

Weeknight Pasta Bolognese

PUBLISHED MAY 2003

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For a weeknight pasta Bolognese recipe with a sauce that tasted as if it had simmered all day, not under an hour, we used the food processor to chop most of the ingredients, used a sweet white wine to lend sweetness to the sauce, and cooked the meatloaf mix in milk, which helped break it down and soften it to give it that long-cooked flavor and texture.



INGREDIENTS

- ½ ounce dried porcini mushrooms
- 1 cups sweet white wine (see ¼ note)
- ½ small carrot, peeled and chopped into rough ½-inch pieces (about ¼ cup)
- ½ small onion, chopped into rough ½-inch pieces (about ⅓ cup)
- 3 ounces pancetta, cut into 1-inch pieces
- (28 ounce) can whole tomatoes with juice

INSTRUCTIONS

Sweet white wines such as Gewürztraminer, Riesling, and even white Zinfandel work especially well with this sauce. To obtain the best texture, be careful not to break up the meat too much when cooking it with the milk in step 4. With additional cooking and stirring, it will continue to break up.

SERVES 4 TO 6

1. Cover porcini mushrooms with ½ cup water in small microwave-safe bowl; cover bowl with plastic wrap, cut a few steam vents with paring knife, and microwave on high power for 30 seconds. Let stand until mushrooms have softened, about 5 minutes. Using fork, lift porcini from liquid and transfer to second small bowl; pour soaking liquid through paper towel-lined mesh strainer. Set porcini and strained liquid aside.

2. Bring wine to simmer in 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat; reduce heat to low and simmer

1 1/2 tablespoons **unsalted butter**

1 small clove garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 1/2 teaspoon)

1 teaspoon granulated sugar

1 1/4 pounds meatloaf mix (or equal amounts 80 percent lean ground beef, ground veal, and ground pork)

1 1/2 cups whole milk

2 tablespoons **tomato paste**

table salt

1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 pound **pasta**

grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

until wine is reduced to 2 tablespoons, about 20 minutes. Set reduced wine aside.

3. Meanwhile, pulse carrot in food processor until broken down into rough 1/4-inch pieces, about 10 one-second pulses. Add onion; pulse until vegetables are broken down to 1/8-inch pieces, about 10 one-second pulses. Transfer vegetables to small bowl. Process softened porcini until well-ground, about 15 seconds, scraping down bowl if necessary. Transfer porcini to bowl with onions and carrots. Process pancetta until pieces are no larger than 1/4 inch, 30 to 35 seconds, scraping down bowl if necessary; transfer to small bowl. Pulse tomatoes with juice until chopped fine, 6 to 8 one-second pulses.

4. Heat butter in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat; when foaming subsides, add pancetta and cook, stirring frequently, until well browned, about 2 minutes. Add carrot, onion, and porcini; cook, stirring frequently, until vegetables are softened but not browned, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and sugar; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add ground meats, breaking meat into 1-inch pieces with wooden spoon, about 1 minute. Add milk and stir to break meat into 1/2-inch bits; bring to simmer, reduce heat to medium, and continue to simmer, stirring to break up meat into small pieces, until most liquid has evaporated and meat begins to sizzle, 18 to 20 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and cook until combined, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, reserved porcini soaking liquid, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper; bring to simmer over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to medium and simmer until liquid is reduced and sauce is thickened but still moist, 12 to 15 minutes. Stir in reduced wine and simmer to blend flavors, about 5 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to rolling boil, covered, in stockpot. Add 1-tablespoon salt and pasta, stir to separate, and cook until al dente. Drain, reserving 1/4 cup pasta cooking water, and return pasta to stockpot. Add 2 cups sauce and 2 tablespoons pasta water to pasta; toss well, adding remaining pasta water, if necessary, to help distribute sauce. Divide pasta among individual

bowls and top each portion with about 1/4 cup remaining sauce. Serve immediately, passing Parmesan separately.



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Foolproof Chocolate Frosting

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED · PUBLISHED MARCH 2008

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For an easy chocolate frosting recipe that required no special equipment, we used both cocoa powder and melted chocolate, which produced a deep chocolate flavor. Confectioners' sugar and corn syrup made our chocolate frosting smooth and glossy. Mixing the frosting in the food processor instead of using an electric mixer prevented it from separating and turning greasy.



INGREDIENTS

- 20** tablespoons (2 ½ sticks) **unsalted butter**, softened (60 to 65 degrees)
- 1** cup confectioners' sugar (4 ounces)
- ¾** cup **Dutch-processed cocoa**
- pinch table salt
- ¾** cup light corn syrup
- 1** teaspoon **vanilla extract**
- 8** ounces **milk chocolate**, melted and cooled slightly (see note)

INSTRUCTIONS

MAKES 3 CUPS TO FROST ONE 9-INCH 2-LAYER CAKE

This frosting may be made with milk, semisweet, or bittersweet chocolate. For our Fluffy Yellow Layer Cake (see related recipe), we prefer a frosting made with milk chocolate. Cool the chocolate to between 85 and 100 degrees before adding it to the butter mixture. The frosting can be made 3 hours in advance. For longer storage, refrigerate the frosting, covered, and let it stand at room temperature for 1 hour before using.

In food processor, process butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping sides of bowl as needed. Add corn syrup and vanilla and process until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Scrape sides of bowl, then add chocolate and pulse until smooth and creamy, 10 to 15 seconds. Frosting can be used immediately or held (see note).

Meat Loaf with Brown Sugar-Ketchup Glaze - Loaf Pan Variation

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 1996

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

While testing to create our meatloaf recipe, we found out that a trio of beef, pork, and veal, with a higher proportion of ground chuck, was best. This gave the loaf a distinct but not overly strong beef flavor. Loaves made without filler were too hamburger-like. Those made with binders, on the other hand, had that distinct meatloaf texture. Cracker crumbs, quick-cooking oatmeal, and fresh bread crumbs improved the texture in our meatloaf recipe without adding a distracting flavor.



INGREDIENTS

BROWN SUGAR - KETCHUP GLAZE

½ cup **ketchup** or chili sauce

4 tablespoons brown sugar

4 teaspoons **cider vinegar** or white vinegar

MEATLOAF

2 teaspoons **vegetable oil**

1 medium onion, chopped medium

2 medium cloves garlic, minced

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6 TO 8

If available at your supermarket in the meat case or by special order, you can use 2 pounds meatloaf mix in place of the ground beef, pork, and veal.

1. **For the glaze:** Mix all ingredients in small saucepan; set aside.

2. **For the meatloaf:** Heat oven to 350 degrees. Heat oil in medium skillet. Add onion and garlic; sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool while preparing remaining ingredients.

3. Mix eggs with thyme, salt, pepper, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, pepper sauce, and milk or yogurt. Add egg mixture to meat in large bowl along with crackers, parsley, and cooked onion and garlic; mix with fork until evenly blended and meat

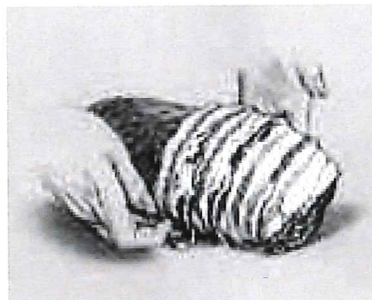
- 2 large eggs
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons **Dijon mustard**
- 2 teaspoons **Worcestershire sauce**
- ¼ teaspoon **hot pepper sauce**
- ½ cup whole milk or plain yogurt
- 1 pound ground beef chuck
- ½ pound ground pork
- ½ pound ground veal
- ⅔ cup Saltine crackers, crushed (about 16), or quick oatmeal, or 1 ⅓ cups fresh bread crumbs
- ⅓ cup minced fresh parsley leaves

mixture does not stick to bowl. (If mixture sticks, add additional milk or yogurt, a couple tablespoons at a time until mix no longer sticks.)

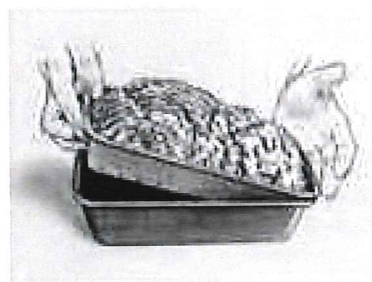
4. Turn meat mixture into meatloaf pan with perforated bottom, fitted with drip pan. Use fork to pull mixture from pan sides to prohibit glaze from dripping into oven. Brush with one-quarter of glaze. Bake until glaze is set, about 45 minutes. Top with another one-quarter of glaze; continue to bake until second coat has set and loaf registers 160 degrees, about 15 minutes longer. Cool at least 20 minutes. Simmer remaining glaze over medium heat until thickened slightly. Slice meatloaf and serve with extra glaze passed separately.

STEP-BY-STEP

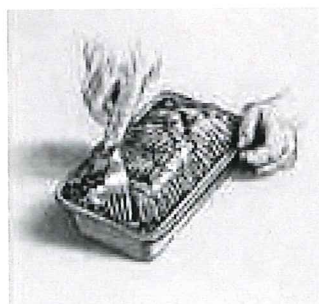
Forming the Loaf



1. For a free-form loaf, lay the bacon strips crosswise over the loaf and overlapping slightly, tucking bacon ends underneath.



2. A loaf pan with a perforated bottom keeps the meat from stewing in the pan.



3. If using a perforated loaf pan, use a fork to pull the mixture away from the pan sides.

All-Purpose Gravy

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2003

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Gravy, by definition, is a thickened sauce made of meat juices and pan drippings, usually left over from a roast. But what if you don't have a roast on hand and want gravy for some mashed potatoes or pork chops? We wanted to create a top-notch, all-purpose gravy that could be made quickly, without any special ingredients.

When we began our tests, we assumed that some combination of supermarket broths and sautéed vegetables thickened with flour would be most likely to give us the results we wanted. But water and vegetable broths made for flavorless gravies, while chicken and beef broths alone dominated the gravy. Equal amounts of chicken and beef broth, however, provided a meaty yet balanced base.



With our broth mixture determined, we turned to the vegetables. A standard mirepoix (a mixture of onions, carrots, and celery) lightly sautéed in oil contributed a rounded sweetness and body, but it failed to accent the gravy's meatiness or to impart any roasted flavor. In most gravy recipes, the fond (the browned bits at the bottom of a roasting pan) provides concentrated flavor and an appealing nutty-brown color. It occurred to us that we could create similar bits of rich, caramelized flavor by developing a vegetable fond. We were right; simply extending the cooking time and sautéing the vegetables until they were well browned resulted in a more pronounced roasted, meaty flavor. Switching from oil to butter (for more flavor) and chopping the vegetables in a food processor (for smaller, more uniform pieces) further enhanced our fond.

Our final step was to thicken the gravy. We tried a variety of techniques but got the best results by sprinkling a little flour into the sautéed vegetables to create a classic roux. The gravy was getting better, but it still lacked depth. We borrowed a method from Creole gumbos and took our roux far past the pale blond shade of our previous tests, cooking it until it became the color of milk chocolate. This simple technique developed complex flavor elements, provided an unexpectedly rich roasted flavor, and added a meaty intensity. Together with the caramelized vegetable fond, the darkened roux lent the gravy a rich, deep brown color. A classic combination of dried thyme, bay leaf, and peppercorns finished our surprisingly simple yet deeply flavorful gravy.

INGREDIENTS

INSTRUCTIONS

MAKES 2 CUPS

This gravy can be served with almost any type of meat or

- 1 small carrot, peeled and chopped into rough ½-inch pieces (about ½ cup)
- 1 small rib celery, chopped into rough ½-inch pieces (about ½ cup)
- 1 small onion, chopped into rough ½-inch pieces (about ¾ cup)
- 3 tablespoons **unsalted butter**
- ¼ cup **unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups **low-sodium chicken broth**
- 2 cups **low-sodium beef broth**
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- 5 **whole black peppercorns**
- Salt and ground black pepper**

poultry or with mashed potatoes. If you would like to double the recipe, use a Dutch oven to give the vegetables ample space for browning and increase the cooking times by roughly 50 percent. The finished gravy can be frozen. To thaw either a single or double recipe, place the gravy and 1 tablespoon of water in a saucepan over low heat and bring slowly to a simmer. The gravy may appear broken or curdled as it thaws, but a vigorous whisking will recombine it.

1. In food processor, pulse carrot until broken into rough 1/4-inch pieces, about five 1-second pulses. Add celery and onion; pulse until all vegetables are broken into 1/8-inch pieces, about five 1-second pulses.

2. Heat butter in large heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat; when foaming subsides, add vegetables and cook, stirring frequently, until softened and well browned, about 7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; stir in flour and cook, stirring constantly, until thoroughly browned and fragrant, about 5 minutes. Whisking constantly, gradually add broths; bring to boil, skimming off any foam that forms on surface. Reduce heat to medium-low and add bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns; simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened and reduced to 3 cups, 20 to 25 minutes.

3. Strain gravy through fine-mesh strainer into clean saucepan, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible; discard solids. Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper. Serve hot.



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Lemon Pound Cake

PUBLISHED MARCH 2002

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

We set out to formulate a superior lemon pound cake recipe (fine-crumbed, rich, moist, and buttery) while making the process as simple and foolproof as possible. Using a food processor ensured perfect emulsification of the eggs, sugar, and melted butter; adding baking powder to the cake increased lift and produced a consistent crumb; and finishing the cake with lemon sugar syrup delivered a blast of flavor.



INGREDIENTS

- 16 tablespoons **unsalted butter** (2 sticks), plus 1 tablespoon, softened, for greasing pan
- 1 cups cake flour (6 ounces),
½ plus 1 tablespoon for dusting pan
- 1 teaspoon **baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- 1 cups granulated sugar (8 ¾
¼ ounces)
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon
zest plus 2 teaspoons juice
from 2 medium lemons
- 4 large eggs

INSTRUCTIONS

MAKES ONE 9 BY 5-INCH CAKE, SERVING 8

You can use

a blender instead of a food processor to mix the batter. To add the butter, remove the center cap of the lid so it can be drizzled into the whirling blender with minimal splattering. This batter looks almost like a thick pancake batter and is very fluid.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9 by 5-inch loaf pan with 1 tablespoon softened butter; dust with 1 tablespoon cake flour, tapping out excess. In medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt; set aside.
2. In glass measuring cup or microwave-safe bowl, microwave butter, covered with plastic wrap, at full power until melted, 1 to 2 minutes. (Alternatively, melt butter in small saucepan over medium heat.) Whisk melted butter thoroughly to reincorporate

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract

LEMON GLAZE (OPTIONAL)

½ cup granulated sugar (3 ½ ounces)

¼ cup lemon juice, from 1 or 2 medium lemons

any separated milk solids.

3. In food processor, process sugar and zest until combined, about five 1-second pulses. Add lemon juice, eggs, and vanilla; process until combined, about 5 seconds. With machine running, add melted butter through feed tube in steady stream (this should take about 20 seconds). Transfer mixture to large bowl. Sift flour mixture over eggs in three steps, whisking gently after each addition until just combined.

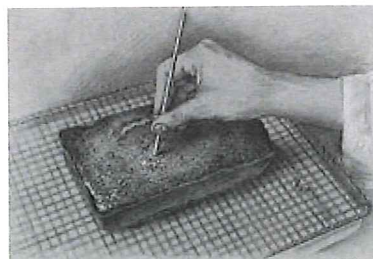
4. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees and continue to bake until deep golden brown and skewer inserted in center comes out clean, about 35 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking time. Cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn onto wire rack.

5. If using lemon glaze, while cake is cooling in pan, bring sugar and lemon juice to boil in small nonreactive saucepan, stirring occasionally to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat to low and simmer until thickened slightly, about 2 minutes.

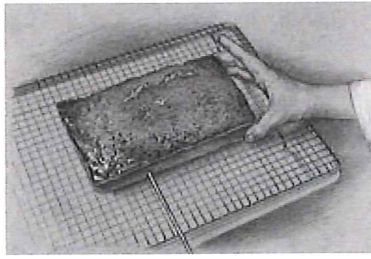
6. After turning cake onto wire rack, poke the cake's top and sides with a toothpick and brush on Lemon Glaze (see illustrations below). Cool to room temperature, at least 1 hour. (Cooled cake can be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 5 days.)

STEP-BY-STEP

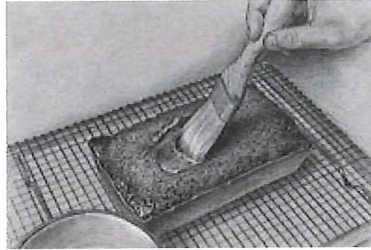
Glazing Pound Cake



1. After removing cake from pan, poke entire top with toothpick.



2. Poke cake on all sides with toothpick.



3. Brush top and sides of cake with glaze. Cool to room temperature.



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Sausage and Fennel Stuffing

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED · PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2009

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

We discovered a few ways to get a roast turkey recipe with everything in one package—juicy meat, burnished skin, and richly flavored stuffing. We salted the meat to keep it flavorful and moist. We started the bird in a low oven and gradually cranked up the heat for the crispiest skin. And for our perfect turkey recipe, we removed the stuffing from the turkey when the meat had reached a safe temperature and mixed it with the remaining uncooked stuffing, so we could cook it all in a baking dish without having to overcook the turkey.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pounds **white sandwich bread**, cut into ½-inch cubes (about 12 cups)
- 1 teaspoon **vegetable oil**
- ½ pound bulk pork sausage
- 4 tablespoons **unsalted butter**, plus extra for baking dish
- 1 medium onion, chopped fine (about 1 cup)
- 1 fennel bulb, halved, cored, and chopped fine (about 1 cup)
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper**

INSTRUCTIONS

This recipe was developed to work with our recipe for Old-Fashioned Stuffed Turkey.

1. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 250 degrees. Spread bread cubes in single layer on baking sheet; bake until edges have dried but center is slightly moist (cubes should yield to pressure), about 45 minutes, stirring several times during baking. Transfer dried bread to large bowl and increase oven temperature to 325 degrees.
2. While bread dries, heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add sausage and cook, stirring to break sausage into ½-inch pieces, until browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer sausage to paper towel-lined plate. Return skillet to heat and add 4 tablespoons butter to fat in skillet. When foaming subsides, add onion, fennel, 4 teaspoons kosher salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften and brown slightly, 7 to 10 minutes. Stir in

MAKES ABOUT 12 CUPS

- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme leaves
 - 1 tablespoon minced fresh marjoram leaves
 - 2 tablespoons minced fresh sage leaves
 - 1 cups **low-sodium chicken**
1/2 **broth**
 - 3 large eggs
- thyme, marjoram, and sage; cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add vegetable mixture and sausage to bowl with dried bread; add 1 cup broth and toss until evenly moistened (you should have about 12 cups stuffing).
3. Use stuffing as directed in Old-Fashioned Stuffed Turkey recipe, adding eggs and remaining 1/2 cup broth in step 7.

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Pot Roast with Root Vegetables

PUBLISHED MARCH 2002

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

A good pot roast recipe should transform a cut of meat into a tender, rich, flavorful main course by means of a slow, moist cooking process called braising. For our best pot roast recipe, we browned the roast on all sides, then added onion, carrot, and celery along with some sugar to caramelize the vegetables and develop flavor. By braising the meat in a combination of chicken and beef broths and water until it reached an internal temperature of 210 degrees, and then maintaining that temperature for a full hour, we got the tender result we were looking for.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 chuck-eye roast (about 3 ½ pounds), boneless
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped medium
- 1 small carrot, chopped medium
- 1 small rib celery, chopped medium

INSTRUCTIONS

For pot roast, we recommend a chuck-eye roast. Most markets sell this roast with twine tied around the center. If necessary, do this yourself (see illustrations, "How To Tie A Top-Blade Roast," below). Seven-bone and top-blade roasts can also be used for this recipe. Remember to add only enough water to come halfway up the sides of these thinner roasts, and begin checking for doneness after 2 hours. If using a top-blade roast, tie it before cooking (see illustrations, "How To Tie A Top-Blade Roast," below) to keep it from falling apart. Mashed or boiled potatoes are good accompaniments to pot roast.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Thoroughly pat roast dry with paper towels; sprinkle generously with salt and pepper.

2. Heat oil in large heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over

SERVES 6 TO 8

- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

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- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 1 cups water
½
- ¼ cup dry red wine
- 1 pounds carrots (about 8
½ medium carrots), sliced ½
inch thick (about 3 cups)
- 1 pounds small red potatoes,
½ halved if larger than 1 ½
inches in diameter (about 5
cups)
- 1 pound large parsnips (about
5), sliced ½ inch thick
(about 3 cups)

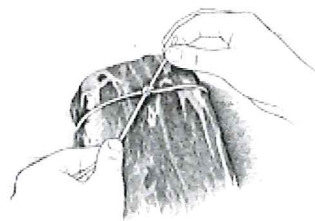
medium-high heat until shimmering but not smoking. Brown roast thoroughly on all sides, reducing heat if fat begins to smoke, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer roast to large plate; set aside. Reduce heat to medium; add onion, carrot, and celery to pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Add garlic and

of pan with wooden spoon to loosen browned bits. Return roast and any accumulated juices to pot; add enough water to come halfway up sides of roast. Bring liquid to simmer over medium heat, then place large piece of foil over pot and cover tightly with lid; transfer pot to oven. Cook, turning roast every 30 minutes, until roast is almost tender (sharp knife should meet little resistance), 3 to 3 1/2 hours. Add carrots, red potatoes, and parsnips to Dutch oven, submerging them in liquid. Continue to cook until vegetables are almost tender, 20 to 30 minutes.

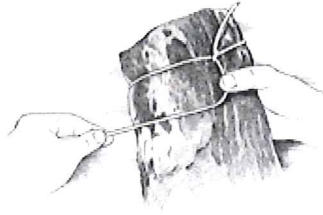
3. Transfer roast to carving board; tent with foil to keep warm. Allow liquid in pot to settle about 5 minutes, then use wide spoon to skim fat off surface; discard thyme sprig. Add wine and salt and pepper to taste; boil over high heat until vegetables are fully tender, 5 to 10 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer vegetables to warmed serving bowl or platter. Using chef's or carving knife, cut meat into 1/2-inch-thick slices or pull apart into large pieces; transfer to bowl or platter with vegetables and pour about 1/2 cup sauce over meat and vegetables. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.

STEP-BY-STEP

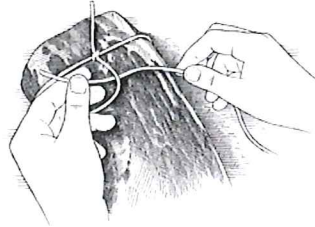
How to Tie a Roast



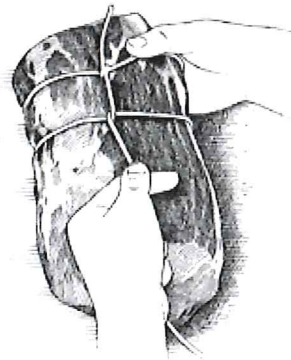
1. Slip 6-foot piece of twine under roast and tie a double knot.



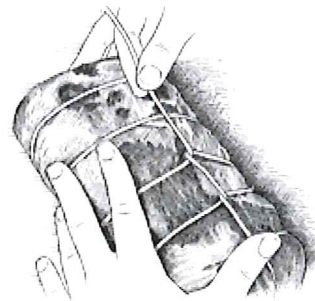
2. Hold twine against meat, and loop long end under and around roast.



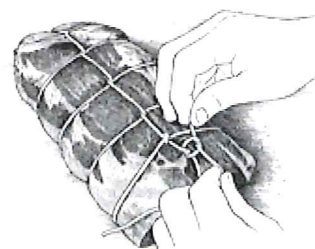
3. Run long end through loop.



4. Repeat procedure down length of roast.



5. Roll roast over and run twine under and around each loop.



6. Wrap twine around end of roast, flip roast, and tie to original knot.

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Dark Chocolate Ganache

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2000

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons **unsalted butter**
- 6 ounces **semisweet chocolate** or bittersweet chocolate (high-quality), chopped
- 1 tablespoon Cognac

INSTRUCTIONS

MAKES 1 1/2 CUPS, ENOUGH TO COVER

ROULADE

If your

kitchen is cool and the ganache becomes too cold and stiff to spread, set the bowl over a saucepan containing simmering water, then stir briefly until smooth and icinglike.

Microwave cream and butter in measuring cup on high until bubbling, about 1 1/2 minutes. (Alternatively, bring to simmer in small saucepan over medium-high heat). Place chocolate in bowl of food processor fitted with steel blade. With machine running, gradually add hot cream and cognac through feed tube and process until smooth and thickened, about 3 minutes. Transfer ganache to medium bowl and let stand at room temperature 1 hour, until spreadable (ganache should have consistency of soft icing).



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Chocolate Sour Cream Bundt Cake

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED · PUBLISHED JANUARY 2004

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For a chocolate Bundt cake recipe that would deliver a cake that tasted every bit as good as it looked, with a fine crumb, moist texture, and rich chocolate flavor, we used both bittersweet chocolate and natural cocoa, dissolving them in boiling water, which "blooms" their flavor. Sour cream and brown sugar gave our chocolate Bundt cake recipe moisture and flavor. Finally, we enhanced our cake's chocolate flavor with small amounts of espresso powder and vanilla extract, both of which complement the floral nuances of the chocolate.



INGREDIENTS

CAKE RELEASE

- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon cocoa

CAKE

- ¾ cup natural cocoa (2 ¼ ounces)
- 6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 teaspoon instant espresso powder (optional)
- ¾ cup water (boiling)

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 12 TO 14

Natural (or regular) cocoa gives the cake a fuller, more assertive chocolate flavor than does Dutch-processed cocoa. In addition, Dutch-processed cocoa will result in a compromised rise. The cake can be served with just a dusting of confectioners' sugar but is easily made more impressive with Tangy Whipped Cream and Lightly Sweetened Raspberries (recipes follow). The cake can be made a day in advance; wrap the cooled cake in plastic and store it at room temperature. Dust with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

1. **FOR THE PAN:** Stir together butter and cocoa in small bowl until paste forms; using a pastry brush, coat all interior surfaces of standard 12-cup Bundt pan, see illustration below. (If mixture becomes too thick to brush on, microwave it for 10 to 20 seconds, or until warm and softened.) Adjust oven rack to

- 1 cup sour cream, room temperature
- 1 cups **unbleached all-purpose flour** (8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces)
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 12 tablespoons **unsalted butter** (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks), room temperature
- 2 cups **packed light brown sugar** (14 ounces)
- 1 tablespoon **vanilla extract**
- 5 large eggs, room temperature
- confectioners' sugar for dusting

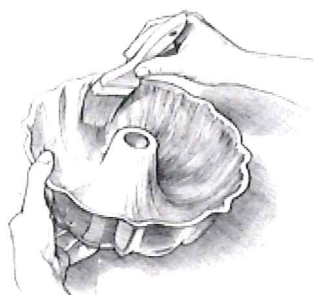
lower-middle position; heat oven to 350 degrees.

2. **FOR THE CAKE:** Combine cocoa, chocolate, and espresso powder (if using) in medium heatproof bowl; pour boiling water over and whisk until smooth. Cool to room temperature; then whisk in sour cream. Whisk flour, salt, and baking soda in second bowl to combine.

3. In standing mixer fitted with flat beater, beat butter, sugar, and vanilla on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Reduce speed to medium and add eggs one at a time, mixing about 30 seconds after each addition and scraping down bowl with rubber spatula after first 2 additions. Reduce to medium-low speed (batter may appear separated); add about one third of flour mixture and half of chocolate/sour cream mixture and mix until just incorporated, about 20 seconds. Scrape bowl and repeat using half of remaining flour mixture and all of remaining chocolate mixture; add remaining flour mixture and beat until just incorporated, about 10 seconds. Scrape bowl and mix on medium-low until batter is thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds. Pour batter into prepared Bundt pan, being careful not to pour batter on sides of pan. Bake until wooden skewer inserted into center comes out with few crumbs attached, 45 to 50 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes, then invert cake onto parchment-lined wire rack; cool to room temperature, about 3 hours. Dust with confectioners' sugar, transfer to serving platter, and cut into wedges; serve with Tangy Whipped Cream and raspberries, if desired.

TECHNIQUE

Ensuring an Easy Release



A Bundt cake is attractive only if you get it out of the pan in one piece. A simple paste made from melted butter and cocoa powder and painted into the grooves of the pan with a pastry brush worked wonders in helping to release our chocolate Bundt cake. We much preferred this tidy method over the standard technique of greasing and flouring, which left an unsightly pasty white film on the cake's exterior.



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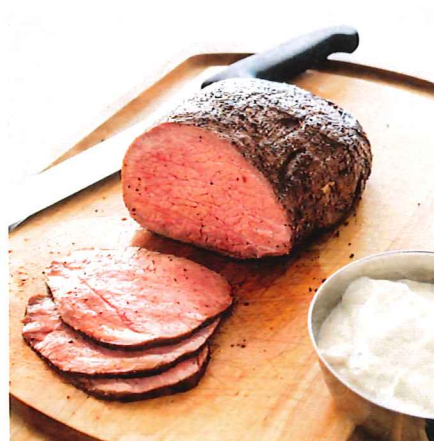
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Slow-Roasted Beef

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED · PUBLISHED JANUARY 2008

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For an inexpensive slow-roasted beef recipe, we transformed a bargain cut into a tender, juicy roast by salting the meat a full 24 hours before roasting and then cooking it at a very low temperature, which allowed the meat's enzymes to act as natural tenderizers, breaking down its tough connective tissue.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 boneless eye-round roast (3 ½ to 4 ½ pounds) (see note)
- 4 teaspoons kosher salt or 2 teaspoons table salt
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil plus 1 tablespoon
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6 TO 8

We don't recommend cooking this roast past medium. Open the oven door as little as possible and remove the roast from the oven while taking its temperature. If the roast has not reached the desired temperature in the time specified in step 3, heat the oven to 225 degrees for 5 minutes, shut it off, and continue to cook the roast to the desired temperature. For a smaller (2 1/2- to 3 1/2-pound) roast, reduce the amount of kosher salt to 3 teaspoons (1 1/2 teaspoons table salt) and black pepper to 1 1/2 teaspoons. For a 4 1/2- to 6-pound roast, cut in half crosswise before cooking to create 2 smaller roasts. Slice the roast as thinly as possible and serve with Horseradish Cream Sauce (see related recipe), if desired.

1. Sprinkle all sides of roast evenly with salt. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate 18 to 24 hours.

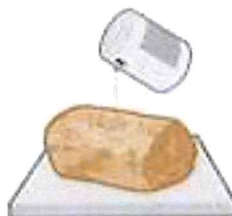
2. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 225 degrees. Pat roast dry with paper towels; rub with 2 teaspoons oil and sprinkle all sides evenly with pepper. Heat remaining tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until starting to smoke. Sear roast until browned on all sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer roast to wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet. Roast until meat-probe thermometer or instant-read thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 115 degrees for medium-rare, 1 1/4 to 1 3/4 hours, or 125 degrees for medium, 1 3/4 to 2 1/4 hours.

3. Turn oven off; leave roast in oven, without opening door, until meat-probe thermometer or instant-read thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 130 degrees for medium-rare or 140 degrees for medium, 30 to 50 minutes longer. Transfer roast to carving board and let rest 15 minutes. Slice meat crosswise as thinly as possible and serve.

STEP-BY-STEP

The Transformation From Tough to Tender

Along with salting and searing, the key to our eye round's makeover into a tender, juicy roast is keeping its internal temperature below 122 degrees for as long as possible. Below 122 degrees, the meat's enzymes act as natural tenderizers, breaking down its tough connective tissues.



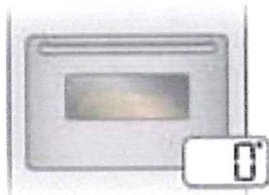
1. **SALT:** Salt the roast and allow it to rest for 18 to 24 hours. Salt breaks down proteins to improve texture.



2. **SEAR:** Sear the meat in a hot pan before roasting. While this won't affect tenderness, it will boost flavor.



3. **OVEN ON:** Cook the meat in an oven set to 225 degrees and open the door as infrequently as possible.



4. **OVEN OFF:** When the roast reaches 115 degrees, turn off oven and continue to cook the roast as the oven cools.

SHOPPING

Low-Cost Lineup

Not all bargain cuts have the potential to taste like a million bucks—or look like it when carved and served on a plate.

OUR FAVORITE: EYE-ROUND ROAST

\$4.99 per pound We singled out this cut not only for its good flavor and relative tenderness but also for its uniform shape that guarantees even cooking and yields slices that look good on the plate.

TOO FATTY: CHUCK EYE

\$3.99 per pound While undeniably tender and flavorful,, its fat and gristle make this meat better for stew and pot roast than roast beef.

ODD SHAPE: TOP ROUND

\$3.99 per pound A deli staple for sandwiches, this cut comes in irregular shapes that can cook unevenly.

TOUGH TO CARVE: BOTTOM ROUND RUMP

\$4.29 per pound

We ruled out this roast for being both tough and hard to carve against the grain.

Eye-Round Roast:

Our Favorite



Chuck Eye:

Too Fatty



Top Round:

Odd Shape



Bottom Round

Roast:

Tough To Carve

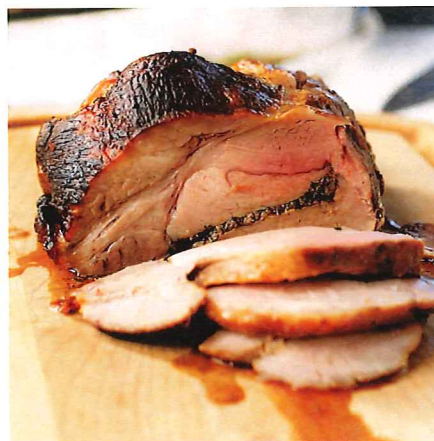


Tuscan-Style Garlic-Rosemary Roast Pork Loin with Roasted Potatoes

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2002

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For the best Tuscan-style roast pork loin recipe, succulent and with a crisp crust, we chose a bone-in, center-cut pork rib roast. Its protective cap of fat and muscle made it the tastiest of all the cuts we sampled, and its rack of bones helped to protect the meat during roasting. Brining the meat in a mixture of water, salt, brown sugar, garlic, and rosemary ensured juiciness and imparted flavor. To add more flavor to our pork loin recipe, we butterflied the pork loin, then rubbed the meat with a garlic, rosemary, and olive oil paste (olive oil helped heat and cook the paste, boosting flavor).



INGREDIENTS

ROAST

- 2 cups kosher salt or 1 cup table salt
- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar (16 ounces)
- 10 large cloves garlic, lightly crushed and peeled
- 5 sprigs fresh rosemary (each about 6 inches long)
- 1 bone-in, center-cut, 4-pound pork rib roast, prepared according to first two illustrations below

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6 TO 8

The roasting time is determined in part by the shape of the roast; a long, thin roast will cook faster than a roast with a large circumference. Though not traditionally served, the ribs are rich with flavor. If you'd like to serve them or enjoy them for yourself, increase the oven temperature to 375 degrees, untie the roast and remove the loin as directed, then scrape off the excess garlic-rosemary paste from the ribs, set them on a rimmed baking sheet, and return them to the oven for about 20 minutes, until they are brown and crisp. Slice in between bones and serve.

1. **TO BRINE THE ROAST:** Dissolve salt and brown sugar in 1 1/2 quarts hot tap water in large stockpot or clean bucket. Stir in garlic and rosemary; add 2 1/2 quarts cold water and submerge meat and bones in brine. Refrigerate until fully seasoned, about 3

GARLIC PASTE

- 8 - cloves garlic, pressed
- 10 through garlic press or minced to paste (1 ½ tablespoons)

- 1 tablespoons fresh rosemary, ½ finely chopped

- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt or pinch table salt

- ¾ cup dry white wine

- 2 pounds medium red potatoes, 2 ½-inch diameter, (about 14 potatoes total), quartered

- 2 tablespoons olive oil

hours. Rinse meat and ribs under cold water and dry thoroughly with paper towels.

2. **FOR THE GARLIC RUB:** While roast brines, mix together garlic, pepper, rosemary, olive oil, and salt in small bowl to form paste; set aside.

3. **TO PREPARE THE ROAST:** When roast is done brining, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Heat heavy-bottomed 12-inch nonreactive skillet over medium heat until hot, about 4 minutes. Place roast fat-side down in skillet and cook until well-browned, about 8 minutes. Transfer roast browned-side up to cutting board and set aside to cool. Pour off fat from skillet and add wine; increase heat to high and bring to boil, scraping skillet with wooden spoon until browned bits are loosened, about 1 minute. Set skillet with wine aside.

4. Following "Adding the Paste" illustrations below, make lengthwise incision in pork loin, rub with one-third of garlic paste, rub remaining paste on cut side of ribs, and tie meat back to ribs. Sprinkle browned side of roast with 1 teaspoon pepper and set roast rib-side down in flameproof roasting pan. Pour reserved wine and browned bits from skillet in roasting pan. Put roast in oven.

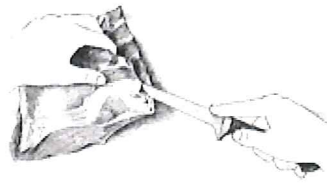
5. When pork has roasted 15 minutes, toss potatoes with olive oil in medium bowl and season generously with salt and pepper. Baste pork. After pork has roasted 30 minutes, add potatoes to roasting pan; stir to coat potatoes with pan juices. Continue to roast pork (basting every 20 minutes) until center of loin registers about 135 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 65 to 80 minutes. (If wine evaporates, add about 1/2 cup water to roasting pan to prevent scorching.) Transfer roast to carving board and tent loosely with foil; let stand until center of loin registers about 145 degrees on instant-read thermometer, about 15 minutes. Turn potato pieces with wide metal spatula and spread them in even layer. Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees and return potatoes to oven; continue to roast until tender and browned, 5 to 15 minutes

longer.

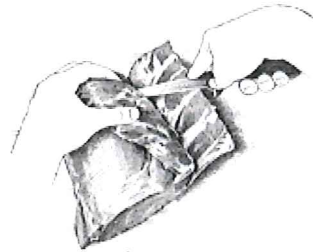
6. Cut twine on roast and remove meat from bones. Set meat browned-side up on board and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Serve immediately, with potatoes.

STEP-BY-STEP

Preparing the Roast and Adding the Paste



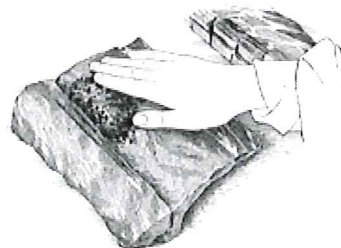
Position roast so bones are perpendicular to cutting board. Starting from far end and working toward you make series of small, easy strokes with boning knife.



Gradually cut along curved rib bones down to backbone until meat is free of bones.



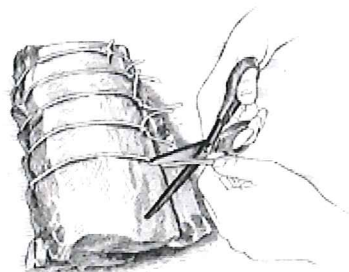
Adding the Paste #1: With fat side of roast down, slice through center of entire length of meat, stopping 1 inch shy of edge. Spread meat flat.



Adding the Paste #2: Rub one-third of rosemary mixture in even layer on one side of cut, leaving 1/2 inch on each end bare.



Adding the Paste #3:
Spread remaining rosemary mixture evenly along bones from where meat was cut, leaving 1/2 inch on each end bare.



Adding the Paste #4:
Fold meat back together and tie meat on bones exactly from where it was cut with 7 individual lengths of twine.



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Roast Crisped-Skin Turkey

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED * PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2000

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For a great roast turkey recipe with a superbly crisp skin, we let the bird air-dry in the refrigerator after brining, which allowed the residual moisture in the skin from brining to evaporate. As a result, the skin became crisp in the oven instead of steaming from excess moisture.



INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups **kosher salt** or 2 cups table salt
- 1 **turkey** (12 to 14 pounds gross weight), rinsed thoroughly; giblets, neck, and tailpiece removed and reserved for gravy (see related recipe)
- 3 medium onions, chopped coarse
- 2 small carrots, chopped coarse
- 2 ribs celery, chopped coarse
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme

INSTRUCTIONS

We prefer to roast small turkeys, no more than 14 pounds gross weight, because they cook more evenly than large birds. If you prefer, halve the amount of salt in the brine and brine 12 hours or overnight. When you remove the turkey from the oven to rotate it, be sure to close the oven door to prevent heat loss.

1. Dissolve salt in 2 gallons cold water in large stockpot or clean bucket. Add turkey and refrigerate or set in very cool spot (about 40 degrees) for 4 to 6 hours.
2. Remove turkey from salt water and rinse well under cool running water. Pat dry inside and out with paper towels. Place turkey breast-side up on flat wire rack set over rimmed baking sheet or roasting pan and refrigerate, uncovered, 8 to 24 hours.

SERVES 10 TO 12

6 tablespoons **unsalted butter**, melted

3. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Toss one-third of onions, carrots, and celery with 2 sprigs thyme and 1 tablespoon butter in medium bowl; fill cavity with mixture. Tuck wings behind back, following illustrations 1 through 3 below, truss turkey.

4. Scatter remaining vegetables and thyme in shallow roasting pan; pour 1 cup water over vegetables. Prepare V-rack following illustration 4, below. Brush turkey breast with butter, then set turkey breast-side down on foil-lined V-rack. Brush back of turkey with butter. Roast 45 minutes.

5. Remove roasting pan with turkey from oven; brush back with butter. Using thick wads of paper towels or potholders, rotate turkey leg/wing--side up. If liquid in bottom of roasting pan has evaporated, add 1/2 cup water. Roast 15 minutes longer.

6. Remove roasting pan with turkey from oven, brush exposed surfaces with butter, and, using thick wads of paper towels or potholders, rotate turkey second leg/wing-side up; roast for 15 minutes longer.

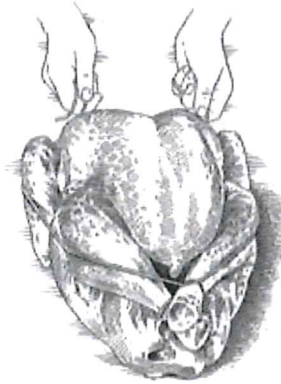
7. Remove roasting pan with turkey from oven, brush exposed surfaces with butter and, using thick wads of paper towels or potholders, rotate turkey breast-side up. Roast until thickest part of breast registers 165 degrees and thickest part of thigh registers 170 to 175 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 30 to 45 minutes longer. Move turkey from rack to carving board and let rest about 20 to 30 minutes. Carve and serve with gravy, if desired.

STEP-BY-STEP

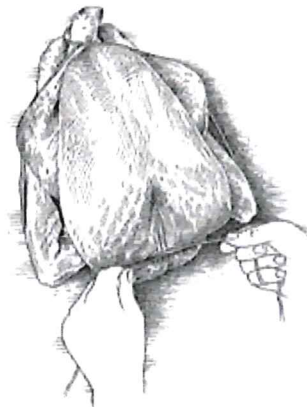
Preparing the Bird



1. Using the center of a five-foot length of heavy kitchen twine, tie the legs together at the ankles.



2. Run the twine around the thighs and under the wings on both sides of the bird, pulling tightly.



3. Keeping the twine pulled snug, tie a firm knot around the excess flesh at the neck of the bird. Snip off excess twine.



4. Set V-rack in pan and line with heavy duty aluminum foil. Spray the foil with vegetable cooking spray, then pierce 20 to 30 small holes in the foil with a paring knife.



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Spinach and Ricotta Filling for Pasta

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 1993

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

We wanted a fresh pasta recipe that could be used to create a variety of filled pasta shapes. We found that the food processor kneaded our simple dough, made with just flour and eggs, almost to perfection. Kneading the dough by hand for an additional minute or two made our pasta dough silky and smooth. Running the dough, in pieces, through a manual pasta machine until it was translucent gave us the delicate egg pasta recipe we were after.

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 pound stemmed spinach leaves, washed
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 small onion, minced (about 1/4 cup)
- table salt
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 egg yolk

INSTRUCTIONS

This filling works well with either a tomato or brown butter sauce (see related recipes). Other leafy vegetables such as kale and Swiss chard may be substituted for the spinach. Three-quarter cups frozen chopped spinach may be used if desired; defrost spinach and squeeze out excess liquid before cooking it with the onions.

1. Place cleaned spinach leaves and any water that clings to them in a nonreactive soup kettle. Cover and cook over medium heat until spinach wilts, about 5 minutes. Cool spinach slightly, squeeze out the excess liquid, and chop fine; set aside.
2. Heat butter in a small skillet. Add onions and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in chopped spinach and salt to taste; cook for 1 minute.
3. Transfer spinach mixture to a medium bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients; adjust seasonings and set aside. (Can be covered and refrigerated overnight.)

MAKES ABOUT 2 1/2 CUPS

Crepes with Ricotta, Ham, and Spinach Filling

PUBLISHED MARCH 1997

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

While developing our crêpes recipe, we found that a batter slightly thicker than heavy cream worked best, coating the pan easily and yielding thin, delicate crêpes. We preferred a batter made of whole milk (rather than low fat), bleached all-purpose flour, and 3 tablespoons butter (less was fine, but the flavor was best with 3 tablespoons). The food processor was best at making a smooth batter (no lumps, as with hand mixing) for our crêpes recipe. Letting the batter rest for two hours after mixing lets the gluten relax, ensuring tender crêpes.

INGREDIENTS

SAVORY CREPES

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup whole milk
- 6 tablespoons water
- 1 cup **bleached all-purpose flour**
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- 3 tablespoons **unsalted butter** melted, plus extra for brushing pan

FILLING

- 2 tablespoons **olive oil**
- 1 small onion, chopped coarse

INSTRUCTIONS FILLS 16 6-7-INCH CREPES, 6-8 SERVINGS

If you have the time, make these crepes with one bunch of fresh spinach (about 1 pound), stemmed, steamed 3 to 4 minutes to wilt it, then refreshed, squeezed dry, and chopped. As a variation, substitute smoked turkey for the ham, blue cheese for the Gruyère, and add 1/3 cup chopped walnuts.

1. **For the Crepes:** Mix all ingredients (except extra melted butter) in food processor or blender (or by hand as noted above) until smooth batter is formed, 3 to 4 seconds. Transfer batter to covered container; refrigerate at least 2 hours or, if desired, up to 2 days.
2. Gently stir batter if ingredients have separated. Heat 6- to 7-inch crepe pan or heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Brush pan bottom and sides very lightly with butter, which should sizzle when it hits pan. When butter stops sizzling, pour 2 1/2 tablespoons (use 1/4-cup measure just over half full) batter into pan, following illustrations below.

- 2 small cloves garlic, minced
- 1 package frozen chopped spinach (10 ounces), thawed and squeezed dry
- 10 ounces whole-milk ricotta (1 ¼ cups)
- 6 ounces Gruyère cheese, grated (3 cups)
- Pinch ground nutmeg
- 16 slices deli-style baked ham (preferably in 6- to 7-inch rounds)

Cook until mottled brown on bottom, loosening crepe from pan side with table knife or metal icing spatula to check doneness, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Flip loosened crepe quickly with fingertips or spatula; cook until spotty brown on other side, about 30 seconds longer.

3. Place cooked crepe on plate and repeat cooking process with remaining batter, brushing pan as necessary, every two to three crepes. For 9- to 10-inch skillet, follow same cooking process using full 1/4 cup of batter for each crepe. (Crepes can be double-wrapped in plastic and refrigerated up to 3 days or frozen up to 2 months.)

4. **For the Filling:** Heat oil in medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic; sauté until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer mixture to medium bowl; add spinach, ricotta, 2 cups Gruyère, and nutmeg as well as salt and pepper to taste; set aside.

5. **To Assemble:** Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Grease two 13-by-9-inch baking pans. Working one at a time, place one ham slice on a crepe; spoon 3 tablespoons filling over ham, then fold as desired. Place in prepared baking pan; top with remaining cheese; cover with foil. Bake until heated through, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

STEP-BY-STEP

Making Crepes



1. Tilt the buttered and heated crepe pan just slightly to the left and begin pouring in the batter.



2. As you continue to pour the batter in a slow, steady stream, twirl the pan slowly counterclockwise until the crepe is formed.



3. To flip the crepe, loosen edge with a spatula and, with fingertips on top side, slide it toward you until you can grab edge and flip.



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Classic Horseradish Cream Sauce

PUBLISHED JANUARY 2008

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

We wanted a great crust from our prime rib recipe, without the mess and without setting off the smoke detectors, so we moved the proceedings outside. First, we seared the fat-covered side (to minimize flare-ups, we had the butcher trim the fat layer down to a thin 1/8 inch), then we moved the roast to the cooler side of the grill. To get crispiness from our prime rib recipe, we applied a dry salt rub to the roast three hours before grilling. This drew out moisture from just below the surface, allowing for faster evaporation once we began searing.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup prepared horseradish
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Whisk cream in medium bowl until thickened but not yet holding soft peaks, 1 to 2 minutes. Gently fold in horseradish, salt, and pepper. Transfer to serving bowl and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 1 hour before serving.

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP



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Peanut Sauce

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED · PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2011

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Using chunky peanut butter as a base, we spiced things up with Thai red curry paste and garlic. Coconut milk contributed body, and chopped roasted peanuts offered additional texture. A final hit of lime juice, coupled with soy and fish sauce, lent brightness.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon **vegetable oil**
- 1 tablespoon Thai red curry paste
- 1 tablespoon packed **dark brown sugar**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup regular or light **coconut milk**
- 1/3 cup **chunky peanut butter**
- 1/4 cup roasted unsalted peanuts, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oil in small saucepan over medium heat until shimmering. Add curry paste, sugar, and garlic; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add coconut milk and bring to simmer. Whisk in peanut butter until smooth. Remove from heat and stir in peanuts, lime juice, fish sauce, and soy sauce. Cool to room temperature.

MAKES ABOUT 1 1/2 CUPS

1 tablespoon fish sauce

1 teaspoon soy sauce



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Grilled Beef Satay

BY COOK'S ILLUSTRATED · PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2011

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

In the hands of American cooks, satay often comes out thick and chewy or overly marinated and mealy. To return this dish to its streetwise roots, we sliced beefy-flavored flank steak thinly across the grain and threaded it onto bamboo skewers. To add flavor, we used an aromatic basting sauce consisting of authentic Thai ingredients, rather than the overtenderizing marinade used in many recipes. And to ensure that the quick-cooking beef achieved a burnished exterior, we corralled the coals in an aluminum pan in the center of the grill to bring them closer to the meat.



INGREDIENTS

BASTING SAUCE

- ¾ cup light or regular **coconut milk**
- 3 tablespoons **packed dark brown sugar**
- 3 tablespoons **fish sauce**
- 2 tablespoons **vegetable oil**
- 3 shallots, minced
- 2 stalks lemon grass, trimmed to bottom 6 inches and minced

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 4 AS A MAIN DISH, OR 6 AS AN APPETIZER

See

below for tips on prepping lemon grass. Bamboo skewers soaked in water for 30 minutes can be substituted for metal skewers. The aluminum pan used for charcoal grilling should be at least 2 ¾ inches deep; you will not need the pan for a gas grill. Note: Unless you have a very high-powered gas grill, these skewers will not be as well seared as they would be with charcoal.

1. FOR THE BASTING SAUCE: Whisk all ingredients together in bowl. Reserve one-third of sauce in separate bowl. (Use reserved sauce to apply to raw beef.)

2. FOR THE BEEF: Whisk oil, sugar, and fish sauce

- 2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground coriander
- ¾ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt

BEEF

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1 (1 ½- to 1 ¾-pound) flank steak, halved lengthwise, then sliced on slight angle against grain into ¼-inch thick slices

disposable aluminum roasting pan

together in medium bowl. Toss beef with marinade and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Weave beef onto 12-inch metal skewers, 2 pieces per skewer, leaving 1 ½ inches at top and bottom of skewer exposed. You should have 10 to 12 skewers.

3a. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL: Poke twelve ½-inch holes in bottom of roasting pan. Open bottom vent completely and place roasting pan in center of grill. Light large chimney starter mounded with charcoal briquettes (7 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour into roasting pan. Set cooking grate over coals with grates parallel to long side of roasting pan, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

3b. FOR A GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until very hot, about 15 minutes. Leave all burners on high.

4. Clean and oil cooking grate. Place beef skewers on grill (directly over coals if using charcoal) perpendicular to grate. Brush meat with one-third basting sauce (portion reserved for raw meat) and cook (covered if using gas) until browned, about 3 minutes. Flip skewers, brush with half of remaining basting sauce, and cook until browned on second side, about 3 minutes. Brush meat with remaining basting sauce and cook 1 minute longer. Transfer to large platter and serve with peanut sauce.

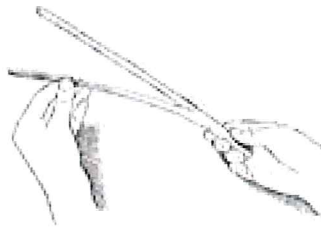
STEP-BY-STEP*How to Prep Lemon Grass*

The tender heart of the lemon grass stalk is used to flavor many Southeast Asian dishes, including our Grilled Beef Satay. While lemon grass is often

steeped in soups and stews and removed before serving, it can also be minced and left in the dish. When buying lemon grass, look for green (not brown) stalks that are firm and fragrant.



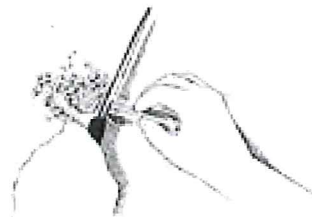
1. Trim dry leafy top (this part is usually green) and tough bottom of each stalk.



2. Peel and discard dry outer layer until moist, tender inner stalk is exposed.



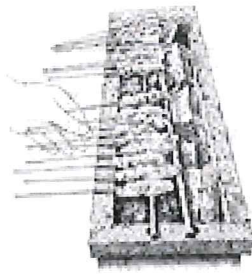
3. Smash peeled stalk with bottom of heavy saucepan to release maximum flavor from fibrous stalk.



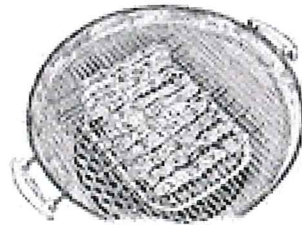
4. Cut smashed stalk into long, thin strips; cut crosswise to mince.

TECHNIQUE

Grill Setup for Satay: East Meets West



THAI WAY The trough-shaped grills used by Thai street-food vendors concentrate the firepower but require flipping the skewered meat constantly so it doesn't burn.



OUR WAY We corralled the coals in an aluminium pan in the center of the grill to bring them closer to the meat, but not so close that we needed to flip it more than once.

RECIPE TESTING

Rooting Out Mealiness

We find that acidic ingredients and certain juices, like papaya and pineapple, often added to marinades to tenderize meat, actually turn the exterior mushy. We avoided these in our marinades—but the meat still turned mealy. Could fresh ginger be the culprit?

EXPERIMENT

We soaked beef in three different marinades for 30 minutes and then grilled each sample. The first marinade contained 2 tablespoons of ginger (per our recipe), the second contained 4 tablespoons, and the third contained no ginger.

RESULTS

The beef marinated in 2 tablespoons of ginger was markedly mealy, 4 tablespoons was even worse. Only the beef without ginger in its marinade had the proper tender- but not mushy- texture.

EXPLANATION

Fresh ginger contains an enzyme known as zingibain that, if left too long on meat, breaks down collagen on the meat's surface, producing the same mealy effect as acids and some juices. We expunged

ginger from the marinade, saving it for the basting sauce instead.



**DON'T MARINATE
WITH GINGER**



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