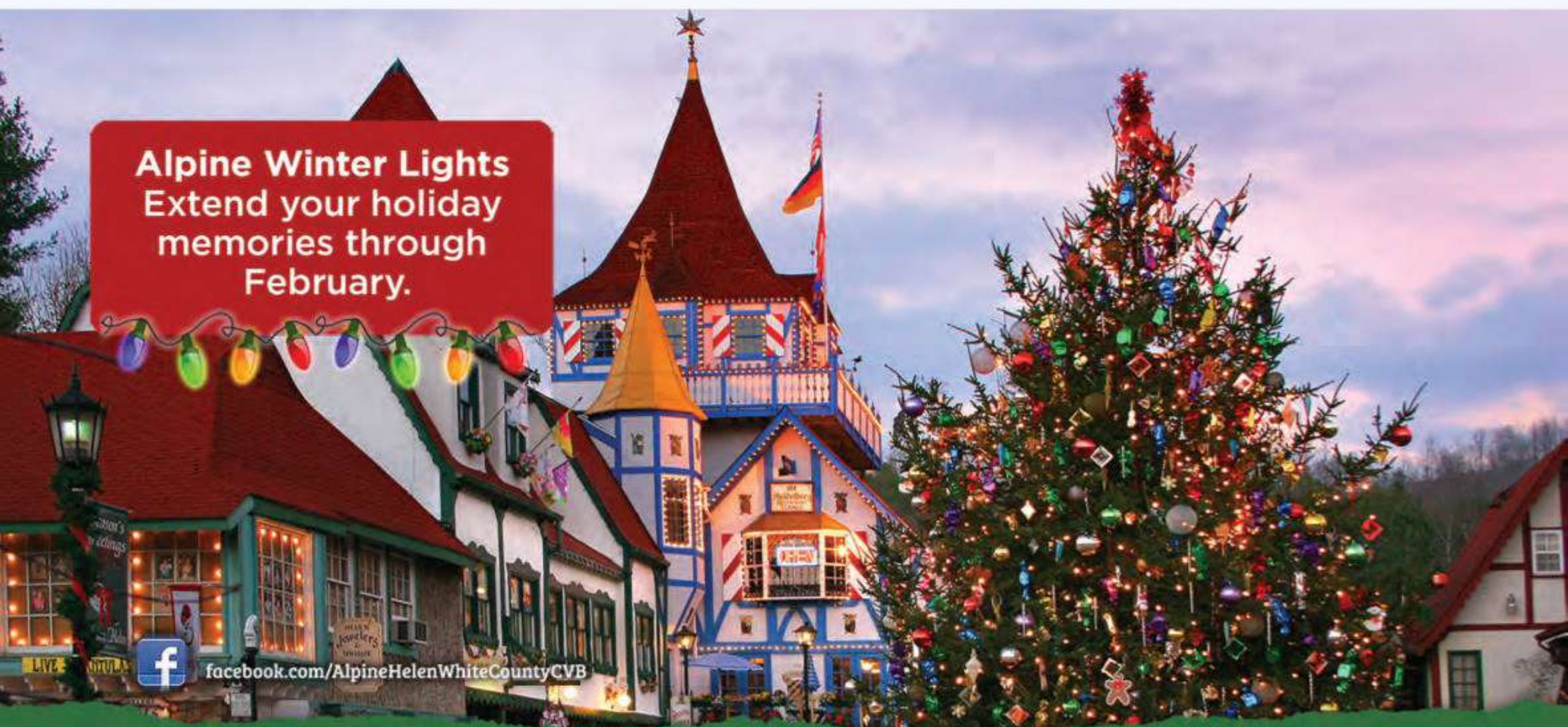
EXTRA SPARKLE

Christmas Market
Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 7, & 8

Mistletoe Marketplace Festival
December 7-8

For more events:
[visit helenga.org](http://visit.helenga.org).

with the town's quaint European-style buildings, create an enchanting atmosphere perfect for a holiday stroll. From festive events to cozy shops and restaurants, Helen offers an unforgettable holiday experience.



Alpine Winter Lights
Extend your holiday memories through February.

 facebook.com/AlpineHelenWhiteCountyCVB

N.E. Georgia Mountains just 90 minutes North of Atlanta

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FITZGERALD

Visiting Fitzgerald, Georgia, during the holiday season is a unique experience filled with Southern charm and festive spirit. On Main Street, string lights illuminate the downtown, and the neon lights of the historic Art Deco Grand Theatre are aglow! There you can enjoy a movie, live performance, or concert. The park in front of the theater is a prime place to relax (you can even play a game of giant chess or checkers). Locally owned shops will treat you to Southern hospitality, and eateries will delight you with delicious regional and international cuisine. Walk the town's brick streets as you shop and sightsee, enjoy the murals, or embark on an architectural tour. You are likely to see wild chickens along the way. Visit fitzgeraldga.org to find out why chickens are running wild in Fitzgerald and why there is a giant metal chicken in the middle of town. Check out the calendar to see what event might be happening during your visit.



WOODSTOCK

Visiting Woodstock, Georgia, feels like coming home to a welcoming retreat filled with warmth and charm. Just 30 minutes from Atlanta, Woodstock invites you to discover vibrant views, diverse eats, and year-round events in North Georgia's favorite city. The holiday season brings an extra layer of magic to this bustling town, where more than 35 restaurants await you in the walkable downtown, offering everything from Southern comfort food to international delights. Stroll through the decorated streets, explore locally owned shops, and find unique gifts at the holiday market. Woodstock also boasts Atlanta's closest outlet mall, perfect for checking off everything on your holiday shopping list. With its festive events, cozy ambience, and convenient location, Woodstock offers a perfect blend of small-town charm and big-city convenience, making it an ideal destination for your holiday getaway.



Small Town, USA, is Fitzgerald, Georgia.

Come experience the small-town charm, the brick streets, the historic theatre, the museums and galleries, the unique shops, camping, kayaking and...who can forget about the wild chickens!

Fitzgerald Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.fitzgeraldga.org
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A Texas Hill Country Christmas

BY DANIEL DUBUISSON

Discover the magic of the holidays in Fredericksburg, Texas, where rich traditions and festive cheer create an unforgettable holiday experience



AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON DESCENDS UPON THE SOUTH,

charming towns across the region come alive to celebrate the season, and Fredericksburg, Texas, is one of the finest examples. Known for its rich German heritage and vibrant culinary scene, this idyllic hub in the heart of the Texas Hill Country offers a unique blend of tradition and modernity, making it a perfect destination for a holiday getaway. Whether you're savoring local flavors at renowned restaurants or exploring the twinkling lights and holiday markets, Fredericksburg promises an unforgettable experience that captures the true spirit of the season.

Finding the perfect place to stay during a holiday visit to the area is easy, with an array of charming accommodations that cater to all tastes. For those seeking a tranquil escape, the **Hill Country Herb Garden** offers a peaceful retreat with individual, private cottages nestled among lush gardens. Each cottage is designed for relaxation, featuring porches with rocking chairs, perfect for sipping a morning coffee or evening glass of wine while soaking in the serene surroundings.



The downtown Marktplatz in Fredericksburg, Texas, is the place to be for nightly Christmas tree and pyramid lighting ceremonies.



(Top to bottom): A look into the cozy conservatory of Hoffman Haus; the tranquil garden space of Hill Country Herb Garden; families enjoy a demonstration at the city's Pioneer Museum.

For those who prefer to be closer to the action, the **Inn on Barons Creek** and **Hoffman Haus** offer a blend of convenience and comfort. The Inn on Barons Creek, located just a short stroll from Main Street, is a modern hotel providing guests with easy access to Fredericksburg's shops, restaurants, and holiday events. The inn also features a full-service spa where visitors can unwind with a massage or facial after a day of exploring the town.

Hoffman Haus is a historic bed-and-breakfast that combines rustic charm with contemporary comforts. Originally built as a German farmhouse and lovingly renovated more than two decades ago, Hoffman Haus exudes a warm, welcoming atmosphere, making it an ideal spot for a cozy holiday getaway. With its elegant boutique suites, personalized service, and hearty breakfast offerings, guests feel right at home from the moment they arrive.

The entire town of Fredericksburg radiates with the same inviting glow during the holiday season. With the town decked out in twinkling lights and festive decorations, there's a magic in the air. At the heart of the celebration is the **Marktplatz**, the central town square where nightly tree and pyramid lighting ceremonies draw crowds of locals and visitors alike during the season. The towering Christmas tree, adorned with thousands of lights, is a sight to behold, while the German-style Christmas pyramid adds a touch of old-world charm to the festivities.

One of the highlights of this time of year is the **Christmas Wine Affair**, a nearly monthlong event that invites visitors to explore the region's renowned wineries. Each participating winery is festively decorated, and guests can enjoy tastings of seasonal wines, including spiced mulled wine, which is perfect for warming up on a blustery winter day. The Christmas Wine Affair is a wonderful way to experience the rich flavors of Hill Country while getting into the holiday spirit.

Another must-visit event is the **Weihnachtsmarkt**, a series of traditional German Christmas markets held in downtown Fredericksburg. The markets feature a variety of handmade goods, from ornaments and toys to artisanal foods and crafts. They're the perfect place to find unique gifts for loved ones while enjoying festive treats like gingerbread cookies, hot chocolate, and roasted nuts.

If you're looking for a peaceful escape from the holiday hustle and bustle, **Wildseed Farms** and the **Pioneer Museum** offer a glimpse into the natural beauty and rich history of the region. Wildseed Farms, the largest working wildflower farm in the country, is a stunning sight, with fields of colorful blooms even in winter. The Pioneer Museum, on the other hand, provides a look at the lives of the early settlers of Fredericksburg, with exhibits that showcase the town's German heritage and pioneer spirit.

History buffs will also enjoy the **National Museum of the Pacific War** in town for its unique perspective on World War II, with exhibits that tell the story of the Pacific theater. During the holiday season, the museum hosts special events and activities that provide insight into this pivotal time in history.



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TEAM
KENTUCKY.

Beyond the history, Fredericksburg's culinary scene is a feast for the senses, especially during the holidays, when local restaurants showcase the very best of Texas Hill Country cuisine. Start the day with a fulfilling breakfast at **The Restaurant**, located within the Hill Country Herb Garden compound. This charming eatery offers a farm-to-table experience, with dishes crafted from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The menu even features staples like chicken and waffles and stuffed French toast, as well as a range of hearty options for lunch and dinner.

As far as afternoon bites go, **Otto's German Bistro** is a must-try. Its menu pays homage to Fredericksburg's historic German roots, blending traditional flavors with fresh culinary techniques. Guests can enjoy dishes like Duck Schnitzel paired with a curated selection of wines from local vineyards. The intimate atmosphere of Otto's makes it a perfect spot for a leisurely meal with loved ones.

When evening falls, one of the best places to dine is **Cabernet Grill**. Known for its upscale Texan cuisine, Cabernet Grill offers a dining experience that is both refined and deeply rooted in local tradition. Signature dishes like bacon-wrapped Texas quail and lobster-topped chicken-fried rib eye highlight the restaurant's commitment to top-notch meals using fresh ingredients sourced locally. With its own extensive wine list that showcases the best of Texas vineyards, guests can enjoy a meal that captures the essence of Hill Country.



Holiday Cheer & Reindeer

This holiday season, remember that those moments in between are made in Bowling Green. Visit The Reindeer Farm to meet our friendly reindeer and farm animals, perfect for that dream greeting card photo. Glide at SoKY Ice Rink, explore our enchanting downtown, and bask in Southern charm.

PLAN YOUR MAGICAL
HOLIDAY ADVENTURE AT
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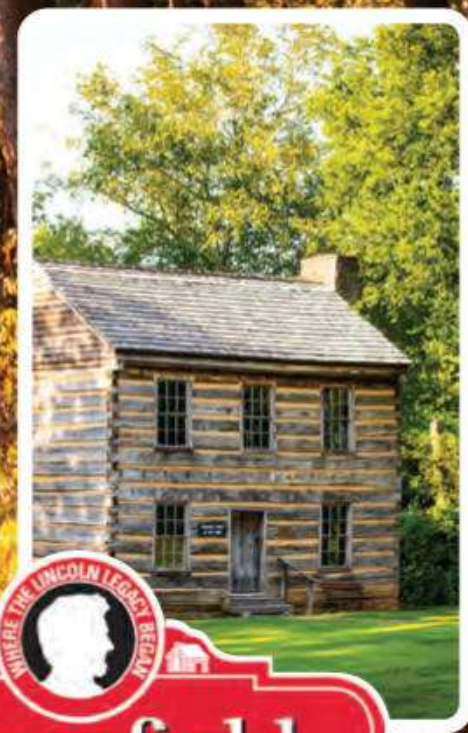


Hill & Vine is praised by visitors and locals for its menu celebrating Texas ingredients. From popular and mouthwatering sandwiches to creative and zingy cocktails, the team provide a fresh take on traditional Southern cuisine in a stylish and welcoming setting. For those who prefer a more casual dining experience, **Hondo's on Main** offers a lively atmosphere with a menu that features Tex-Mex favorites. Known for its live music and friendly crowd, Hondo's is a great place to unwind with a margarita and some chips and salsa. If barbecue is on the agenda, **Eaker Barbecue** is the place to be. This family-owned joint specializes in smoked meats that are tender, flavorful, and cooked to absolute perfection, making it some of the best barbecue in the Hill Country.

There's more where that came from in Fredericksburg's culinary wonderland. In fact, a visit to **Vaudeville** is another essential stop. This unique bistro, located in a beautifully restored building on Main Street, offers a menu that blends Southern comfort with contemporary flair. The culinary team at Vaudeville are known for their creative take on classic dishes such as buttermilk fried chicken and crawfish étouffée, each artfully presented and bursting with flavor.

OPPOSITE PAGE (top to bottom): Cabernet Grill's bacon-wrapped Texas quail; a delicious fried pork sandwich at Hill Country Herb Garden's restaurant. **THIS PAGE (top to bottom):** Vaudeville's historic and charming exterior; Otto's German Bistro's famous Duck Schnitzel.

Hello Springfield!



TEAM
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THIS PAGE (Left to right): Fredericksburg Brewing Company and its historic biergarten are favorites thanks to award-winning brews and flavorful bar grub; a slice of chocolate pecan pie from Fredericksburg Pie Company.

Fredericksburg has the pub scene covered as well. Beer enthusiasts will find delight at **Fredericksburg Brewing Company**, the oldest operating brewpub in Texas, where you can enjoy handcrafted beers alongside hearty pub fare. The cozy atmosphere and friendly service make it a great spot to relax after a day of exploring the town's holiday attractions. But after any day out and about, treat yourself to something sweet at **Fredericksburg Pie Company**, where the pies are made from scratch with seasonal fillings.

Whether you choose a slice of pecan pie or a classic apple pie, you'll find the perfect ending to your meal.

Fredericksburg is a town that truly comes alive during the holiday season, offering a blend of rich traditions, warm hospitality, and vibrant culinary experiences. Whether you're exploring the twinkling lights, savoring a hearty meal, or simply enjoying the festive atmosphere, you'll find that Fredericksburg captures the true spirit of Christmas in the South. This Hill Country gem provides the perfect setting for creating memories that will last a lifetime, making it an ideal destination for a holiday getaway. 📍



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ABBEVILLE, EDGEFIELD, GREENWOOD, LAURENS, AND McCORMICK COUNTIES





Where Memories are Made

Savor the season with family and friends in Burnsville, North Carolina. Cozy up in a cabin for the perfect holiday getaway. Bring a taste of Burnsville to your spread with this recipe by beloved local restauranteurs, Leigh and Melissa Howell, owners of Pig and Grits and Mount Mitchell Cafe and Eatery.

Holidays & Happenings Brussel Sprouts

2 pounds Brussels sprouts
washed and dried

8 ounces diced bacon

2 ounces diced red onion

2 ounces dried cranberries

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning

1 ounce pure maple syrup

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon cracked black
pepper

4 ounces toasted pecans to
garnish

Step 1: Trim the ends of sprouts and cut in half lengthwise.

Step 2: Arrange Brussels and any loose leaves on a sheet pan. Season with salt and pepper and spread the mixture out in a single layer.

Step 3: Roast the Brussels in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes at 375 degrees, until slightly soft and golden brown.

Step 4: While the Brussels are in the oven, in a sauté pan, render chopped bacon and onions over medium-high heat for 15 minutes.

Step 5: Add brown sugar, Cajun seasoning, and maple syrup. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes.

Step 6: Add the Brussels to the bacon, add the onion mixture, and toss with dried cranberries. Garnish with the toasted pecans.

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LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

Whether you crave adventure, relaxation, or a little of both, Lake Charles sets the stage for unforgettable memories. Immerse yourself in the jubilant spirit of celebration in Lake Charles, where a trio of festive events await.

The **Mistletoe & Moss Holiday Market** (Nov. 15-17) transforms into a haven of joy and festivity and is your ultimate winter wonderland for all your holiday gift needs. The Sip and Shop soirée elevates your shopping experience, while a special

meeting with Santa himself promises to spark joy in the hearts of the little ones.

Smoke & Barrel (Nov. 14-17) is ideal for those who love bold flavors and spirited fun. Held on the Calcasieu Parish Courthouse lawn, the event features nearly 100 bourbons, scotches, and whiskeys, paired with mouth-watering barbecue from top pitmasters. Don't miss the Cocktail Royale Contest from Sept. 20 to Nov. 10, where local mixologists compete for the best bourbon cocktail, culminating in a grand finale on Nov. 14. The weekend wraps up with a relaxing Smokin' Brunch!

Set amidst the enchanting backdrop of Sulphur's Heritage Square, **Christmas Under the Oaks** (Dec. 5-7) bursts into life with mesmerizing snowfall, live performances, and carnival rides. Explore the Holiday House, an impressive collection of over 40 shops brimming with innovative Christmas gift ideas.

Learn more at UnpackYourJoy.com



Christmas Under the Oaks



Mistletoe & Moss Holiday Market



Smoke & Barrel



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Classic Christmas Divinity

Making impressive treats at Christmas is a great tradition, but making candy from scratch can feel a little daunting if you don't make it very often. Our step-by-step instructions, along with some kitchen tips, will have you feeling like a pro.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD STYLING BY VANESSA ROCCHIO | STYLING BY SIDNEY BRAGIEL

Old-Fashioned Orange Divinity Candy

MAKES ABOUT 25

- 2½ cups sugar**
- ½ cup light corn syrup**
- ½ cup water**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**
- 3 large egg whites, room temperature**
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar**
- ¼ cup finely chopped praline pecans**
- 2 tablespoons orange zest**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

About 25 praline pecan halves

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; lightly spray with cooking spray.
2. In a large stainless steel saucepan, stir together sugar, corn syrup, ½ cup water, and salt just until sugar is moistened. Cook over medium-high heat, without stirring, until a candy thermometer registers 260°, 10 to 12 minutes. When thermometer registers near 240°, continue to next step.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites and cream of tartar at high speed until stiff peaks form. When sugar mixture has reached 260°, with mixer on low speed, slowly pour sugar mixture into egg white mixture in a slow, steady stream. Beat at high speed until mixture holds its shape and begins to lose its gloss, 6 to 9 minutes. Immediately reduce mixer speed to low, and add chopped pecans, orange zest, and vanilla, beating just until combined.

4. Working quickly with 2 spoons or a small spring-loaded scoop, immediately drop mixture by tablespoonfuls onto prepared pan. Gently press a pecan half on top of each. Let stand until dry and can easily be removed from pan, about 6 hours. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

KITCHEN TIP

Be sure to let candy dry before storing.



HOW-TO



ASSEMBLE all equipment and ingredients before beginning.



COOK sugar mixture to 260° (hardball stage).



POUR sugar syrup in a thin, steady stream into stiffly beaten egg white mixture with the mixer running.



BEAT candy mixture for 6 to 9 minutes.



SPOON candy onto pan quickly with 2 spoons.



TOP candy with pecans.

KITCHEN TIPS

A candy thermometer and a stand mixer are the keys to success in making divinity.

Beat the egg white and syrup mixture until it holds its shape. This can take a while.

Drop a small amount of candy onto wax paper to see if it holds its shape before scooping.

For colored candies, add a couple drops of food coloring when adding the flavoring.

Don't make divinity on rainy or humid days.

Good times
ARE BREWING



Let's raise a glass to family, friends, and the sweet taste of tradition! Savoring the flavor of fresh-brewed Luzianne Tea has been a pitcher-perfect part of holiday gatherings since 1902, because Luzianne is more than just iced tea – it's a celebration of the sweet, slow moments that make the season bright.

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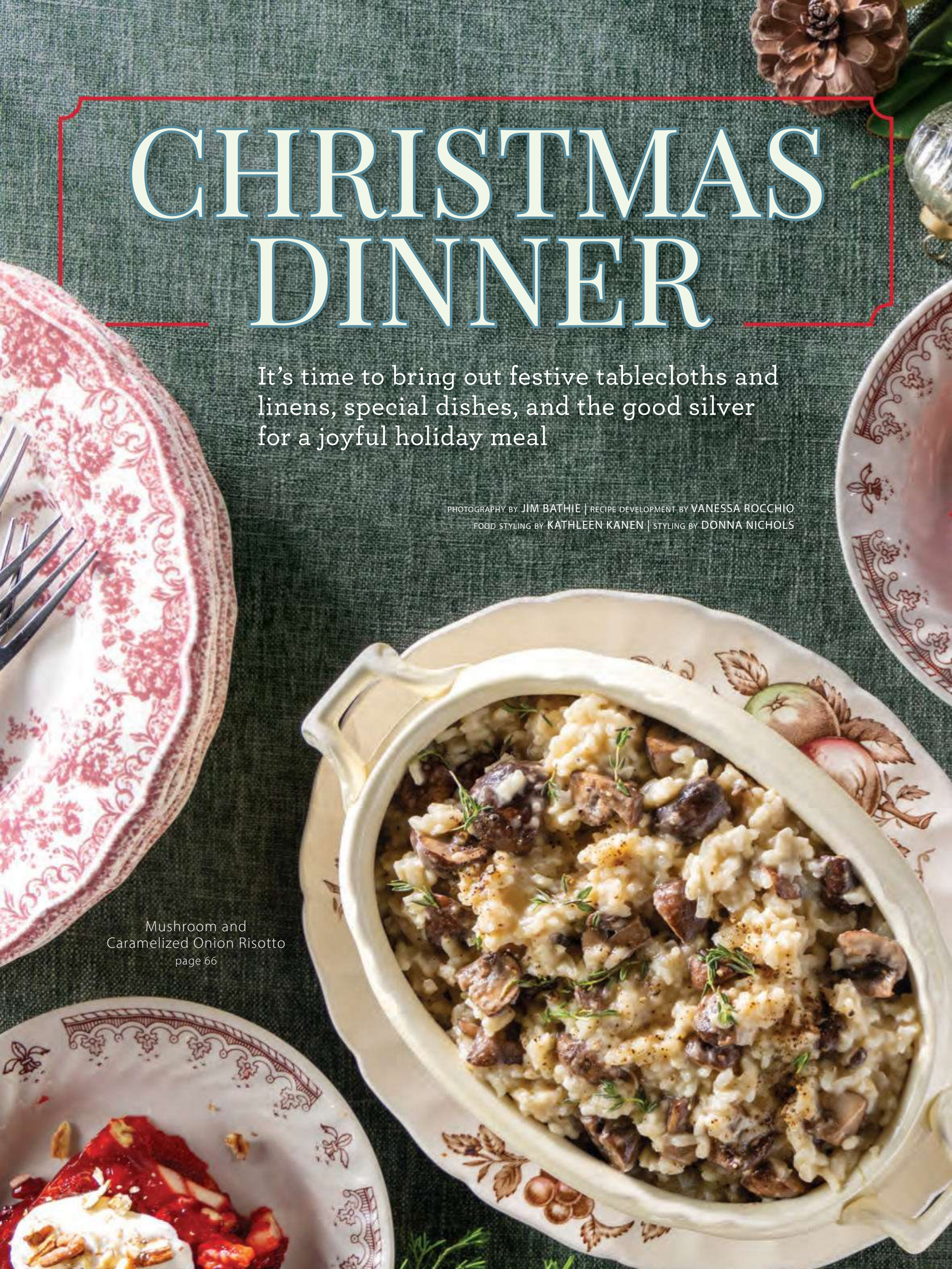
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Savor the **GOOD TIMES**

CHRISTMAS DINNER

It's time to bring out festive tablecloths and linens, special dishes, and the good silver for a joyful holiday meal

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY VANESSA ROCCHIO
FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN | STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS

Mushroom and
Caramelized Onion Risotto
page 66







Baked Acorn Squash with
Cornbread Topping
page 65

Sage Butter-Roasted
Oysters
page 66





Stuffed Pork Tenderloin
page 65



Cranberry Congealed Salad
page 65

Stuffed Pork Tenderloin

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS
(photo on page 63)

- 2 (1½-pound) pork tenderloins**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ½ cup chopped red onion**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary**
- 4 large collard greens, stemmed**
- 16 slices thick-cut bacon**
- 5 small apples, halved**
- 2 cups apple juice**
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar**
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper**
- Garnish: fresh rosemary sprigs**

1. Place tenderloin lengthwise on a cutting board, with one short end closest to you. Holding your knife parallel to bottom of tenderloin, make a lengthwise cut along bottom third of one long side, cutting to within ½ inch of other long side.
2. Open meat at incision as if you were opening a book. Again, holding your knife parallel to cutting board, with blade facing thicker side, make another lengthwise cut into thicker side of tenderloin, cutting to within ½ inch of opposite side.
3. Again, open meat at incision as if you were opening a book. Repeat with second tenderloin. Sprinkle evenly with 1½ teaspoons salt and black pepper. Sprinkle red onion, parsley, and chopped rosemary on top, and place collard greens flat on top. Working with one at a time, starting with one long side, tightly roll up meat and filling. Wrap bacon around outside of each tenderloin.
4. Preheat oven to 375°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
5. In a 12-inch skillet, cook tenderloin over medium heat, turning occasionally, until bacon is browned on all sides. Place pork on prepared pan.
6. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in thickest portion registers 145°, 15 to 20 minutes,

or to desired degree of doneness. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing.

7. Heat same skillet over medium heat. Add apples, cut side down. Cook, without stirring, until browned. Remove apples from skillet, and drain any excess bacon drippings from skillet.
8. Add apple juice, vinegar, red pepper, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt to skillet, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer until liquid is reduced and coats the back of a spoon. Serve over pork with apples. Garnish with rosemary sprigs, if desired.

Baked Acorn Squash with Cornbread Topping

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 61)

- 3 medium acorn squash, halved, seeded, and sliced ½ inch thick**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, divided**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme**
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, cubed**
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme**
- 1 cup crumbled cornbread**
- Garnish: fresh thyme leaves**

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, toss together squash, melted butter, parsley, oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and chopped thyme until combined. Transfer to prepared pan.
3. Bake until squash is lightly golden brown and tender, 35 to 40 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, in a large ovenproof skillet, heat cubed butter over medium heat. Add thyme sprigs. Sprinkle cornbread evenly over butter, and sprinkle with remaining ½ teaspoon salt.
5. Bake until golden brown and crispy, 10 to 15 minutes. Top squash with cornbread mixture. Garnish with thyme leaves, if desired.

Cranberry Congealed Salad

MAKES 12 SERVINGS
(photo on page 64)

- 3 cups boiling water**
- 3 (3-ounce) packages cranberry instant gelatin**
- ¼ cup sugar**
- 1½ cups cold water**
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish**
- 2 teaspoons packed orange zest**
- ¾ cup fresh orange juice**
- 1 (12-ounce) package fresh cranberries, chopped**
- 1 cup chopped toasted pecans, plus more to serve**
- 1 cup chopped peeled fresh pear**
- ½ cup chopped fresh orange segments**
- Sour cream, to serve**

1. Lightly spray an 11x7-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, stir together 3 cups boiling water, gelatin, and sugar until completely dissolved, about 2 minutes. Stir in 1½ cups cold water, horseradish, and orange zest and juice. Refrigerate until mixture is the texture of egg whites, about 30 minutes. Gently stir in cranberries, pecans, pear, and chopped orange. Pour into prepared pan. Refrigerate until set, at least 6 hours, or overnight. Cut into squares. Serve with pecans and sour cream.

Mushroom and Caramelized Onion Risotto

MAKES ABOUT 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 59)

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided**
- 1 pound fresh baby portobello mushrooms, quartered**
- 3 cups chopped yellow onion**
- 6 to 6½ cups chicken broth**
- 1½ cups Arborio or other short-grain rice**
- 1 cup dry white wine**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme**

- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese**
- ¼ cup heavy whipping cream**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest**
- Garnish: freshly grated Parmesan cheese, fresh thyme, ground black pepper**

- 1.** In a medium cast-iron Dutch oven, melt 2 tablespoons butter over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; cook, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms soften and release liquid, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from pot.
- 2.** In same pot, melt remaining 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat. Add onion, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and lightly browned, about 8 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and tender, about 20 minutes. (If onions become dry, stir in 1 or 2 tablespoons water.)
- 3.** In a medium saucepan, heat broth over medium heat.
- 4.** Add rice to onion mixture, and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until rice begins to

smell nutty and toasted, about 3 minutes. Add wine, and cook, stirring constantly, until liquid is absorbed. Stir in salt and thyme. Add 6 cups hot broth, 1 cup at a time, and cook, stirring constantly, letting liquid absorb after each addition, until rice is tender and creamy. (You should be able to drag your spoon through the rice and the rice not come back together before adding the next cup of broth.) Add remaining ½ cup hot broth if necessary. Stir in mushrooms, cheese, cream, pepper, and lemon zest. Garnish with cheese, thyme, and pepper, if desired.


Sage Butter-Roasted Oysters

MAKES 12 (photo on page 62)

Rock salt

- 12 oysters on half shell**
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted**
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**

- ½ teaspoon lemon zest**
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese**
- Lemon wedges, to serve**
- Garnish: fresh sage**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 450°.
- 2.** In 12-inch cast-iron skillet, pour a thick layer of rock salt. Arrange oysters on top.
- 3.** In a small bowl, stir together melted butter, sage, kosher salt, and lemon zest. Spoon butter mixture over oysters, and sprinkle with cheese.
- 4.** Bake until golden brown and bubbly, 10 to 12 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges. Garnish with sage, if desired. 

GIFT IDEA

For oyster-loving folks who deserve the best tools, the Waterman Oyster Knife makes an ideal gift. It was painstakingly crafted by Andrew Carmines of Hudson's Seafood (Hilton Head Island, South Carolina) and Wölfe to make shucking a breeze. \$205; watermanwares.com



ROUND IT OUT

The sides will take center stage this holiday season with these delicious dishes that'll make your Christmas dinner a true feast



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY VANESSA ROCCHIO
FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN | STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS



Roasted Hasselback
Butternut Squash
page 74

Creamy Roasted
Cauliflower
page 73



Browned
Butter-Sage
Red Potatoes
page 73





Roasted
Vegetable Rice
page 73



Rustic Roasted
Fennel
page 73

Roasted Vegetable Rice

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 71)

- 4 slices thick-cut bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 2½ cups plus 2 tablespoons vegetable broth**
- 1½ cups wild blend rice***
- 3 teaspoons kosher salt, divided**
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved**
- 4 large carrots, peeled and sliced**
- ½ red onion, sliced**
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 5 tablespoons olive oil, divided**
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar**
- 3 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 2 tablespoons molasses**
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ½ cup chopped toasted pecans**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- Garnish: chopped fresh parsley, toasted pecans**

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. On a rimmed baking sheet, place bacon.
3. Bake until almost crispy, about 8 minutes. Leave oven on.
4. In a medium saucepan, combine broth, rice, and 1 teaspoon salt, and bring to a boil over medium heat. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer until broth is absorbed and rice is tender, 35 to 45 minutes. Remove from heat. Let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff rice with a fork.
5. On rimmed baking sheet with bacon, toss together Brussels sprouts, carrots, red onion, bell pepper, 2 tablespoons oil, and 1 teaspoon salt.
6. Bake until sprouts are roasted, about 20 minutes, stirring halfway through baking.
7. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, brown sugar, molasses, thyme, black pepper, remaining

3 tablespoons oil, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt. Add to warm vegetables, tossing to coat.

8. In desired serving bowl, stir together rice, vegetable mixture, pecans, and parsley. Garnish with parsley and pecans, if desired.

**We used Lundberg Wild Blend Rice.*

Browned Butter-Sage Red Potatoes

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 70)

- 3 pounds red potatoes, cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- 8 fresh sage leaves, divided**
- 3 cloves garlic**
- ½ cup unsalted butter**
- Coarsely ground black pepper**

1. In a stockpot, combine potatoes, 1 tablespoon salt, and water to cover. Cover and bring to a boil over medium heat; cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, bring milk, 4 sage leaves, and garlic to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat, and let stand for 20 minutes.
3. In small saucepan, heat butter and remaining 4 sage leaves over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and browned.
4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat potatoes at low speed until slightly mashed. Strain milk mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into potatoes; add remaining 2 teaspoons salt, and beat until smooth. Add one-fourth of butter mixture, and beat until combined, about 1 minute. Transfer to desired serving dish, and pour remaining butter mixture on top. Sprinkle with pepper. Serve warm.

Rustic Roasted Fennel

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 72)

- 6 fennel bulbs**
- 3 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¼ cup dry white wine**
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 1 cup fresh French bread crumbs**
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1 tablespoon orange zest**
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper**

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Cut fronds from fennel, and reserve for garnish. Cut each bulb into fourths, and place on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with oil, and sprinkle with salt; toss until combined. Drizzle wine on top. Cover with foil to seal.
3. Bake until fork-tender, about 25 minutes. Uncover and drain any liquid. Increase oven temperature to 450°. Bake until browned and roasted, about 20 minutes more, stirring halfway through baking.
4. Meanwhile, in a medium skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add bread crumbs, and cook, stirring frequently, until browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in cheese, orange zest, and red pepper. Sprinkle mixture over roasted fennel, and garnish with reserved fennel fronds, if desired.

Creamy Roasted Cauliflower

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 69)

- 2 heads cauliflower (about 2 pounds each), cut into florets**
- 2 leeks, cut in half and thinly sliced (white parts only)**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
 - 4 cloves garlic, chopped**
 - 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves**
 - 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
 - 2½ cups whole milk**
 - 1 (8-ounce) block sharp white Cheddar cheese, shredded**
- Garnish: fresh thyme**

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss together cauliflower, leeks, oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper.
3. Bake until browned, 30 to 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Spoon cauliflower into a 10-inch cast-iron skillet. Increase oven temperature to broil.
4. In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add garlic and thyme, and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute; add flour, and cook, stirring frequently, for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in milk and remaining 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until thickened and bubbly, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in cheese until melted. Pour cheese mixture over cauliflower.
5. Broil about 8 inches from heat until browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Garnish with thyme, if desired.

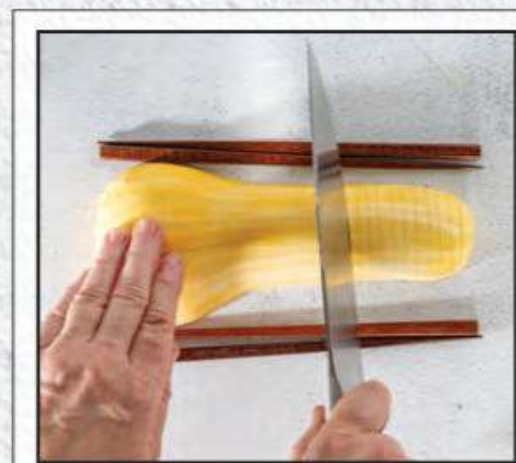
Roasted Hasselback Butternut Squash

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS
(photo on page 68)

- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh sage**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary**
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika**
- 3 butternut squash (2 pounds each)**
- 4 slices thick-cut bacon, chopped**
- 1 medium shallot, chopped**
- ½ cup chopped dried sweetened cranberries**
- ½ cup roasted salted pepitas**

Garnish: flaked sea salt, chopped fresh rosemary

1. In a small saucepan, combine oil, sage, rosemary, garlic, kosher salt, and paprika. Heat over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until oil is bubbly and garlic is browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, and let stand for 10 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 400°.
3. Peel squash. Cut squash in half lengthwise, and remove seeds. Place cut side down, and make crosswise cuts ¼ inch apart without cutting through squash. Place on a rimmed baking sheet, and brush evenly with oil mixture. Cover with foil.
4. Bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake until squash is tender, about 25 minutes more.
5. In a skillet, cook bacon over medium heat, stirring frequently, until almost crisp. Add shallot, and cook, stirring occasionally, until bacon is crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain.
6. In a small bowl, combine bacon mixture, cranberries, and pepitas. Spoon over squash just before serving. Garnish with sea salt and rosemary, if desired.



KITCHEN TIP

In step 3 of the Roasted Hasselback Butternut Squash recipe, you can use 2 chopsticks or wooden spoons on each side of the squash to help ensure you do not cut all the way through it.

The **ICING** *on*
the

CAKE

Sweet celebrations in the South
always involve cake



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY IZZIE TURNER
FOOD STYLING BY VANESSA ROCCHIO
STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS





Pumpkin Bundt Cake
page 81

Spiced Orange Cake with Dark Chocolate Buttercream

MAKES 1 (8-INCH) CAKE

- 1 (13.25-ounce) box spice cake mix**
- 2 cups whole milk, divided**
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted and divided**
- 6 large eggs, divided**
- 1 tablespoon lightly packed orange zest**
- 1 (13.25-ounce) box chocolate fudge cake mix**
- Dark Chocolate Buttercream (recipe follows)**
- Garnish: mandarin orange wedges, cinnamon sticks**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly spray 3 (8-inch) round cake pans with baking spray with flour. Line pans with parchment paper.
- 2.** In a medium bowl, stir together spice cake mix, 1 cup milk, ½ cup melted butter, 3 eggs, and orange zest until just combined.
- 3.** In another medium bowl, stir together chocolate cake mix, remaining 1 cup whole milk, remaining ½ cup melted butter, and remaining 3 eggs until just combined.
- 4.** Alternately spoon batters into prepared pans. Using a knife, swirl batters in a zigzag pattern.
- 5.** Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Let cool completely in pans on wire racks.

- 6.** Remove from pans, and level cooled cakes if desired. Spread Dark Chocolate Buttercream between layers and on top and sides of cake. Garnish with oranges and cinnamon sticks, if desired.

Dark Chocolate Buttercream

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

- 1½ cups unsalted butter, softened**
- 1½ cups Dutch process cocoa powder**
- 5¾ cups confectioners' sugar, sifted**
- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

- 1.** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and cocoa at low speed until well combined. Add confectioners' sugar, 1 cup at a time, alternately with cream, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating just until combined after each addition. Add salt and vanilla. Increase mixer speed to medium-high, and beat until smooth, about 1 minute. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until soft and spreadable. Reduce mixer speed to low, and beat for 1 to 2 minutes to release any air bubbles. Use immediately, or cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of buttercream, until ready to use.





Gingerbread Loaf Cake with Eggnog Glaze

MAKES 1 (9X5-INCH) CAKE

- ½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature**
- ¾ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 1 cup sour cream, room temperature**
- ¾ cup molasses**
- 2 large eggs, room temperature**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**

- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom**
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- Eggnog Glaze (recipe follows)**
- Garnish: Sugared Rosemary (recipe follows), Sugared Cranberries (recipe on page 81)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 9x5-inch loaf pan with baking spray with flour. Line pan with parchment paper; lightly spray parchment.
- 2.** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and brown sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Reduce mixer speed to medium-low, and add sour cream, molasses, eggs, and vanilla, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl.

- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cinnamon, baking powder, ginger, salt, cardamom, and nutmeg. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until just combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Spoon batter into prepared pan.
- 4.** Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 1 hour and 5 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool completely in pan, loosely covering with foil after 45 minutes to prevent excess browning. Remove from pan, and top with Eggnog Glaze. Garnish with Sugared Rosemary and Sugared Cranberries, if desired.

Eggnog Glaze

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon prepared eggnog**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature**
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar**
- 1 to 2 teaspoons water**

- 1.** In a medium bowl, whisk together eggnog and butter. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating with a mixer at low speed until spreadable; add 1 to 2 teaspoons water to thin slightly, if needed. Use immediately.

Sugared Rosemary

MAKES 6 TO 8 SPRIGS

- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons sugar, divided**
- 1 cup water**
- 6 to 8 fresh sprigs rosemary**

- 1.** In a small saucepan, bring 1 cup sugar and 1 cup water to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool for 10 minutes.
- 2.** In a shallow dish, place remaining 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar.
- 3.** Dip each rosemary sprig in simple syrup, and roll in sugar. Let dry for 5 minutes before using.

COVER
RECIPE



Red Velvet and
Cranberry Cake
page 81

Red Velvet and Cranberry Cake

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

(photo on page 80)

- 1½ cups unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup whole buttermilk



- 2 tablespoons red liquid food coloring
 - 1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
 - ⅓ cup cranberry preserves
 - 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, room temperature
 - 1 (8-ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- Sugared Cranberries (recipe follows)**

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a tall-sided 9-inch round cake pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper; spray parchment.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugars at medium-high 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, cocoa, baking soda, and salt. With mixer on low speed, add flour mixture to butter mixture in three additions alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating until combined after each addition. Beat in food coloring, vinegar, and vanilla. Spoon batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes, loosely covering with foil during final 15 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning if needed. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on wire rack.
5. Place cooled cake on a cake plate or pedestal. Spread preserves on top, letting it drip down sides if desired.
6. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. Gently fold in whipped topping in two additions until well combined. Spread cream cheese mixture evenly on top of preserves. Top with Sugared Cranberries.

Sugared Cranberries

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 1 cup sugar, divided
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup fresh or thawed frozen cranberries

1. In a medium saucepan, heat ½ cup sugar and ½ cup water over medium heat, stirring occasionally, just until sugar dissolves. Let cool slightly.
2. Stir cranberries into syrup. Remove cranberries using a slotted spoon, letting excess drip off. Place on a sheet of parchment paper, and let stand until dry, about 1 hour.
3. In a medium bowl, toss together coated cranberries and remaining ½ cup sugar.

Pumpkin Bundt Cake

MAKES 1 (10-CUP) BUNDT CAKE

(photo on page 77)

Cake:

- 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin purée (about 1¾ cups)
- 1½ cups firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup sour cream, room temperature
- ⅔ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda

Topping:

- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 325°.
2. For cake: In a large bowl, whisk together pumpkin, brown sugar, granulated sugar, sour cream, oil, melted butter, eggs, and vanilla.

- In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, pie spice, salt, and baking soda. Gradually add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture, whisking until smooth and well combined.
- Spray a 10-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter a few times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
- Bake for 50 minutes. Rotate pan, loosely cover with foil, and bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers 200° to 205°, 20 to 25 minutes more. Let cool in pan for 15 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack, and let cool completely.
- For topping: In a small bowl, stir together granulated sugar, brown sugar, and pie spice. Brush cooled cake with melted butter; cover with sugar mixture, gently pressing to help adhere, if needed.

Frosted Skillet Sugar Cookie Cake

MAKES 1 (10-INCH) COOKIE CAKE

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 1 large egg, room temperature**
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract**
- 3¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon assorted sprinkles**

Buttercream Frosting (recipe follows)
Garnish: assorted sprinkles

- Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with baking spray with flour.
- In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugars at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, beating well. Beat in vanilla.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add



- flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Fold in ⅓ cup sprinkles. Spread batter into prepared skillet. Sprinkle remaining 1 tablespoon sprinkles onto batter.
- Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely in skillet on a wire rack.
- Spread Buttercream Frosting on top of cooled cookie cake. Top with sprinkles, if desired. Cut into wedges.

Buttercream Frosting

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- ¼ cup unsalted butter, softened**
- 1½ cups confectioners' sugar**
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons heavy whipping cream**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**

- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract**
- Red food coloring (optional)**

- In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter at medium speed until smooth. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until smooth. With mixer on low speed, add cream, vanilla, salt, and almond extract, beating until combined. Add desired amount of food coloring (if using). Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 30 seconds. **f**

KITCHEN TIP

You can substitute 1 teaspoon almond extract for one-third of the vanilla extract if desired.



With a few simple ingredients, you can craft these brilliant brittles and barks in a snap

Christmas





Confections

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY IZZIE TURNER
FOOD STYLING BY VANESSA ROCCHIO | STYLING BY SIDNEY BRAGIEL



KITCHEN TIPS

Use quality chocolate for the creamiest barks. Chocolate chips won't give you the same smooth texture.

Heat the chocolate gently using low heat to melt it.



Berry-Pistachio Bark

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 4 (4.4-ounce) bars coconut white chocolate***
- 3 tablespoons toasted sweetened flaked coconut**
- 3 tablespoons chopped roasted lightly salted pistachios**
- 3 tablespoons roughly crushed freeze-dried strawberries**
- 3 tablespoons roughly crushed freeze-dried raspberries**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 200°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2.** On prepared pan, place chocolate bars in a single layer.
- 3.** Bake just until melted, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon coconut on top, and spread in an even layer. Top with pistachios, strawberries, raspberries, and remaining 2 tablespoons coconut. Refrigerate until set and dry, 15 to 20 minutes. Cut or break into pieces.

**We used Lindt Coconut White Chocolate Bars, but any white chocolate bar will work as well.*

Chocolate-Cherry Brittle

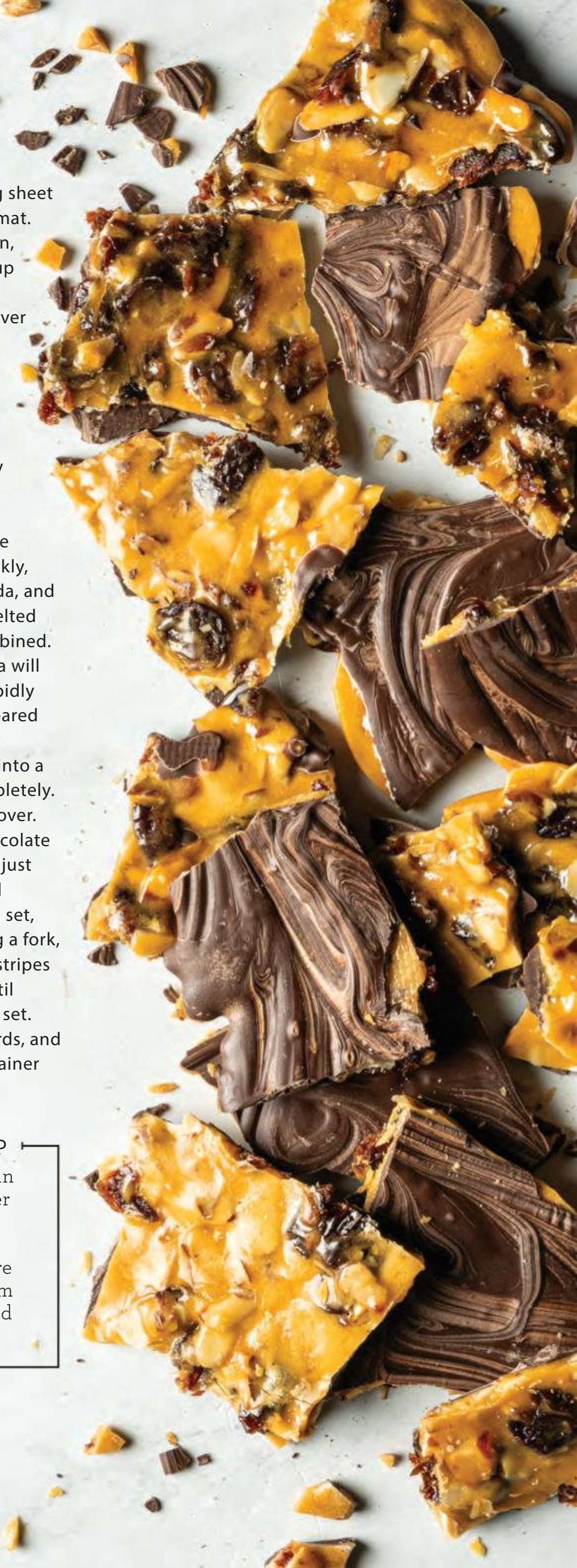
MAKES 10 TO 12 SERVINGS

- 1½ cups sugar**
- ½ cup water**
- ½ cup light corn syrup**
- ½ cup coarsely chopped lightly toasted sliced almonds**
- ½ cup dried cherries, coarsely chopped**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed and room temperature**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 (8-ounce) container dark melting chocolate wafers, melted**

- 1.** Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick baking mat.
- 2.** In a medium saucepan, stir together sugar, ½ cup water, and corn syrup; cook, without stirring, over medium heat until a candy thermometer registers 270°. Stir in almonds and cherries. Cook, stirring frequently, until a candy thermometer registers 300°.
- 3.** Remove sugar mixture from heat; working quickly, stir in butter, baking soda, and vanilla until butter is melted and mixture is well combined. (Adding the baking soda will cause the mixture to rapidly bubble.) Pour onto prepared pan; using a large offset spatula, quickly spread into a thin layer. Let cool completely.
- 4.** Carefully turn brittle over. Spread melted dark chocolate in a thin layer on brittle just to edges. Let stand until chocolate just begins to set, about 15 minutes. Using a fork, score chocolate in thin stripes as desired. Let stand until chocolate is completely set.
- 5.** Break brittle into shards, and store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.

KITCHEN TIP

Store brittles in an airtight container or resealable plastic bags at room temperature to keep them from getting sticky and breaking down.





Holiday Candy
Crunch Bark
page 89



Spicy Orange-
Chocolate Gems
page 89

Holiday Candy Crunch Bark

MAKES 10 TO 12 SERVINGS
(photo on page 87)

- 20 ounces white chocolate, chopped**
- 1½ cups crisp rice cereal**
- 3 ounces red chocolate melting wafers, melted**
- 3 ounces green chocolate melting wafers, melted**
- ½ cup red and green candy-coated chocolate pieces**
- ¼ cup crushed candy canes**

Desired sprinkles

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the top of a double boiler, place white chocolate. Heat over simmering water, stirring frequently, until completely melted and smooth. Remove from heat. Stir in cereal.
3. On prepared pan, spread white chocolate mixture in a thin layer. Dollop melted red and green melting wafers in 1-tablespoon portions on top. Using a wooden pick or a knife, swirl melting wafers into white chocolate mixture, being careful not to completely stir them together. Top with candies, candy canes, and sprinkles. Refrigerate until chocolate is set, about 15 minutes.
4. Cut or break bark into desired pieces. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Spicy Orange-Chocolate Gems

MAKES 10 TO 12 SERVINGS
(photo on page 88)

- 3 (4-ounce) bittersweet chocolate bars, chopped**
- ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper**
- 10 sweetened dried orange slices, quartered**
- ½ cup sliced or chopped dried pitted dates**
- ¼ cup chopped toasted pecans**
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper**

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the top of a double boiler, place chocolate and ground red pepper. Heat over simmering water, stirring occasionally, until chocolate is melted, 5 to 8 minutes. Spoon onto prepared pan in 2-inch rounds. Gently tap pan on counter to remove any air bubbles. Let stand for 5 minutes. Top with dried oranges, dates, pecans, and crushed red pepper. Refrigerate until set and dry, 15 to 20 minutes. Store in an airtight container.

Bourbon Butter Pecan Brittle

MAKES ABOUT 12 SERVINGS

- 1½ cups sugar**
- ½ cup light corn syrup**
- ½ cup bourbon**
- 1¼ cups coarsely chopped lightly toasted pecans**

- ⅓ cup toffee bits**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Flaked sea salt, for sprinkling**

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick baking mat.
2. In a medium saucepan, stir together sugar, corn syrup, and bourbon; cook, without stirring, over medium heat until a candy thermometer registers 270°. Stir in pecans and toffee bits. Cook, stirring frequently, until a candy thermometer registers 300°.
3. Remove sugar mixture from heat; working quickly, stir in butter, baking soda, and vanilla until butter is melted and mixture is well combined. (Adding the baking soda will cause the mixture to rapidly bubble.) Pour onto prepared pan; using a large offset spatula, quickly spread into a thin layer. Sprinkle with sea salt. Let cool completely.
4. Break brittle into shards, and store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks. **f**

KITCHEN TIP

Be sure to cook your brittle to 300° (hard crack stage) to get that classic brittle crunch.







HANDCRAFTED HOLIDAYS

Delight friends and family with these
heartfelt gifts from your kitchen

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY KATHLEEN KANEN
FOOD STYLING BY VANESSA ROCCHIO | STYLING BY COURTNI BODIFORD

MERRY
CHRISTMAS



Coconut
Shortbread
page 97



granola

granola

TO:
FROM:

TO:
FROM:

Chunky Chocolate Granola

MAKES 6 GIFTS

- 3 cups old-fashioned oats**
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans**
- 1 cup raw pumpkin seeds**
- 1/3 cup unsweetened flaked coconut**
- 1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 1/3 cup golden syrup**
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil**
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 1 (10-ounce) bag bittersweet chocolate chips**
- 1/2 cup dried sweetened cranberries**
- 1 teaspoon flaked sea salt**

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Spray a large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine oats, pecans, pumpkin seeds, and coconut.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together brown sugar, golden syrup, oil, and kosher salt. Pour sugar mixture over oats mixture. Sprinkle cocoa on top, and stir until combined. Spread mixture in an even layer on prepared pan.

4. Bake for 25 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes. Sprinkle chocolate chips and cranberries on top. Let stand until chocolate begins to melt, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle sea salt on top, and stir. (It's OK for some chocolate chips to remain solid.) Let cool completely. Using a spatula, break into pieces. Divide granola evenly among 6 airtight containers. Store for up to 3 weeks.

Apple Cider Mix

MAKES 6 GIFTS

- 3/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- 1 tablespoon apple pie spice**
- 24 sweetened dried orange slices***
- 24 (2-inch) slices crystallized ginger**
- 12 cinnamon sticks**

1. In a small bowl, combine brown sugar and pie spice. Divide brown sugar mixture among 6 airtight containers. Add 4 orange slices, 4 ginger slices, and 2 cinnamon sticks to each container, and seal with lid. Store for up to 4 weeks.

2. To serve: In a medium saucepan,

combine 1 mix with 1 quart apple cider. Heat over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until hot and sugar dissolves, about 30 minutes.

**We used Trader Joe's Sweetened Dried Orange Slices.*





Vanilla
Mug Cake Mix
page 97

KITCHEN TIP

For a coffee cake version, sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon granulated sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon espresso powder, and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon on top of batter. Serve warm with whipped cream and additional espresso powder.

Peanut Chili
Crisp
page 97



Coconut Shortbread

MAKES 2 GIFTS (ABOUT 22 COOKIES PER ROLL)

(photo on page 92)

- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature**
- ⅔ cup confectioners' sugar**
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1½ cups unsweetened flaked coconut, toasted, coarsely chopped, and divided**
- 2 cups all-purpose flour**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, confectioners' sugar, salt, and vanilla at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in one-third of coconut. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour, beating until combined, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Divide dough in half.
2. On a cutting board, sprinkle remaining coconut. Roll each portion of dough in coconut into a 6-inch log. Tightly wrap in parchment paper or plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour. Wrap dough in decorative paper as desired. Refrigerate unbaked cookie dough for up to 1 week.
3. To bake, preheat oven to 350°. Line large baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. Let dough stand at room temperature for 15 to 20 minutes before slicing. (If the dough is too cold, it will crumble when cutting.) Trim ends of dough logs, if desired. Using a serrated knife and a gentle sawing motion, cut logs into ¼-inch slices. Place 1 inch apart on prepared pans.
5. Bake until lightly browned, 16 to 18 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Store baked cookies in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

KITCHEN TIP

Baked cookies can be dipped in melted dark or white chocolate. Top with holiday sprinkles or chopped nuts. Or spread dulce de leche between cookies to make sandwich cookies.

Vanilla Mug Cake Mix

MAKES 1 GIFT, 1 GIFT MAKES 6 CAKES

(photo on page 95)

Mug cake mix:

- 1½ cups self-rising flour**
- 6 tablespoons sugar**
- ¼ cup instant nonfat dry milk**
- 2 tablespoons holiday sprinkles**

To prepare each cake:

- ¼ cup mug cake mix (stirred before measuring)**
- 3 tablespoons water**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted**
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 teaspoon holiday sprinkles (optional), plus more to serve**

Sweetened canned whipped topping* and holiday sprinkles, to serve

1. For mug cake mix: In a medium bowl, stir together flour, sugar, dry milk, and sprinkles. Store in an airtight container for up to 12 weeks. (Each of these gift mixtures makes 6 cakes. The gift mixture can be doubled or tripled if you want to give multiple gifts.)
2. To prepare each cake: In an 8-ounce microwave-safe mug, stir together ¼ cup mug cake mix, 3 tablespoons water, melted butter, and vanilla just until smooth. Top with sprinkles (if using). Heat on high until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 seconds to 1 minute. Let cool. Serve with whipped topping and sprinkles.

*We used Reddi-wip Original Dairy Whipped Topping.

Peanut Chili Crisp

MAKES ABOUT 3½ CUPS (photo on page 96)

- 1½ cups peanut oil**
 - ½ cup sliced garlic**
 - ½ cup sliced shallot**
 - 2½ cups chopped salted peanuts (not dry-roasted)**
 - 5 tablespoons cane syrup**
 - 1 tablespoon ground red pepper**
 - 1 tablespoon smoked paprika**
 - 1½ teaspoons chili powder**
 - 1½ teaspoons crushed red pepper**
 - 1½ teaspoons distilled white vinegar**
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- Crackers and pimiento cheese, to serve**

1. In a medium saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and shallot; cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in peanuts. Remove from heat; pour into a bowl. Let cool for 10 minutes.
2. Stir cane syrup, ground red pepper, paprika, chili powder, crushed red pepper, vinegar, and salt into oil mixture. Let cool completely. Divide mixture among glass jars, and seal with lid. Refrigerate for up to 4 weeks. Serve with crackers and pimiento cheese. **f**

Chunky Chocolate Granola
page 94

One of our favorite *Bake from Scratch* traditions!



**Bakers, it's time pull out the cookie cutters and piping tips—
our 2024 *Holiday Cookies* special issue is here!**

Don't miss your chance to try Chocolate-Peppermint Bark Cookies or Almond-Cherry Cookies for a more traditional holiday treat, or try your baking hand at our Joe Froggers or editor-in-chief Brian Hart Hoffman's delicious Gingerbread Cookies. Fill your cookie tins to the brim with festive charm and crave-worthy treats that are fit for every holiday occasion!

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Savoring the Season

Explore the rich flavors of the South with these must-have cookbooks

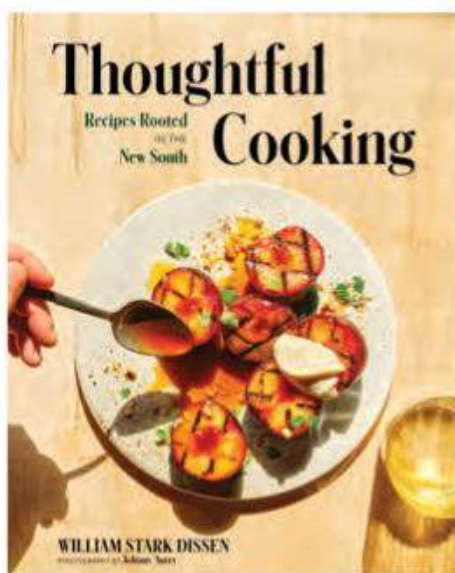
BY DANIEL DUBUISSON



Pumpkin Grits with Roasted
Maitake Mushrooms
(Thoughtful Cooking)

page 103

Once the holiday season reaches its peak, kitchens across the South start overflowing with the aromas of beloved family recipes and new culinary creations. For those looking to expand their repertoire or find inspiration for festive gatherings, this year's crop of Southern cookbooks offers a wealth of possibilities. From a celebration of the South's culinary heritage to inventive takes on traditional flavors, these four standout cookbooks deserve a place on every Southern cook's shelf. And as an added gift, each of the authors has graciously shared a recipe to give you a taste of what's inside.

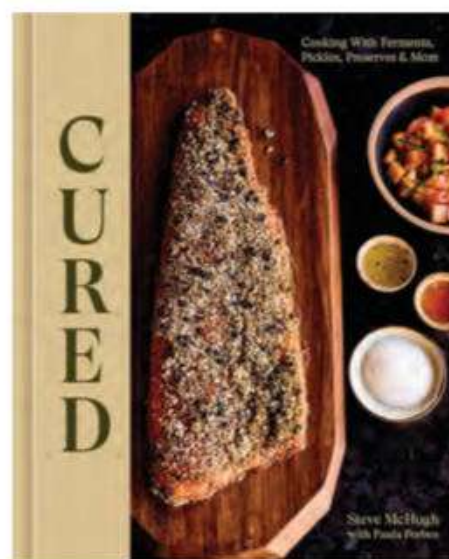


**THOUGHTFUL
COOKING**
BY WILLIAM STARK
DISSEN

Chef William Stark Dissen, a leader in the sustainable food movement, shares his approach to mindful eating in his latest cookbook, *Thoughtful*

Cooking. As the chef-owner of The Market Place in Asheville, North Carolina, he's built a reputation for his commitment to using locally sourced, seasonal ingredients in his dishes. *Thoughtful Cooking* reflects this philosophy, offering readers a collection of recipes that are as nourishing as they are flavorful.

The book is organized around the concept of, well, thoughtful cooking, which William defines as cooking with intention, seasonality, and sustainability in mind. Each recipe is designed to highlight the natural flavors of the ingredients, with an emphasis on fresh, locally sourced produce and responsibly raised meats. From vibrant salads and hearty soups to elegant entrées and decadent desserts, *Thoughtful Cooking* provides a wide range of recipes that cater to both everyday meals and special occasions. He also shares his insights on the importance of supporting local farmers and artisans, offering tips on how to shop for and select the best ingredients. For a unique holiday side dish, the recipe for Pumpkin Grits with Roasted Maitake Mushrooms offers a perfect blend of comfort and sophistication, showcasing William's commitment to thoughtful, sustainable cooking.



CURED
BY STEVE MCHUGH

Chef and restaurateur Steve McHugh, the James Beard Award-nominated chef behind the acclaimed San Antonio, Texas, restaurant Cured (the book's namesake), shares his culinary

philosophy and expertise in his debut cookbook, *Cured*. This book is a testament to Steve's passion for curing, fermenting, and preserving—techniques that have earned him accolades and a devoted following. *Cured* is not just a cookbook; it's an exploration of the art of preservation, with recipes that showcase the depth of flavor and texture that can be achieved through these time-honored methods.

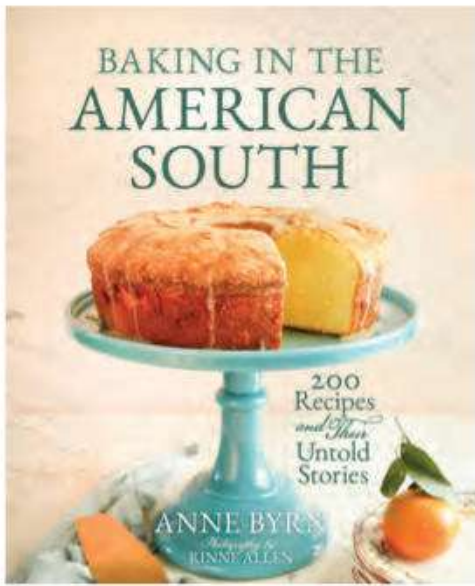
In *Cured*, Steve offers a collection of recipes that highlight his approach to Southern cuisine, where tradition meets innovation. From house-cured charcuterie to pickled vegetables, the book provides detailed instructions and tips for achieving the perfect results at home. He also includes recipes for complete dishes, such as his signature pork belly and smoked chicken, which are enhanced by the cured and fermented ingredients that are central to his cooking. For those who want to delve deeper into the world of curing and fermenting, the book also features chapters on making your own condiments, preserves, and even cocktails. And for a hearty main dish to impress your guests, Steve's recipe for Smoked Pork Shoulder offers a delicious introduction to his flavor-forward style.



Smoked Pork Shoulder
(Cured)
page 104



Baba au Rhum
*(Baking in the
American South)*
page 103



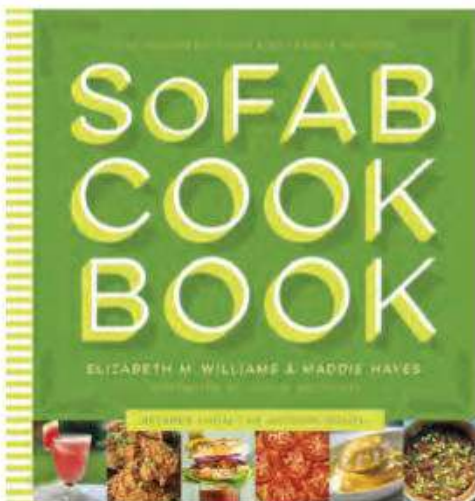
**BAKING IN THE
AMERICAN SOUTH**

BY ANNE BYRN

Anne Byrn is a celebrated Southern author returning with a new book that is sure to delight home bakers: *Baking in the American South*.

This cookbook is a love letter to the art of Southern baking, a tradition that has been passed down through generations and remains at the heart of Southern hospitality. From buttery biscuits to tender cakes and flaky pies, her book offers a comprehensive collection of recipes that celebrates the sweet and savory sides of Southern baking.

Baking in the American South is divided into chapters that focus on different types of baked goods, with each section providing a mix of classic recipes and modern twists. Anne's approachable writing style and detailed instructions make this book accessible to bakers of all skill levels, and her deep knowledge of Southern baking traditions ensures that each recipe is both authentic and delicious. The book also includes tips on techniques, ingredient substitutions, and variations, allowing readers to tailor the recipes to their own tastes. To give a taste of the decadence within, she shared a recipe for Baba au Rhum, a delightful dessert that combines the richness of a rum-soaked cake with the elegance of Southern holiday baking.



**THE SOUTHERN
FOOD & BEVERAGE
MUSEUM
COOKBOOK**

BY ELIZABETH M.
WILLIAMS & MADDIE
HAYES

The Southern Food & Beverage Museum (SoFAB) has long been a beacon for those passionate about the South's culinary traditions. With the release of the cookbook, food enthusiasts can bring a taste of the museum's offerings into their kitchens. This cookbook is more

than just a collection of recipes; it's a state-by-state journey through the South's diverse culinary landscape, highlighting the flavors, techniques, and stories that define the region.

Curated by a team of chefs, food historians, and cultural experts, the book features recipes that range from the iconic to the innovative, all rooted in the traditions that make Southern cuisine so beloved. Whether it's the smoky richness of barbecued meats, the comforting warmth of a pot of gumbo, or the delicate sweetness of a perfectly baked pie, each recipe is presented with an eye toward both authenticity and modernity. The cookbook also offers insights into the cultural significance of certain dishes, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history and evolution of Southern food. And for those with a sweet tooth, the book includes a recipe for a classic Buttermilk Chess Pie that's sure to become a holiday favorite.



Buttermilk Chess Pie
(SoFAB)
page 104



BAKING IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH:

Baba au Rhum

SERVES 8 TO 12

Taken from *Baking in the American South: 200 Recipes and Their Untold Stories* by Anne Byrn. Copyright © 2024 by Anne Byrn. Photographs © 2024 by Rinne Allen. Used by permission of Harper Celebrate.

- ¾ cup (4 ounces/113 grams) golden raisins**
- 2 tablespoons dark rum**
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick/86 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus 2 teaspoons, at room temperature, to prep the pan**
- 1 tablespoon dry yeast**
- ⅓ cup whole milk**
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar**
- 3 large eggs**
- 1¾ cups (210 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh orange zest**

SYRUP

- 1 cup water**
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar**
- ½ cup dark rum**
- Slivered orange zest, tossed with sugar, if desired**
- Whipped Cream for serving**

- 1.** Place the raisins in a small bowl and pour in the rum. Toss to coat and place in the microwave oven to warm for 20 seconds. Rub a 12-cup Bundt pan with 2 teaspoons soft butter. Set the raisins and the Bundt pan aside.
- 2.** Place the yeast in a large bowl. Heat the milk in a small saucepan over medium heat to 120°F on an instant-read thermometer (very warm to the touch) and pour over the yeast. Add the sugar and whisk until the sugar and yeast dissolve. Place in a warm spot until it puffs up, about 5 minutes.
- 3.** Crack the eggs into the bowl with the yeast mixture and stir with a wooden spoon to combine. Add the flour, salt, and orange zest and stir until smooth. Add the 6 tablespoons soft butter and continue to stir until the dough is smooth. It will be soft

but elastic. Cover with a kitchen towel and place in a warm spot to rise until double in size, about 1 hour.

4. Push down the dough with a rubber spatula and fold in the raisins and rum until well mixed. Turn the dough into the prepared pan, cover with the kitchen towel, and let the dough rise until nearly to the top of the pan, 45 minutes.

5. Heat the oven to 375°F, with a rack in the middle.

6. When the dough has risen, remove the towel, place the pan in the oven, and bake until the cake is golden brown and begins to pull away from the sides of the pan, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the pan to a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes, then run a dinner knife around the edges, give the pan a gentle shake, and turn the cake onto the rack and let cool completely, 30 minutes.

7. Make the syrup: Heat the water and sugar in a small saucepan until the sugar dissolves and the syrup cooks down just a bit, 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and pour in the rum.

8. When the cake has cooled, place it on a serving plate and spoon the syrup over the top, doing so slowly to allow the syrup to soak into the cake. Let the cake rest for 30 minutes. If desired, serve with whipped cream and garnish with orange zest slivers.

THOUGHTFUL COOKING:

Pumpkin Grits with Roasted Maitake Mushrooms

PHOTO ON PAGE 99

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PUMPKIN GRITS

- 1 tablespoon canola oil**
- 1 cup small-dice yellow onion**
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic**
- 4 cups water**
- 1 cup stone-ground grits**
- 1 cup roasted pumpkin puree**
- ½ cup heavy cream**
- ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**

- 1** **tablespoon Frank's Red Hot sauce**
- 1** **teaspoon kosher salt, plus extra to taste**
- ½** **teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus extra to taste**

MUSHROOMS

- 1** **pound maitake mushrooms**
- 3** **tablespoons canola oil**
- 8** **sage leaves**
- ½** **teaspoon kosher salt, plus extra to taste**
- 2** **cloves garlic, sliced**
- 2** **tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 2** **tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- Pinch of red pepper flakes**
- 1** **tablespoon rough chopped parsley**
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**

FOR PUMPKIN GRITS:

- 1.** Place the oil in a medium saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the onions and cook until translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until aromatic, 1 minute. Add the water, increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Add the grits in a slow, steady stream while whisking continually. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Once simmering, decrease the heat to low and cook, stirring frequently, for about 1 hour.
- 2.** Add the pumpkin, cream, Parmesan, butter, hot sauce, salt, and pepper and stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary. Cover and keep warm until ready to serve.

FOR MUSHROOMS:

- 3.** Cut the mushrooms into golf ball-sized pieces.
- 4.** Place the oil in a large sauté pan and set over medium-high heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the sage and fry until aromatic and crisp, 15 to 20 seconds. Remove the sage to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Lightly sprinkle with salt.
- 5.** Add the mushrooms to the pan and cook until golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip and continue to cook on the other side for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until lightly golden, about 1 minute.

6. Add the butter, lemon juice, and red pepper flakes and cook until bubbling, about 1 minute. Turn off the heat, add the parsley and ½ teaspoon salt, and stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary.

7. Place the grits into a large serving bowl, spoon the mushrooms around the edge, and garnish with the fried sage. Serve immediately.

CURED:

Smoked Pork Shoulder

MAKES 6 SERVINGS | PHOTO ON PAGE 101

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- 4** **pounds boneless pork shoulder**
- ⅓** **cup equal parts salt and ground black pepper (pre-ground works fine here), about 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons of each**
- ⅓** **cup pork herbs (optional, page 97 of cookbook)**
- ⅓** **cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- Oak, hickory, or mesquite wood chips, soaked in water for at least 2 hours and up to 24 hours before smoking**

- 1.** Pat the pork shoulder dry with paper towels.
- 2.** Combine the seasonings and olive oil in a small bowl. Put the pork in a larger bowl and rub the seasoning all over it. Cover the pork with plastic wrap and place it in the refrigerator for 24 hours.
- 3.** Heat a smoker or charcoal grill to 275°F. If using a charcoal grill, pile the coals on one side of the grill, on the opposite side of any vents in the lid. Add a handful of wood chips on top of the hot coals and continue to add them throughout the cooking process as needed.
- 4.** Unwrap the pork shoulder and rub it with any seasoning that may have collected in the bottom of the bowl.
- 5.** Put the pork shoulder in the smoker, or on the grill on the opposite side from the coals. Close the lid and keep the temperature of the grill between

225°F and 275°F. Smoke the shoulder for 4 hours, or until the pork's internal temperature reaches 190°F. Remove the pork from the smoker or grill and let sit for 15 minutes before serving, to allow the juices to redistribute within the meat.

SoFAB:

Buttermilk Chess Pie

MAKES 1 (9-INCH) PIE

PHOTO ON PAGE 102

Recipe and photos excerpted with permission from LSU Press.

- 1** **(9-inch) unbaked homemade or store-bought pie crust**
- 1½** **cups granulated sugar**
- ½** **cup (1 stick) salted butter, melted**
- ½** **cup buttermilk**
- 2** **tablespoons fine cornmeal**
- 1** **tablespoon all-purpose flour**
- 1** **tablespoon lemon juice**
- 1** **tablespoon finely grated lemon**
- 1** **teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ¼** **teaspoon salt**
- 4** **large eggs**
- For serving, confectioners' sugar or whipped cream (optional)**

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line the unbaked pie crust with aluminum foil. Fill with dried beans or pie weights and bake 5 minutes. (This weighted baking technique is called "blind baking.") Remove the weights and foil. Bake until golden and lightly fragrant, about 5 more minutes. Cool completely.
- 2.** In a bowl, thoroughly combine sugar, butter, buttermilk, cornmeal, flour, lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla. Add the eggs and salt and mix well. Pour the mixture into the cooled pie crust.
- 3.** Turn the oven temperature down to 350°F and bake 10 minutes. Place aluminum foil around the edges to prevent burning. Bake until the center is set, 40-55 more minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and cool 30 minutes. When ready to serve, dust with confectioners' sugar or top with a dollop of whipped cream. Store pie in the refrigerator. 🍴

CANDY CREATIONS YOUR FAMILY WILL GO CRAZY FOR

BY KAITLYN SHEHEE

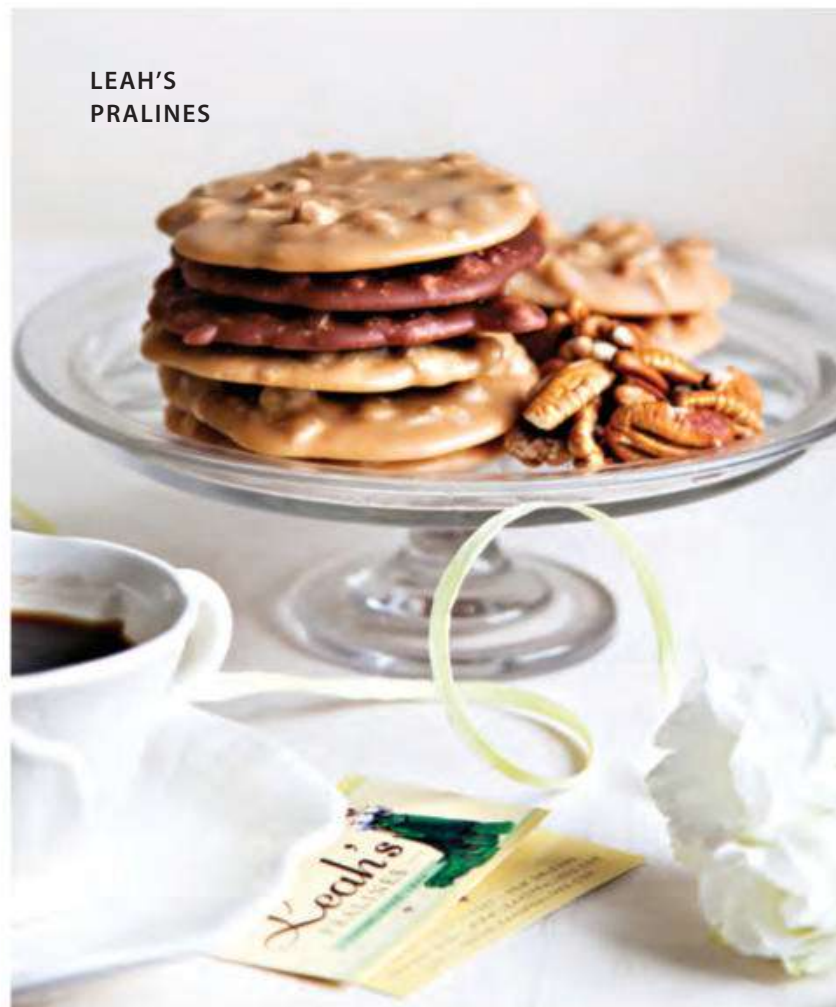


ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

is arguably the excuse to indulge in all the sweets your heart could desire. From gift-giving to stocking stuffers, candy makes its way into our lives during the holidays, and this year, we've got a list of the best candies to gift your loved ones, friends, and coworkers. We might be biased, but the best candy comes straight out of the South, and these eight picks are sure to please.

Starting off with a New Orleans, Louisiana, favorite, **Leah's Pralines** are a stocking stuffer must-have. Sweet and crunchy, these pralines will satisfy your taste buds for sure. Next, we're hopping over to North Carolina's very own classic: **Red Bird Handcrafted Candy Soft Peppermint Candy Puffs**. These widely available delights are melt-in-your-mouth good and beyond delicious. The only hard decision here is whether to gift them to yourself or others. (But, of course, why not both?)

Out of Georgia comes **Sunnyland Farms Peanut Brittle**, sure to taste like pure nostalgia in every bite. This old-fashioned peanut brittle is just like your grandma used to make and makes for the perfect present. In Alabama, **Priester's Pecans** serves up **Pecan Divinity** perfection.



LEAH'S
PRALINES



SUNNYLAND
FARMS
PEANUT
BRITTLE



RED BIRD HANDCRAFTED CANDY SOFT
PEPPERMINT CANDY PUFFS



PRIESTER'S
PECANS PECAN
DIVINITY

This Southern delicacy is crafted with a creamy, smooth, and flavorful mixture loaded with the finest pecan pieces. Both these classic Southern candies are an indulgent and decadent experience that will have you diving right in to satisfy your sweet tooth.

In West Virginia, you can find **Cherry Stain Glass Candy** from **True Treats Historic Candy**. These recipes have stood the test of time, so you're sure to enjoy every sweet bite. And we'd be remiss not to mention **Goo Goo Clusters** on a list of the South's best candy. These delectable treats are a fan favorite for a reason, and there's no better time to enjoy them than this holiday season.

While we've focused on the holidays and spirit of gift-giving, these next two candies are just as brilliant all year long, and we can never quite get enough. From Texas comes the famous **Chick-O-Stick** candy from **Atkinson Candy Co.**, a crunchy treat with a peanut butter core and rolled in toasted coconut—out-of-this-world delicious. And out of Kentucky comes **Ruth Hunt Candy Blue Monday**. The Blue Monday is a real delight and the perfect way to cure any Monday blues. There's a reason this candy is in high demand. 🍬

TRUE TREATS HISTORIC CANDY
CANDY CHERRY STAIN
GLASS CANDY



RUTH HUNT CANDY
BLUE MONDAY



GOO GOO
CLUSTER

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Which of these craveworthy candies are your go-tos? Did we miss your favorite Southern candy? Be sure to let us know and have a happy holiday season from all of us at *Taste of the South!*

ATKINSON CANDY CO.
Lufkin, Texas
atkinsoncandy.com

GOO GOO CLUSTERS
Nashville, Tennessee
googoo.com

LEAH'S PRALINES
New Orleans, Louisiana
leahspralines.com

PRIESTER'S PECANS
Fort Deposit, Alabama
priesters.com

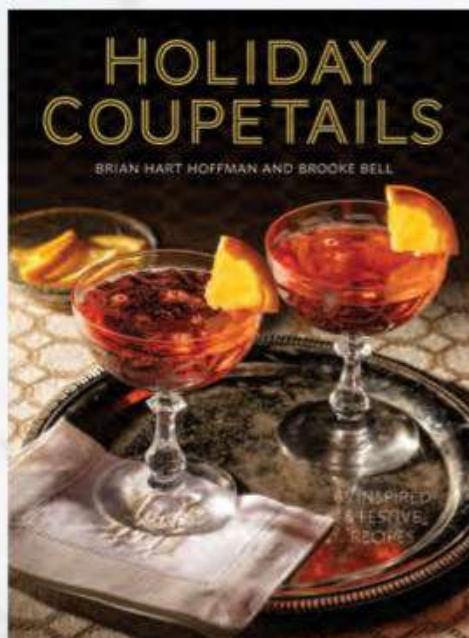
RED BIRD HANDCRAFTED CANDY
Lexington, North Carolina
redbirdcandies.com

RUTH HUNT CANDY
Mt. Sterling, Kentucky
ruthhuntcandy.com

SUNNYLAND FARMS
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Sweet Potato Casserole

One of the best things about Thanksgiving is sweet potato casserole. These recipes are going to steal the show at your holiday table.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE | RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY VANESSA ROCCHIO AND IZZIE TURNER
FOOD STYLING BY KATHLEEN KANEN | STYLING BY COURTNI BODIFORD





Bacon and Sage
Sweet Potato
Casserole



Smoky Sweet Potato Gratin Casserole

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 2** teaspoons unsalted butter
 - 2** cups heavy whipping cream
 - 3** cloves garlic, crushed
 - 2 to 3** teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
 - 3½** teaspoons kosher salt, divided
 - ½** teaspoon smoked paprika
 - ½** teaspoon ground black pepper, divided
 - ⅛** teaspoon ground nutmeg
 - 1** tablespoon finely chopped chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
 - 3** pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
 - ½** cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- Garnish: chopped fresh thyme**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325°. Grease a shallow 11x8-inch baking dish with butter.
- 2.** In a medium saucepan, bring cream, garlic, thyme leaves, 2 teaspoons salt, paprika, ¼ teaspoon black pepper, and nutmeg to a gentle boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer until garlic is tender, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in chipotle peppers.
- 3.** In a large bowl, combine potatoes, remaining 1½ teaspoons salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Layer potatoes in prepared pan. Pour cream mixture over potatoes. Tightly cover with foil.
- 4.** Bake until potatoes are tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Uncover and top with cheese. Bake until cheese is melted, about 15 minutes more. Garnish with chopped thyme, if desired.

Orange-Sweet Potato Casserole with Toasted Marshmallows

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- 3** pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1** tablespoon plus ½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- ½** cup orange marmalade
- ¼** cup cane syrup
- 2** tablespoons cornstarch



- 2** tablespoons chopped crystallized ginger
- ½** teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼** teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼** cup unsalted butter
- 16** extra-large marshmallows

- 1.** In a Dutch oven, bring potatoes and water to cover to a boil; add 1 tablespoon salt, and cook until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain.
- 2.** Preheat oven to 400°.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, stir together marmalade, cane syrup, cornstarch,

ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt.

4. In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Remove from heat; add potatoes and preserves mixture, tossing until combined.

5. Bake until slightly browned and crispy, about 20 minutes. Top with marshmallows. Increase oven temperature to broil; broil 8 inches from heat until marshmallows are puffed and browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve warm.



Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes with Crumble Topping

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Potatoes:

- 7 large sweet potatoes**
- ¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ¼ cup sour cream**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest**

Topping:

- 1 cup chopped pecans**
- ¾ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ⅔ cup all-purpose flour**
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 cup mini marshmallows**

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
2. For potatoes: On prepared pan, place potatoes.
3. Bake until tender, about 1 hour. Let cool enough to handle. Leave oven on.
4. Split potatoes lengthwise on top, and squeeze ends to open potatoes. Using a spoon, scoop out flesh into a medium bowl, leaving a ½-inch-thick shell in 6 potatoes; discard remaining potato skin. Using a fork, mash potatoes, and stir in brown sugar, sour cream, salt, cinnamon, and lemon zest. Spoon potato mixture evenly into potato shells.
5. For topping: In another medium bowl, stir together pecans, brown sugar, flour, melted butter, and cinnamon. Using your hands, press pecan mixture together. Stir in marshmallows.

Spoon mixture evenly onto stuffed potatoes, and return to pan.

6. Bake until heated through and marshmallows are lightly browned, about 20 minutes.

Bacon and Sage Sweet Potato Casserole

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

(photo on page 110)

- 4 large sweet potatoes (about 3 pounds), peeled and diced**
- 3¼ teaspoons kosher salt, divided**
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, softened and divided**
- 4 large eggs**
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ¾ teaspoon ground black pepper, divided**
- 1½ cups shredded Parmesan cheese, divided**
- ½ cup panko (Japanese bread crumbs)**
- ½ teaspoon chopped fresh sage**
- ½ cup crumbled cooked bacon**
- Garnish: chopped fresh sage**

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In a medium stockpot or Dutch oven, combine potatoes, 1 teaspoon salt, and water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until very tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain well.

3. In a large bowl, beat potatoes, ½ cup butter, eggs, brown sugar, 2 teaspoons salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper with a mixer at low speed until smooth. Stir in 1 cup cheese. Spoon into a 9-inch square baking dish.

4. In a small skillet, melt remaining ¼ cup butter over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes. In a medium bowl, stir together browned butter, bread crumbs, sage, remaining ½ cup cheese, remaining ¼ teaspoon salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper. Sprinkle bread crumb mixture and bacon onto potatoes.

5. Bake until center slightly jiggles and top is golden brown, about 40 minutes. Let stand for 15 minutes before serving. Garnish with sage, if desired.





Sweet Potato Casserole with Pecan Topping

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, rinsed well**
- 6 large eggs, separated**
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

- ½ cup all-purpose flour**
 - 2 teaspoons baking powder**
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
 - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
 - 1 teaspoon orange zest**
- Pecan Topping (recipe follows)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 425°. Line a baking sheet with foil.
- 2.** Pierce potatoes all over with a fork. Place on prepared pan.
- 3.** Bake until fork-tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let stand until cool; leave oven on.

4. Halve potatoes, and scoop flesh into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add egg yolks, brown sugar, melted butter, milk, and vanilla, and beat at medium speed until smooth.

5. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and orange zest. Add flour mixture to potato mixture, and beat at low speed just until combined. Transfer mixture to a large bowl.

6. Clean bowl of stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at high speed just until stiff peaks form. Using a large spatula, gently fold one-third of egg whites into potato mixture. Add remaining egg whites, and gently fold until incorporated.


7. Spray a 2½-quart baking dish with cooking spray. Spoon potato mixture into prepared dish.

8. Bake until puffed and lightly browned, 25 to 30 minutes. (Do not open the oven door for at least 20 minutes to prevent cold air from collapsing the casserole. It will deflate slightly when removed from the oven.) Top with Pecan Topping.

Pecan Topping

MAKES 1½ CUPS

- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- ¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 cup roughly chopped pecans**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2.** In a medium bowl, stir together flour, brown sugar, melted butter, salt, and cinnamon until well combined. Stir in pecans, and transfer to prepared pan.
- 3.** Bake until golden brown and crunchy, 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Let cool completely. Break into smaller pieces, if desired. 

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Conquering the Challenges of Holiday Cooking

Get tips on mastering two iconic holiday mains from TikTok sensation Darryl Postelnick

STORY AND RECIPES BY DARRYL POSTELNICK



Deep Fried Turkey
page 121

“Beef Wellington is my most-requested meal. It looks pretty fancy, but it’s well worth the effort.”

that it’s Gordon Ramsey’s signature dish didn’t help matters either. It was also one of the most requested meals I have received in my comments since I started on social media. After doing my research on all the different methods, I decided it was time to give it a whirl. I filmed the first attempt—as I do on almost all my recipes—really thinking I would nail it. After all, I put a lot of prep time into it.

I decided to make it for family dinner when my kids were coming home from school for Christmas break. I timed the cookout perfectly so it was coming out of the oven when they were walking in the door from the airport. My family likes all the ingredients that make up beef Wellington, especially the mushrooms and prosciutto—and the roast, of course. I decided to use an array of mushrooms to try and get different flavors in the dish. Sometimes chefs I’ve seen will use a pancake- or crêpe-like liner for the mushrooms and prosciutto, but I decided to just use the prosciutto as the wrap along with plastic wrap.

The key to this dish is searing the tenderloin roast just right. I like using a cast-iron skillet with some Bacon Up Bacon Grease in the pan to get the proper sear. Once every side has a nice sear, let it rest before rolling in the puff pastry. Don’t worry—the roast will continue to cook while resting as well as when it’s back in the oven so the puff pastry can brown. The golden-brown pastry will tell you when it’s done, so there’s no need to use a meat thermometer. A lot of cooks on social media love to cut into their meal and show you the results; there is something about cutting into this dish and having it look perfect that is really satisfying. I have

IT TOOK ME ALMOST THREE YEARS to finally get the courage to make (and film) cooking beef Wellington. I don’t know why, but this delicious meal has been one that I have delayed making for some time now. I love the taste, ingredients, and everything about it, but this complex recipe has had me scared for years. What if I overcooked the roast? What if the wrapping isn’t tight or comes out overcooked? The fact





“During the holidays, this is how I cook our Thanksgiving turkey—doused in a spicy homemade marinade and deep-fried in Bacon Up Bacon Grease to golden, crispy, juicy perfection.”



conquered my fear of beef Wellington and will continue to make it for family meals.

Christmas isn't the only holiday where intimidating foods are on the menu. I love Thanksgiving for its ability to also bring the family together and give thanks for all we have while enjoying a great meal. There is nothing better than the smell of turkey cooking in the oven all day, watching football, and digging into a feast—or is there? As much as I love a turkey in the oven, deep-frying one outside is an entirely different experience. Better yet, deep-frying a turkey in Bacon Up Bacon Grease? R. U. kidding me? I've deep-fried a turkey before but never in bacon grease. I had to give this a try.

This method came to me from my partners over at Bacon Up. One of the company's owners, David, encouraged me to try this method and even flew to my house to help with the process. He brought his award-winning, Cajun-inspired flavor injection. For first-timers, it can be daunting, but the first thing to do is load the deep-fryer with bacon grease. Where do you find 22 pounds of Bacon Up? Believe it or not, they sell it in 9-pound containers, so you'll need a few of them to fill the fryer. Once you bring it up to 375°, you are ready to lower the bird in.

We injected the Cajun seasoning mixture into the bird, not leaving any parts without a shot. Once you get it fully

loaded with flavor with a buttery coating over the skin, you are ready for the drop. The difference between baking and deep-frying is that your bird will be done in less than an hour, so you'll have to time all your sides appropriately. What I love about deep-frying a turkey is that the golden-brown, crispy skin can be so incredibly flavorful and the turkey comes out equally juicy. I like to cut my pieces so you will get a piece of crispy skin with every cut of meat. I have to say that my family was skeptical of this method but soon came around when they had a chance to taste it. Give it a try; you may never do your holiday bird in the oven again.

Darryl is a loving husband and father and an Illinois native with decades of experience in sales at the executive level. With inspiration from his children, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Darryl turned his love for cooking at home into a thriving following on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, where he cooks both in his kitchen and outdoor on the grill for his more than 3.5 million followers.

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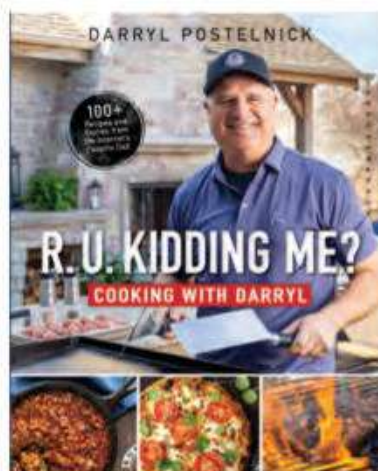
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Deep Fried Turkey

MAKES 10 SERVINGS

(photo on page 117)

- 3 (9-pound) containers Bacon Up Bacon Grease (more or less as needed)**
- 2 sticks butter**
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce**
- 3 tablespoons hot sauce**
- 3 tablespoons garlic powder**
- 3 tablespoons onion powder**
- 1 tablespoon ground red pepper**
- 1 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning**
- 1 (12- to 14-pound) turkey, giblets and neck discarded, completely thawed and patted dry**
- ½ cup Cajun seasoning***

- 1.** In a turkey deep fryer, heat Bacon Up until a deep-fry thermometer reads 375°. (Do not overfill.)
- 2.** In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium-low heat. Stir in Worcestershire, hot sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, red pepper, and Italian seasoning. Using a marinade injector, inject the butter mixture into the thawed turkey—breast, legs, back, thighs, and wings. Be sure turkey is patted dry completely.
- 3.** Rub Cajun seasoning all over turkey. Place turkey on a poultry rack with legs facing up. Place in the fryer's fry basket, if recommended by manufacturer.
- 4.** Using the fryer's hanging device, very slowly lower the turkey into the fryer. (The turkey should be completely submerged in the hot grease.) Cook until a meat thermometer inserted in the thickest portion reads 165° and skin is golden and crispy, about 3 minutes per pound. Turn off fryer, and use hanging device to slowly remove turkey from grease, making sure all the grease drains out of the cavity. Let rest on a cutting board for about 20 minutes before carving. Serve warm.

*Darryl uses Cajun Two Step Seasoning.

Beef Wellington

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

(photo on page 118)

- 1 (2.5-pound) beef tenderloin**
- 2 tablespoons plus ½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided**
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- ⅓ cup Dijon mustard**
- ¼ cup butter**
- ¼ cup minced garlic**
- 3 shallots, finely chopped**
- 2 (16-ounce) containers fresh mushrooms, finely chopped**
- ½ cup white wine**
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ½ teaspoon dried parsley**
- 8 ounces sliced prosciutto**
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten**
- 2 (17.3-ounce) packages frozen puff pastry sheets, thawed**

- 1.** Heat a cast-iron skillet over high heat. Sprinkle tenderloin with 2 tablespoons salt and pepper. Add oil to pan and sear tenderloin on all sides. Remove from heat. Brush mustard over tenderloin.
- 2.** In a small pan, melt butter over low heat. Add garlic and shallots. Cook until fragrant, about 1 to 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook until liquid has evaporated, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add white wine. Sprinkle with thyme, parsley, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Once liquid has evaporated, remove from heat.
- 3.** Preheat oven to 400°. Lay prosciutto slices on plastic wrap in an even layer. Spread mushroom mixture over prosciutto. Place tenderloin on one edge of mushroom mixture, and using plastic wrap, roll tenderloin to completely surround it. Wrap tightly and refrigerate.
- 4.** Whisk egg. Unfold pastry sheets and stack staggered so they can cover the length of tenderloin. Brush edges with egg wash to adhere sheets together.
- 5.** Remove plastic wrap and place tenderloin on top of dough. Roll to completely surround tenderloin in pastry, folding ends inside. Brush all over with egg wash. Using a sharp knife, make a few angled cuts in the top of pastry to vent.
- 6.** Bake until crust is golden and a meat thermometer inserted in thickest portion reads 125°, 25 to 35 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing. 📖



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Mawmaw's Rum Punch

Cheers to an extra-special holiday season with a cupful of one of the treasured recipes being passed down and shared in features editor Daniel Dubuisson's family

BY DANIEL DUBUISSON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE
FOOD STYLING BY VANESSA ROCCHIO | STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS

A FEW YEARS AGO, my paternal grandmother compiled all her favorite recipes from decades of cooking for family and friends and passed them down to each of her children and grandchildren in more than two dozen copies of a handwritten cookbook. I was thrilled to see this rum punch included among other personal favorites. This delightful recipe, which she lovingly often prepares for Christmas Day family gatherings, has a rich history rooted in one of her most beloved friendships. She first learned the recipe from her dear friend Susan Madigan. Together, they've created a punch that balances the richness of dark rum with the tanginess of citrus and the subtle sweetness of tropical juices. My grandmother has slightly tweaked certain elements of the frozen concoction to her own tastes through the years, bringing a touch of tropical cheer to our family's festive celebrations.

Mawmaw's Rum Punch

MAKES ABOUT 15 SERVINGS

- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 cup water**
- 1 (2-liter) bottle lemon-lime soda**
- 1 (46-ounce) can pineapple juice**
- 1 (16-ounce) jar stemless maraschino cherries, drained**
- 1 (12-ounce) container frozen orange juice, thawed**
- 3 cups dark rum*, or to taste**

Garnish: orange slices

- 1.** In a small saucepan, combine sugar and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, and let cool completely.
- 2.** Pour sugar mixture into a large container with a lid; add soda, pineapple juice, cherries, orange juice, and rum, stirring until combined. Cover and freeze overnight.
- 3.** Let stand at room temperature for up to 2 hours before serving. Transfer punch to a punch bowl. (Mixture will be slushy.) Garnish with orange slices, if desired. ■

**We used Myers's Rum.*



From Law to Loaves

Desiree Di Falco of Miami, Florida, bakery Zak the Baker dishes on her remarkable culinary journey

STORY BY DANIEL DUBUISSON

IN THE VIBRANT CULINARY HUB THAT IS MIAMI, FLORIDA, Desiree Di Falco serves a master class in staying true to and following one's passions. As the current head of production at Zak the Baker bakery, Desiree's journey from Venezuela to France to Chicago, Illinois, to Miami was riddled with life-altering crossroads and tests of perseverance and dedication, culminating with a decade of professional growth and success at some of the South's most notable bakeries.

Born and raised in Venezuela, Desiree's passion for cooking and baking was evident from a young age. Despite her early interest in culinary arts, societal expectations led her to pursue law.

"I grew up in a very traditional society back in Venezuela," she says. "I wanted to study at a culinary school right after high school, but my family freaked out when I told them. They'd say, 'Are you out of your mind?' and 'Do a real career before you do that!' I went to law school at first instead to keep them happy."

Even while studying law, Desiree couldn't stay away from baking. She started making wedding cakes while also keeping up with her studies, quickly considering the hobby a source of much needed solace and joy. Her dissatisfaction with a legal career grew to be too much to bear, leading her to a pivotal decision: She left law school and moved to France to study pastry at the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu Paris.

In France, Desiree not only honed her skills and refined her technical abilities but also deepened her understanding of the science behind baking. After spending four years in France, Desiree moved to Chicago with her then-husband, a fellow pastry chef. Together, they opened a wholesale bakery, supplying to high-end hotels and convention centers. However, the pull of family brought her to Miami in 2015, where she eventually landed at Zak the Baker.

"I started with sales when I first worked at Zak the Baker," she explains. "I worked for another bakery in Miami before coming back to Zak the Baker and becoming head of production. Now, I oversee both the pastry and bread departments. There's a head baker in the bread department, so I also act as head baker for the pastry department."



Zak the Baker, a name that has become synonymous with quality and innovation in Miami's bakery scene, has a unique origin story of its own. Founded by Zak Stern in 2012, the bakery began in a parking garage. Zak, much like Desiree, left his original career path—pharmacy—to pursue his passion for baking. After traveling through Europe and learning the craft, he returned to Miami and started Zak the Baker. Today, it's a thriving business that boasts not only a bakery and café but also supplies wholesale to hotels, restaurants, and cafés, as well as Whole Foods Market locations across south Florida.

Despite her success and fulfillment in her current role, Desiree hasn't ruled out the possibility of opening her own bakery in the future.

"I think it's a possibility," she says. "I have a very entrepreneurial spirit, but part of the reason I've stayed so long with Zak the Baker is because we have a lot of independence, choice, and room for mistakes. One day, I might go open a place on my own in the future, but it would be a few years from now."

For now, Desiree is content contributing to Miami's evolving culinary scene where she is. Thankfully, that means we can enjoy her and the team's delicious creations at Zak the Baker, knowing that behind every pastry and loaf of bread is a person like Desiree, fully committed to the all-encompassing joy of baking. 🍞

GET THERE

Zak the Baker
295 NW. 26th St.
Miami, Florida
zakthebaker.com



THIS PAGE (Clockwise from top): Apricot-Almond Hamantaschen; Zak the Baker's vibrant exterior; profiteroles; local banana bread, honey pie, and challah loaves.

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Sideboard: Pages 9–13: Photos courtesy of Kate Voskova (Michelle Carpenter headshot); @7s.mediaco (Ricky Albright headshot); Simone Rathle (Neutral Ground Bar + Kitchen); Hack Hargett (Makan); Alexandria Restaurant Partners (Palette 22).

Southern Bound: Pages 41–47: Photos courtesy of Trish Rawls (Fredericksburg's festive Marktplatz, Hill Country Herb Garden exterior; Pioneer Museum, Otto's German Bistro; Vaudeville); Inn on Barons Creek; Hoffman Haus; Hill Country Herb Garden (fried pork sandwich); Cabernet Grill; Fredericksburg CVB (Fredericksburg Pie Company); Texas Twinkies (Eaker Barbecue); Marc Bennett (Fredericksburg Brewing Company).

Savoring the Season: Pages 99–104: Photos courtesy of Countryman Press, an imprint of W. W. Norton & Co., Inc (Pumpkin Grits, *Thoughtful Cooking*); Denny Culbert (*Cured*, Smoked Pork Shoulder); Rinne Allen (Baba au Rhum, *Baking in the American South*); LSU Press (*The Southern Food & Beverage Museum Cookbook: Recipes from the Modern South*, Buttermilk Chess Pie).

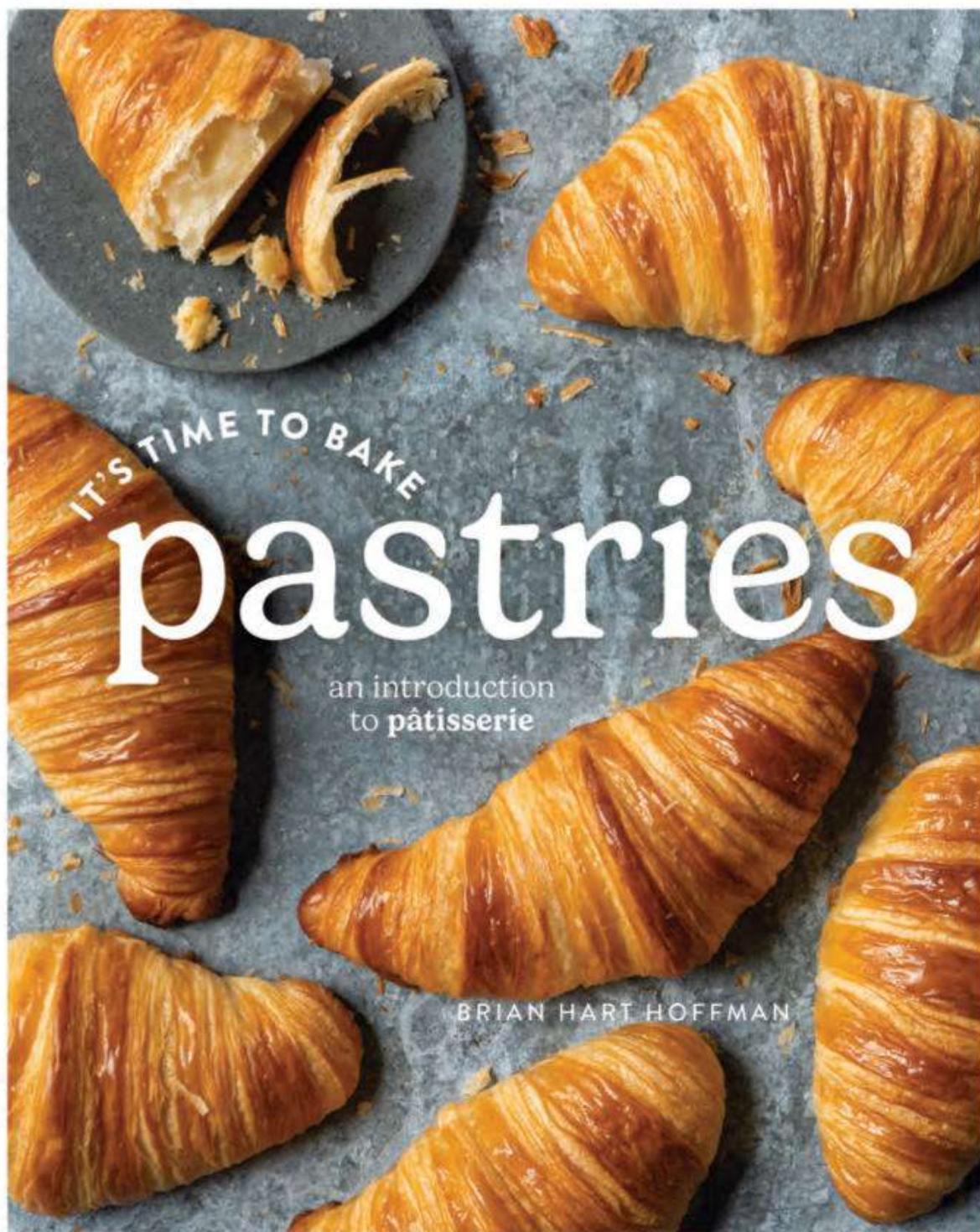
South's Best: Pages 105–107: Photos courtesy of Red Bird Handcrafted Candy; Leah's Pralines; Sunnyland Farms; Priester's Pecans; Ruth Hunt Candy; Maryann Fisher (True Treats Historic Candy); Phillip Fryman (Goo Goo Clusters).

Southern Stories: Pages 125–126: Photos courtesy of Zak the Baker (Desiree Di Falco, pastries, bakery).

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Deck out the dessert table with this decadent holiday fudge

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RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY LINDA SKEENS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER | FOOD STYLING BY VANESSA ROCCHIO | STYLING BY LUCY FINNEY

THIS IS BY FAR MY DAUGHTER CATHY'S FAVORITE. She's the one who films the videos of me cooking for Facebook. The first time I made this fudge, she almost got sick from eating too much—it's just that addictive. To be safe, I usually have to make two batches to have enough for her as well as everyone else in our family who wants a piece or two. It brings a smile to my face to see her joy when I make a batch around the holidays, and we always have a lot of fun when we film videos of it being made. She's my best taste tester for all my recipes, but this one is by far her top pick.

Candy Bar Fudge

MAKES 1 (9-INCH) PAN

- ¾ cup salted butter**
- 3 cups white sugar**
- 1 (5-ounce) can evaporated milk**
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips**
- 1 (7-ounce) jar marshmallow creme**

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 6 (2.07-ounce) candy bars*, cut into ½-inch pieces**

- 1.** Grease a foil-lined 9x9-inch square pan.
- 2.** In a heavy saucepan, bring butter, sugar, and evaporated milk to a boil over medium heat. Cook and stir until a candy thermometer reads 234° (soft ball stage), about 3 minutes.
- 3.** Remove from heat, and stir in chocolate chips, marshmallow

creme, and vanilla until smooth. Pour half the mixture in prepared pan, scatter half of candy bar pieces, and top with remaining chocolate mixture, spreading evenly. Top with remaining chopped candy bars, and let stand at room temperature until completely cool. Lift out of pan and remove foil. Cut into squares. 🍫

**Linda uses Snickers candy bars, but other chocolate bars can also work depending on what you like.*

Kitchen Tip

If you don't have a candy thermometer, put cold water in a bowl and then drop just a little of the sugar mixture in the water and roll it around. If it forms a soft ball, it's ready!



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