

1 Year Anniversary Edition

14
Recipes

**Tastes Better
from Scratch™**

COOKING CHALLENGE

Cookbook



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Chicken & Dumplings



6 servings



55 Minutes

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This EASY Chicken and Dumplings recipe is a comforting, creamy chicken soup with simple homemade dumplings that make it irresistible! It's hearty, loaded with vegetables, and is the perfect meal to make on a chilly day.

"The best chicken and dumplings I've ever had! Even my very picky husband said it's the best chicken and dumpling soup he's ever had!! I made a double batch and it was HUGE! Will be giving some to my mom and freezing some too." - Karen



You'll need



Cast Iron Dutch Oven

Ingredients

- ☐ 2 tablespoons [olive oil](#)
- ☐ 2 celery , ribs, diced
- ☐ 2 carrots , large, diced
- ☐ 1 yellow onion , chopped
- ☐ 1 clove [garlic](#) , minced
- ☐ 5 tablespoons [unsalted butter](#)
- ☐ 1/3 cup [all-purpose flour](#)
- ☐ 6 cups [low-sodium chicken broth](#)
- ☐ 4 teaspoons [chicken bouillon paste](#), better than bouillon base*

- ☐ ¼ teaspoon [dried thyme](#)
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon dried sage
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary
- ☐ 1 teaspoon [kosher salt](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [freshly ground black pepper](#)
- ☐ 1 ½ pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs , or chicken breasts*
- ☐ 12 oz evaporated milk, canned
- ☐ ½ cup frozen peas
- ☐ fresh chopped parsley, for garnish

For the Dumplings:

- ☐ 1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ☐ ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ☐ ¾ cup milk
- ☐ ¼ cup sour cream
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons butter , melted

Instructions

Sauté Veggies: Heat a large pot over medium heat. Add oil. Once hot, add celery, carrots and onion and sauté for 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add butter and flour and whisk well for 1 minute.

Add Broth and Seasonings: Gradually stir in the chicken broth and bouillon, scraping up anything stuck to the bottom of the pot. Add thyme, sage, rosemary, salt and pepper.

Add chicken and bring mixture to a boil.

Cover the pot with a lid, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through.

Remove chicken to a cutting board and rest for 5 minutes before chopping or shredding into small pieces. Return chicken to the pot and add evaporated milk and peas.

Make Dumplings: Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Make a well in the center and add milk, sour cream and melted butter. Stir until combined, but don't over mix.

Add Dumplings: Bring soup to a simmer and then use a small spoon to drop teaspoon-sized amounts of dough all over the top of the simmering soup (the dumplings will double in size as they cook).

Cover the pot and simmer on low for 12-15 minutes. Remove lid, gently stir to break dumplings apart, and scoop out a dumpling to check for doneness. If still doughy, cover and cook for a few more minutes, until tender. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.

Serve warm, with a sprinkle of fresh chopped parsley on top.

Notes

Pro Tip: Choose a wide pot to cook the soup, over a narrow/tall pot, so there is more surface area to add the dumplings in a single layer.

Chicken: I recommend thighs, because they have more fat and won't dry out or overcook as easily. But breast meat will also work. To use rotisserie or leftover cooked chicken (or turkey LINK), simply skip the step of cooking the chicken, and stir in cooked chicken just before cooking the dumplings.

Bouillon: I use chicken better than bouillon base because the flavor is bolder, but 4 regular chicken bouillon cubes may be used.

Make Ahead Instructions: Make the soup 1-3 days ahead of time, excluding the dumplings. When ready to eat, rewarm on the stove, bring to a simmer and add dumplings.

Freezing Instructions: Leftover soup may be frozen for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the fridge before rewarming on the stove.

Slow Cooker Chicken and Dumplings: Prepare steps 1 and 2 in a skillet. Add everything to slow cooker, and add chicken. Cook on low for 5-6 hours or High for 2-3 hours. Make dumplings and spoon them over the top of the hot soup, as directed in this recipe. Press them under the liquid a little before applying the lid. Slow cook on HIGH for 45 minutes. Break dumplings apart if needed and test for doneness.

Gingerbread Cookies



24 servings



35 Minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

Soft and chewy Gingerbread Cookies recipe made with a simple gingerbread recipe and decorated however you like! Everyone loves this classic recipe and they taste delicious!

"The BEST gingerbread recipe I have ever tried! It's so soft and chewy! It's so good my family couldn't resist them, especially fresh from the oven! Now, I have to run to the store for more ingredients!" - Jaime



Ingredients



- ☐ 3 cups [all-purpose flour](#)
- ☐ ¾ cup dark brown sugar, packed
- ☐ ¾ teaspoon [baking soda](#)
- ☐ 1 Tablespoon [ground cinnamon](#)
- ☐ 1 Tablespoon [ground ginger](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [ground cloves](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [salt](#)
- ☐ 12 Tablespoons butter, room temperature, cut into 12 pieces
- ☐ ¾ cup [molasses](#) (dark molasses)
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons milk

For the frosting:

- ☐ 2 Tbs butter, room temperature
- ☐ 2 cups [powdered sugar](#)
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons milk



Instructions

Add flour, brown sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt to a mixing bowl and mix.

Add the butter pieces and use a pastry blender to cut the butter in until the mixture resembles fine meal.

With a mixer running on low speed gradually add the molasses and milk and mix until combined, about 30 seconds.

Divide the dough in half, forming each into a ball. Wrap each in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight, or place in the freezer for about 20 minutes, until firm, if you're in a hurry.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

Remove one dough sheet from the fridge/freezer and place on the counter. Roll out the dough (use a little flour on your rolling pin if needed), until it's about ½ inch thick. Cut gingerbread men and place them on prepared baking sheets.

Refrigerate the gingerbread men for 5 minutes (meanwhile you can roll out the other dough ball).

Bake the cookies until set in the centers and the dough barely retains and imprint when touched very gently with fingertip, 8 to 11 minutes (depending on the size of your cookie cutter). Do not overbake!!

Remove the cookies to a wire rack. Allow to cool to room temperature before frosting.

Store gingerbread cookies in an airtight container with parchment paper between the layers. Freeze for up to 3 months.

For the frosting:

Add butter, milk, and 1 cup of powdered sugar to a bowl. Mix until smooth. Add additional cup of powdered sugar and mix until smooth. Add frosting to piping bag if desired.

Notes

Make Ahead Instructions: Make the gingerbread cookie dough and store it, well covered, in the refrigerator for 3–4 days. Roll out and cut into cookies when ready to bake. You can also bake the cookies and freeze them.

Freezing Instructions: Wrap dough really well in plastic wrap and freeze in a freezer safe container for 2–3 months. Allow the dough to thaw in the refrigerator before attempting to roll. Baked cookies can also be frozen for up to 3 months.

You'll need



December



Red Curry



5 servings



40 Minutes

[View The Recipe ►](#)

This Thai Red Curry recipe is packed full of flavor, veggies, and will become a new favorite. It's easy to customize and is made in one pot for mess-free cooking.

"This recipe has single-handedly cured me of my reluctance to try cooking curry! It was easy and relatively quick to put together, and turned out delicious! It was a vegetable-hearty dish (I added the mushrooms as suggested), and very flavorful. I used Maesri brand curry paste, 3T, and it was good with mild heat. Great recipe! Will definitely be making this again!"

- Lori



Ingredients

- ☐ 3 Tablespoons oil , canola, vegetable or coconut oil
- ☐ 1 leek , chopped (the white and light green part only)
- ☐ 1 yam , small, peeled and chopped into ½ inch cubes
- ☐ 1 cup cabbage , chopped
- ☐ ½ green bell pepper , chopped
- ☐ 1 cup snap peas , halved
- ☐ 2 teaspoons fresh minced ginger
- ☐ 2 cloves garlic , minced
- ☐ 1-6 Tablespoons [red curry paste*](#)
- ☐ 1 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ☐ 14 oz can unsweetened coconut milk
- ☐ 1 or 2 teaspoons cornstarch*
- ☐ 1 teaspoon [fish sauce](#)
- ☐ 1 Tablespoon lime juice , about 1 small lime
- ☐ 1 Tablespoon light brown sugar
- ☐ 1 boneless skinless chicken breast , chopped or ½ lb uncooked shelled shrimp
- ☐ 1 cup Thai basil leaves , loosely packed

Fried Shallots:

- ☐ 2 shallots , sliced very thinly into rounds
- ☐ 3 Tablespoons oil, canola, vegetable or coconut oil

Garnishes

- ☐ fresh cilantro
- ☐ hot cooked rice, jasmine or white rice, optional

Instructions

Heat oil in a pot over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté for a few minutes until softened. Add yams, cabbage, bell pepper and snap peas and sauté over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and add ginger, garlic and curry paste and sauté for 3 minutes. Add chicken, if using.

Stir in chicken broth. Mix cornstarch with the coconut milk, and then add to the pot. Bring to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are tender (and chicken is cooked through).

Meanwhile, add 3 Tablespoons oil and sliced shallots to a small skillet. Cook over medium heat, stirring gently the entire time, for several minutes until they begin to get golden. Once they start to get golden brown, remove to a paper towel lined plate and set aside.

To the curry, stir in fish sauce, brown sugar, lime juice (and shrimp, if using). Simmer 5 more minutes. Stir in Thai basil leaves.

Top with fresh cilantro leaves and fried shallots before serving.

Serve as a soup, or serve over hot cooked jasmine rice, cauliflower rice, zoodles, or cooked spaghetti squash.

Notes

Curry Paste: You can make the [curry paste from scratch](#), or I use the [Mae Ploy Brand](#), which is very bold so I use 1-3 Tablespoons. Spice level of curry paste varies by brand, so start with less and add more later, for more heat and bold flavor. For example, if using [Thai Kitchen brand](#), I use the entire 4oz container for a mild/medium spice curry.

Cornstarch: I love to serve this as a soup so I only add 1 teaspoon cornstarch, but if you want the broth thicker to serve over rice, add 2. Veggie Substitution: broccoli, green beans, zucchini, and carrots.

Tofu: If you'd like to add tofu, I suggest [air frying](#) or baking it first, and then stir in towards the end.

Make Ahead Instructions: Store red curry in the fridge for 3-4 days. Rewarm on the stove.

Freezing Instructions: Place in freezer safe bags or containers for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and reheat on the stove or in the microwave. Serve as a soup, or serve over hot cooked jasmine rice, cauliflower rice, zoodles, or cooked spaghetti squash.

Recipe Inspired by [Buttercup Ice Creams](#) and [Chowders in Nehalem, OR](#)

You'll need



Fish Sauce



Chocolate Mug Cake



1 servings



5 Minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

February

This microwave Chocolate Mug Cake recipe will become your new obsession; it's the easiest and fastest way to make dessert for one or two, and you won't believe how delicious it is! This mug cake recipe is made with chocolate chips and no eggs.

"Made this twice the first week of finding the recipe! First time without chocolate chips and second time with. Both tasted great!! I was tickled I already had all the ingredients in my pantry!! Thanks for sharing!" - Katie



Ingredients

- ☐ 3 Tbsp [all-purpose flour](#)
- ☐ 2 Tbsp [granulated sugar](#)
- ☐ 1 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon [baking powder](#)
- ☐ dash [salt](#)
- ☐ 3 tablespoons milk (any kind of milk)
- ☐ 1 tablespoons canola oil (or melted butter)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [vanilla extract](#)
- ☐ 1 tsp chocolate chips, or your favorite flavor baking chips

You'll need



Ceramic Coffee Mug

Instructions

Spray the bottom of a microwave-safe mug or coffee cup lightly with cooking spray.

Add flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt and stir together.

Add milk, canola oil, and vanilla extract and stir until smooth, being sure to scrape the bottom of the mug. Stir in chocolate chips or sprinkle them on top.

Cook in microwave for 70–90 seconds (see note) until cake is just set, but still barely shiny on top. (see notes).

Allow to rest in microwave for 1 minute before consuming.

Notes

*Because all microwaves are different, it's difficult to give a precise cook time. Start with 70 seconds, wait 1 minute while it cools, then look to see if it is set. Add an additional 15–25 seconds if needed. Allow it to rest in the microwave for 1 minute. The trick with mug cakes is to stop cooking the cake earlier than you think, because you want it to be soft on the inside, and the cake will also continue to cook as it cools.

Add-In Ideas:

- [Nutella](#): small scoop
- [Peanut Butter](#): small scoop
- [Coconut flakes](#)
- Nuts
- [Cinnamon](#): just a small pinch
- Flavored chocolate chips ([peanut butter](#), [mint](#), [butterscotch](#))

Healthier Mug Cake:

- **Sugar**: Cut the amount in half, or substitute an artificial sugar sweetener or honey.
- **Oil**: Replace with applesauce, or coconut oil.
- **Flour**: Use white whole wheat flour.
- **Dairy Free**: For a dairy free chocolate mug cake, substitute almond or soy milk, use dairy-free butter or coconut oil, and [dairy free chocolate chips](#).

Tamale Pie

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

6 servings ⌚ 1 hour 5 Minutes

This Mexican Tamale Pie recipe is a delicious one-pot meal made with ground beef, corn, enchilada sauce and spices, topped with a tamale inspired masa topping.

"This recipe was easy and quick to put together I like that there are no special ingredients A delicious and comforting meal." - Renee

Ingredients

Meat Filling:

- ☐ 1 ½ lbs lean ground beef
- ☐ 1 yellow onion , finely chopped
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [salt](#)
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon [freshly ground black pepper](#)
- ☐ 10 oz can [red enchilada sauce](#) , or homemade
- ☐ 1 can creamed corn
- ☐ 8 oz can diced green chiles
- ☐ 1 teaspoon [chili powder](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [ground cumin](#)
- ☐ 1 ½ cups shredded cheese

Masa Topping:

- ☐ 1 ½ cups [Masa Harina](#) (corn flour)
- ☐ 1 ½ teaspoon [baking powder](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [kosher salt](#)
- ☐ ¾ cup [low-sodium chicken broth](#)
- ☐ 1 cup milk
- ☐ ½ cup melted butter
- ☐ ½ cup shredded cheese

Optional Topping Ideas:

- ☐ avocado, sour cream, cilantro, hot sauce



March

You'll need



Instructions

Cook ground beef in a deep 12-inch skillet* or cast iron pan, crumbling it into small pieces as it cooks, until browned. Add diced onion, season with salt and pepper, and sauté for 3 minutes.

Add enchilada sauce, corn, chiles, chili powder, coriander, and cumin and cook for 5-10 minutes. Taste and add additional spices (chili powder, cumin, salt or pepper), as desired. Stir in cheese.

Make Topping: Mix the corn flour, baking powder and salt together. Stir in the chicken broth, milk, butter and cheese. Pour evenly over the top of meat mixture.

Bake 400 degrees for 40 min. Allow to cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.

Top with avocado and sour cream, if desired.

Notes

Pan Size: I like to bake the tamale pie right in the skillet I'm cooking in but if you don't have the right size or oven proof pan, you can bake it in a 9x9 inch or similar size pan.

Vegetarian: Swap the meat for two cans of pinto or black beans.

Box Mix Cornbread Topping (Jiffy or Bobs Red Mill): Prepare according to package instructions. Pour over meat mixture and bake.

Chiles: Try using diced jalapeños or a chipotle chili in adobo sauce. More Veggies: Add a chopped bell pepper, grated carrot, olives, peas or whatever you like.

Make Ahead Instructions: The beef mixture can be made ahead of time and kept in an airtight container in the fridge for 1-2 days. Warm in a pan before adding the tamale topping.

Freezing Instructions: Bake as instructed and allow to cool. Cover well and freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw in the fridge before baking. May also freeze after baking. The beef mixture may also be frozen separately in an airtight container for up to 3 months.

Belgian Waffles



6 servings



15 Minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

This light and fluffy homemade Belgian Waffle recipe is so easy to make from scratch. Try adding fruit or other toppings and I think you'll find you will never need another waffle recipe!

"I love this recipe! I make them for freezing so my family can have them anytime! Thank you!" - Rosanna



April

You'll need



Belgian Waffle Maker

Ingredients

- ☐ 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ☐ ½ teaspoon salt
- ☐ 2 large eggs , separated
- ☐ 1 ¾ cups milk or dairy-free milk
- ☐ ½ cup oil vegetable, canola, or melted coconut oil

Instructions

Combine Dry Ingredients: In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.

Separate the egg yolks and whites into two different mixing bowls. (Be careful not to get any yellow egg yolk in with the egg whites or they won't beat to stiff peaks properly). Use a hand mixer to beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks.

Combine wet ingredients: Add the milk and oil to the bowl with the egg yolks and mix. Stir in the dry ingredients.

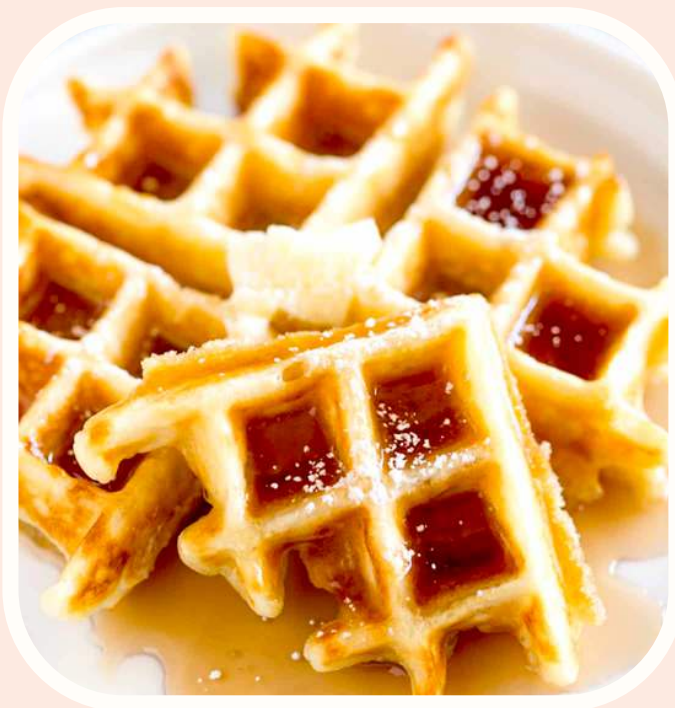
Fold in egg whites, gently being careful not to over-mix.

Cook waffles: Spoon batter into preheated and greased waffle iron and cook according to waffle maker instructions.

Serve with syrup or your favorite toppings, like powdered sugar, Nutella, strawberry jam, berries, bananas or whipped cream.

Notes

Freezing Instructions: Allow waffles to cool completely, then store in a freezer-safe ziplock bag for up to 3 months. Rewarm in the toaster or microwave.



Tacos Al Pastor

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

5 servings ⌚ 4 Hours 30 Minutes

There's a reason Tacos Al Pastor are everyone's favorite and I'm so excited to share my take on these delicious Mexican tacos, adapted for home cooks to use a grill, stove or oven to cook the meat. Serve them on warm corn tortillas with tender meat, grilled pineapple, pickled red onions, and cilantro.

"As always, Lauren has truly outdone herself with this recipe. I love how it's so easy to make and the ingredients aren't too complicated. My picky-eater husband was grabbing for seconds like his life depended on it. Will make again! Thanks for sharing!" - Aubrey



Ingredients

- ☐ 3 lb pork shoulder, sliced into wide, thin pieces
- ☐ 4 pineapple spears

Marinade:

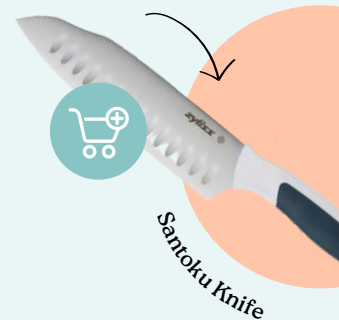
- ☐ 6 guajillo chiles
- ☐ 1 chile de arbol
- ☐ 5 cloves garlic
- ☐ ¼ of an onion
- ☐ 10 whole black peppercorns
- ☐ 1 teaspoon Mexican oregano
- ☐ ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon ground allspice

- ☐ ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ☐ 2 packets [Sazon Goya](#)*, OR 1 Tablespoons ground achiote powder
- ☐ 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ☐ ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- ☐ ¼ cup pineapple or orange juice

Tacos:

- ☐ 15 corn tortillas, white or yellow
- ☐ ½ cup pickled red onion OR chopped red or white onion
- ☐ ½ cup fresh chopped cilantro
- ☐ lime wedges
- ☐ creamy avocado salsa* optional, for serving

You'll need



Instructions

Cut Pork: Remove any large pieces of fat. Slice the pork horizontally into long, ¼" thick pieces (you could see if your butcher would do this).

Soften Chiles: Remove seeds and veins from the dried chiles (wear gloves if desired). Add to a small saucepan cover with water. Bring to a boil and then simmer for 15 minutes, to soften the chiles.

Blend: Add chiles and ¼ cup of water from the pot (discard remaining water) to a high powdered blender. Add onion, garlic cloves, allspice, peppercorn, cloves, Mexican oregano, cumin, ginger, achiote powder, salt, apple cider vinegar, and juice. Blend until completely smooth.

Marinate: Add pork to a large bowl or ziplock bag and spread mixture all over pork, tossing to coat. Cover and refrigerate for several hours, or overnight.

Grill Pork: Remove pork from marinade and cook on a very hot grill for a few minutes on each side until just shy of 145 degrees F. Remove to a cutting board allow to rest.

Grill pineapple: Brush pineapple spears with olive oil and place on hot grill, cooking briefly on both sides. Remove and chop into pieces.

Assemble Tacos: Chop pork into small pieces for serving. Warm tortillas in a hot dry skillet or on the grill. Top tortillas with a spoonful of pork some pineapple, onion, cilantro and a squeeze of lime juice.

Notes

Serving Size: About 3 tacos per person (feeds about 5 people)

Pineapple: Grilling is optional—fresh chopped pineapple may be used, or even canned pineapple cut into small pieces, if good fresh pineapple is not available.

[Sazon Goya](#) should be easily found in the Mexican aisle at the grocery store and adds great flavor. [Achiote](#) is more authentic for tacos al pastor but may be harder to find in the stores (or buy it online.)

Avocado sauce or salsa: We love to serve these with a creamy avocado sauce or salsa on top, [like this recipe](#). Or, this store-bought [avocado hot sauce](#), or mild [guacamole salsa](#).

Spice level: Tacos Al Pastor are very mild in spice level. To add heat, serve with fresh sliced fresh jalapeño coins or a red hot chili pepper.

Oven Method: To braise the pork, cut the pork into a few large chunks (instead of slicing it thinly) and marinate as directed. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Add oil to a large dutch oven over medium high heat. Once hot, add pork pieces (working in batches if needed) and cook for a few minutes on each side, until browned. Remove to a plate. Add 1 ½ cups of chicken broth to pot to deglaze the pan and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom. Return pork pieces. Cover with lid and place in oven. Cook for 2 ½ hours, until meat is tender. Shred meat, and serve.

Slow Cooker Method: Cut the pork into a few large chunks (instead of slicing it thinly). Marinate for several hours as directed. Add pork to slow cooker with ½ cup chicken broth. Cook on low for 6-8 hours. Shred meat, and serve.

Stovetop Method: Cook the meat in a hot cast iron skillet, grill pan, or non-stick skillet over medium high heat, with a little bit of olive oil in it.

Cottage Cheese Pancakes



7 servings



15 Minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

This easy Cottage Cheese Pancakes recipe is made in a blender using whole foods, and results in healthier pancakes that still taste amazing! Best of all, they contain 5 grams of protein at just 100 calories each.

"I gave this recipe a 5 star but would have given it 10 if I could. I made these over the weekend and they served me all week. They are the pancakes I love, perfect thickness, extremely moist, and full of protein that keeps my hunger at bay until lunch. And the flavor is so good that I can eat them by themselves on the go!" - Robin



You'll need



Ingredients

- ☐ 1 1/3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- ☐ 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ☐ 1/2 cup cottage cheese
- ☐ 2 large eggs (or substitute a flax-egg)
- ☐ 1/2 cup water, milk, or dairy-free milk
- ☐ 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ☐ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ☐ dash of cinnamon



Instructions

Preheat a hot griddle or skillet over medium heat.

Add oats and baking powder to a food processor or blender and blend until they're as fine as flour.

Add the cottage cheese, eggs, water, vanilla, oil and cinnamon and blend until smooth.

Pour about 1/4 cup batter onto griddle to form pancake. Cook on one side until bubbles begin to appear on the surface of the pancake. Flip and cook on the other side until golden.

Serve with fresh fruit and real maple syrup, or a low sugar syrup.

Notes

Serving size is one pancake.

Yield: Makes about seven, 4-inch pancakes. Feel free to double the recipe if you're feeding a bigger group.

Protein Powder: The protein richness from these pancakes comes from the cottage cheese (26 grams protein/cup) and oats (10 grams protein/cup, but you could add 1/2 scoop of protein powder to the batter if you'd like.

Lemon Cottage Cheese Pancakes: Add zest of one small lemon to the batter.

Freezing Instructions: Allow cottage cheese pancakes to cool, then lay them in a single layer on a plate or baking sheet and freeze for 30 minutes (to help keep them from sticking together). Then place them in a freezer safe container and freeze for up to 3 months. Warm from frozen in the microwave.

Butterfinger Cake



12 servings ⌚ 1 hour

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

This easy Butterfinger Cake recipe starts with a chocolate cake, poked and drizzled with caramel sauce and sweetened condensed milk, and topped with the most incredible peanut butter whipped cream and chopped butterfingers. It's everyone's favorite and just incredible!

"This cake was gone in two days. I think everyone in our family ate it for or with every meal until it was down to one piece left and we had to have a dance off for who got the last piece. Thanks for all the family fun and deliciousness." - Sarah



You'll need



Ingredients



- ☐ 1 [chocolate cake](#), baked in a 9×13" pan
- ☐ 1 recipe [caramel sauce](#), or one 16oz jar caramel topping
- ☐ 7 ounces sweetened condensed milk*
- ☐ 1 ½ cups heavy whipping cream
- ☐ 1 ½ Tablespoons creamy peanut butter
- ☐ ¼ cup [powdered sugar](#)
- ☐ 3 Butterfinger bars, chopped

Instructions

Bake cake in a 9×13" pan according to recipe directions. Allow cake to cool for a few minutes, then poke holes in it with a fork or wooden skewer.

Pour caramel sauce and sweetened condensed milk all over the top of the cake. Set aside to cool completely.

Add the peanut butter and powdered sugar to a mixing bowl and mix until smooth. While mixing, slowly pour in whipping cream. Whip until stiff peaks form, and it hold its shape.

Spread the peanut butter whipped cream over the cooled cake and sprinkle crushed butterfingers on top. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or up to one day, before serving.

Notes

***Sweetened Condensed Milk:** I buy a 14oz can but only use half the can (you could freeze the remaining for another day).

Make Ahead Instructions: Make the chocolate cake up to 1 week ahead of time. Allow it to cool completely, cover it well, and store it in the freezer. Allow it to thaw overnight in the refrigerator (or leave it at room temperature for a couple hours) and then continue with step 2, poking wholes in the cake. The homemade caramel sauce can be made several days in advance to save time. It can be poured on the cake warm or cold.

Variations:

- **Cake:** Try a [Yellow](#) or [Vanilla Cake](#) base instead of chocolate.
- [Better than Sex Cake](#), with Heath bits
- [Butterfinger Cookie Bars](#)
- **Nut Allergy:** Omit peanut butter, and top cake with a different crushed candy bar or cookie crumbs.

Peanut Noodles



4 servings



15 minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

August

Easy and delicious Peanut Noodles recipe made with udon noodles tossed in a simple homemade peanut sauce. You can make them spicy or milk, and the best part is they're made with pantry ingredients and on the table in less than 15 minutes!

"My Kids loved this !!!!! It was so good , definitely making again. Just as good as take out in 10 min. Thank you again for another delicious recipe." - Amber



You'll need



Ingredients

- ☐ 1 lb refrigerated pre-cooked Udon noodles*

Peanut Sauce:

- ☐ ½ cup creamy peanut butter*
- ☐ ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce , or tamari
- ☐ 3 Tablespoons rice vinegar
- ☐ 2 ½ Tablespoons honey*
- ☐ 2 ½ Tablespoons sesame oil
- ☐ 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- ☐ 3 cloves garlic , minced
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons chili oil * for mild, or add more for extra heat

Garnishes:

- ☐ 2 green onions , chopped
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons dry roasted peanuts , chopped
- ☐ Sesame seeds , roasted
- ☐ 2-3 Tablespoons fresh cilantro , chopped
- ☐ 2-3 Tablespoons fresh basil leaves , chopped
- ☐ 2-3 Tablespoons fresh mint leaves , chopped

Instructions

Cook noodles according to directions. Drain, reserving ½ cup of the pasta water.

Combine sauce ingredients in a mixing bowl. Add hot pasta and toss to coat. Add a little reserved pasta water, to thin the sauce, if needed.

Serve garnished with peanuts, chopped green onion, and fresh herbs.

Notes

Yield: Makes about 4 cups.

Udon: I like to use the refrigerated fresh udon noodles that you just heat and serve. They often come in smaller packages (for example, I buy two 7.5 oz packages, to make this recipe and serve 4). Discard seasoning package.

Chili Oil: Could substitute 2 Tablespoons of another hot sauce, like Sambal Oelek or chili paste.

Honey: Could substitute agave or granulated sugar.

Variations:

Add Protein: Cooked shrimp, chicken, tofu, tempeh, edamame, or top with a fried egg (my favorite!)

Add Veggies: Spiralized or shredded grated carrot and zucchini would add beautiful color and crunch.

Noodles: Use anything you have: ramen, bucatini, spaghetti, etc.

Nut Free: Substitute tahini for the peanut butter.

Peanut Butter: Try almond butter, or use tahini for a nut-free option.

Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins



18 servings ⌚ 1 hour 18 minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

This easy Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins recipe is tender and flavorful with a sweet cream cheese filling! Better than the bakery and one of my favorite pumpkin recipes of all time!

*"These melt in your mouth muffins were absolutely amazing!!!
Do yourself a favor and make them this fall!!!" - Heather*



Ingredients

You'll need



Muffins:

- ☐ 2 cups [all-purpose flour](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [ground cinnamon](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [ground cloves](#)
- ☐ 2 teaspoons [pumpkin pie spice](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [salt](#)
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [baking powder](#)
- ☐ 1 teaspoon [baking soda](#)
- ☐ 2 large eggs
- ☐ ¾ cup oil
- ☐ 1 ¼ cups [granulated sugar](#)
- ☐ 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin puree , or homemade

Cream Cheese Filling:

- ☐ 4 oz plain cream cheese , softened
- ☐ ½ cup [powdered sugar](#)

Streusel Topping:

- ☐ 2 Tablespoons [granulated sugar](#)
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons [light brown sugar](#) , packed
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons [all-purpose flour](#)
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons cold butter cut into pieces
- ☐ ½ teaspoon [ground cinnamon](#)

Instructions

Cream Cheese Filling: Prepare cream cheese filling by combining the cream cheese and powdered sugar and mix well until smooth. Refrigerate while you make the muffins.

Muffins: In a large mixing bowl combine the flour, spices, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Stir and set aside. In a separate large bowl, combine the eggs, oil, sugar and pumpkin puree. Mix until well combined. Add to the dry ingredients and mix until just combined.

Streusel Topping: Add the streusel topping ingredients to a bowl and mix to combine using a pastry or fork, until crumbly.

Bake: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and lightly grease a standard muffin pan, or line with paper liners.

Fill each muffin cup with a heaping tablespoon of batter. Place a heaping teaspoon of cream cheese filling into the center of each muffin cup. Add additional muffin batter until the cups are ¾ way full. Sprinkle crumb topping over the top of each. (This recipe will make 18 regular size muffins, or 12 very large muffins. If you want to use all the batter to make large muffins, add 6-10 minutes to the bake time. I've never had them overflow on me.)

Bake muffins for 18-20 minutes. Remove from muffin pan and allow to cool on a wire rack before serving.



Notes

Store pumpkin cream cheese muffins in the refrigerator in an air-tight container for 3-5 days.

Freezing Instructions: Place muffins in a freezer safe bag or container and freeze for up to 3 months.

Hashbrown Breakfast Casserole



12 servings



1 hour

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

This sausage Hashbrown Breakfast Casserole recipe is made with simple ingredients and is a highlight of any breakfast! It can be prepped the night before and placed in the oven that morning.

"Love, love, love this! I made this for a family brunch and it was literally devoured in minutes. I also loved how easy it was to put together." - Erin



You'll need



Ceramic Baking Dish Set

Ingredients

- ☐ 2 pounds pork sausage (I like Jimmy Dean)
- ☐ 12 large eggs
- ☐ 1 cup sour cream, (light, regular, or sub Greek yogurt)
- ☐ ¼ cup milk
- ☐ ½ teaspoon salt
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ☐ 20 oz bag frozen shredded hash browns, thawed
- ☐ 4 green onions
- ☐ ½ green bell pepper , diced
- ☐ ½ red bell pepper , diced
- ☐ 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Instructions

Combine the eggs, sour cream, milk, cheese, and salt and pepper in a large bowl. Mix on low speed with electric mixers, just until combined. Stir in thawed hash browns.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add sausage and cook until browned, breaking it into small pieces with a wooden spoon as it cooks. Drain most of the grease and add the sausage to the bowl with the egg mixture.

Add the bell peppers and onion to the same skillet the sausage was cooked in and sauté for 2- 3 minutes. Add to the bowl with the egg mixture and stir everything to combine.

Pour mixture into a greased 9x13" pan. Cover dish and refrigerate overnight, or bake immediately at 350 degrees for 40-50 minutes or until the edges are set and the center is just barely jiggly.

Notes

Store leftovers in the refrigerator and enjoy within 3-4 days. Reheat in the microwave.

Make Ahead Instructions: Make and assemble casserole according to instructions. Cover and keep in the refrigerator overnight or up to 2 days before baking.

Freezing Instructions: Cover (unbaked) hashbrown breakfast casserole with plastic wrap and then tinfoil and freeze for 2-3 months. Allow it to thaw completely overnight in the refrigerator, then allow it to come to room temperature before baking according to recipe instructions.

Adapted from this popular [Breakfast Casserole](#) recipe.



Perfect Pie Crust



2 servings



2 hours 20 minutes

[View The Recipe ▶](#)

November

This homemade Pie Crust recipe includes a full tutorial for making perfect pie crust every time! The BEST tender, buttery, and flaky pie crust recipe, and it's so easy!

"By far the best pie crust ever! And trust me, I've had a lot of flops. My favorite filling so far is the luscious Triple Berry which gets unanimous raves. Thanks for sharing!" - Marilyn



Ingredients

- ☐ 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ☐ 6 Tablespoons cold unsalted butter
- ☐ ¾ cup vegetable shortening chilled
- ☐ ½ cup ice water

Instructions

Mix flour and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add ice cubes to a measuring cup and fill with ½ cup cold water. Set aside.

Add fats: Grate frozen butter into the bowl, or cut it into small pieces. Add chilled shortening and use a pastry blender or fork to cut the fats into the flour until well combined and resembles coarse crumbs.

Add ice water a spoonful at a time, mixing until the dough begins to come together. Be careful not to over mix, and you may not need all of the water.

Gently mold the dough into a ball, then divide it into 2 equal pieces. Press each piece gently with your hands into a flat disk.

Refrigerate: Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate the dough for 2 hours, or freeze for 30 minutes.

Roll out Crust: Dampen a large towel or cloth and lay it flat on your countertop. Place a large piece of parchment paper over it. Lightly flour both sides of the pie dough disc and set it on the parchment paper. Use your rolling pin to gently press the pie dough out into a large circle. Always start at the center of the crust, and work outwards. You want your dough to be thin, and about ½ inch larger than the diameter of your pie dish.

Place in pie pan: Gently turn the dough into your pie dish and remove the parchment paper. Settle it smoothly into the bottom and sides of the pan. Trim and crimp the edges of the crust.

Fill with desired pie filling, or blind bake the crust for recipes that require a baked pie shell.

To Blind Bake Pie Crust: Place a large piece of parchment paper into the bottom of unbaked crust.

Pour some dry beans, rice, or pie weights on top and smooth into an even layer.

Bake at 375° F for 15–20 minutes. Remove the pie from the oven and lift the parchment paper and weights out of the crust.

Prick the the bottom of the crust all over with a fork, then return the pie to the oven to bake until lightly golden, about 10–15 more minutes.



Notes

This recipe makes 2 pie crusts, perfect for recipes that require a top crust, like [Apple Pie](#), or [Chicken Pot Pie](#). Or, freeze the second crust for another day.

Freezing Instructions:

To freeze pie crust dough: Prepare the pie dough, wrap the dough discs tightly in plastic wrap and place in a freeze ziplock bag. Freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw in refrigerator before rolling out.

To freeze unbaked pie crust: roll out pie crust and place in a freezer safe pie dish. Cover well and freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator before filling or baking.

To freeze baked pie crust: Allow blind baked pie crust to cool completely. Cover well and freeze for up to 3 months.

December Reindeer Cookies



18 servings



53 minutes

[View The Recipe ►](#)

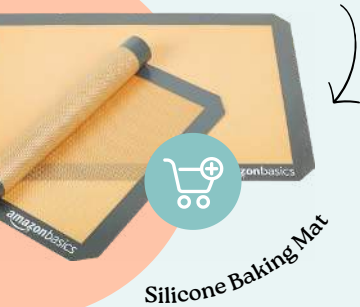
My kids love making these fun and festive Reindeer Cookies with a baked peanut butter cookie decorated with a Rudolph face. I love that you can make them ahead of time, and they're freezer friendly (ready to place on Santa's plate on Christmas Eve!).

"We made these for Christmas and they turned out just as cute as your photos!" - Shannon

December



You'll need



Ingredients

- ☐ ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ☐ ¼ cup vegetable shortening*
- ☐ ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- ☐ ½ cup granulated sugar
- ☐ ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- ☐ ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ☐ 2 large eggs
- ☐ 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon salt
- ☐ 36 mini pretzel twists
- ☐ 18 rolo cookies
- ☐ 18 red m&m candies
- ☐ 36 candy eyes, or mini chocolate chips
- ☐ 1 small tube decorating frosting

Instructions

In a mixing bowl cream together butter, shortening, peanut butter, ½ cup granulated sugar, and brown sugar until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes.

Add and eggs, mixing after each addition. Mix in the vanilla.

In a separate bowl whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt.

Stir dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and mix gently to combine. Don't over-mix. The dough will be very soft. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 3 days.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Scoop dough into large balls and roll them into an oval shape. Place on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 9-12 minutes until set and no longer glossy looking.

Remove from oven. Press pretzels into the top of the cookie, for the ears. Press a rolo into the center, for the nose. Add two candy eyes, or chocolate chips for the eyes. Place a dot of frosting in the center of the rolo to secure a red m&m candy on top, for the nose. Allow to cool on baking sheet. then transfer to cooling rack.

Notes

Shortening: I like the way the shortening helps these cookies bake taller, and adds softness to the texture but you can substitute butter if you want.

Make Ahead Instructions: The cookie dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 days in advance. Store baked cookies in an air-tight container at room temperature for 2-3 days.

Freezing Instructions: Baked and cooled cookies can be frozen in an air-tight container for up to 3 months.



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