

# SUMMER RECIPES



 MediaNews Group

***YOUR GUIDE TO MEALS, SALADS, SIDES & SWEETS***

## **Local delights**

Michigan's summer growing season filled with treats **PAGE 4**

## **Delicious dip**

Fire up your peaches for a bright summer salsa **PAGE 29**

## **A green surprise**

Avocado has a sweet side, too **PAGE 44**

## SUMMER RECIPES » STORY INDEX

- **Michigan's summer growing** season filled with tasty treats **Page 4**
- **Health meets flavor:** Stop to smell (and taste!) the lavender **Page 6**
- **You can still use your oven in the summer.** Just go low and slow **Page 8**
- **Beat the heat with this quick-cooking** skillet of garlicky beans, broccoli, pesto **Page 11**
- **Take your burgers** to the next level **Page 12**
- **Fresh tomatoes are the stars of this bread-filled,** comforting and speedy stew **Page 13**
- **There's a chicken soup for every season,** and this one says summer **Page 14**
- **The sauce that brings** together tastes of summer **Page 15**
- **These Maine-style lobster rolls** deliver a taste of New England summer **Page 16**
- **Give your fish a bed of citrus,** and it will be so much easier to grill **Page 18**
- **A quick way to infuse the taste** of summer tomatoes right into your pasta **Page 19**
- **The cozy-season path to easy** tomato soup starts with roasting **Page 20**
- **Curried corn on the cob** is crazy good and made for summer **Page 21**
- **If you hate a dry sandwich,** this vegetable-packed, delectably messy ciabatta is for you **Page 22**
- **This genius sauce** turns your pasta into a seasonal stunner **Page 23**
- **The secret to cooking** with your favorite summer produce: Keep it simple **Page 24**
- **Fire up your peaches** for a bright summer salsa **Page 29**
- **Forget crisp-tender.** In summer, I channel Grandma **Page 30**
- **Picnic-ready, classic slaw** gets a healthful upgrade and a flavor boost **Page 32**
- **Half ceviche, half shrimp cocktail,** this cool, bright dish is thoroughly refreshing **Page 33**
- **A simple, tasty pasta recipe** that will help you dispatch that zucchini **Page 34**
- **A spicy, smoky potato salad** with Spanish aspirations **Page 35**
- **Creamy burrata and spicy salsa verde** make this a Caprese salad like no other **Page 36**
- **The dinner salad** you could eat every week through summer **Page 37**
- **Chickpeas and fresh herbs** make this brown rice salad a satisfying summer star **Page 38**
- **Beans build the salad;** bread makes it shine **Page 39**
- **Lighten up your summer** potato salad with cauliflower and feta **Page 40**
- **For lazy summer days,** this corn, tomato and tortilla-chip salad does all the work for you **Page 41**
- **Crunchy salad** is a 'mostly plants' recipe **Page 42**
- **This dairy-free ranch dressing** is primed for your summertime salads **Page 43**
- **Avocado has a sweet side,** too, and it's delicious **Page 44**
- **These 100-calorie chocolate** pudding pops will take you back to childhood **Page 47**
- **A customizable cake** for all summer **Page 48**



## SUMMER RECIPES

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**A 21st Century Media  
publication managed by  
MediaNews Group**



## FEATURE

# Michigan's summer growing season filled with tasty treats

By Jane Peterson  
For MediaNews Group

For some people, it's about the pool. For others, it might be the sunshine, warmer temperatures or even the freedom that comes from having a more relaxed schedule.

Then there's that group of people who are all about the food — sweet, juicy strawberries, green beans with a distinctive snap and ripened tomatoes freshly picked from the garden.

The best part is that there is literally something to delight every Michigander's tastebuds.

"There are so many favorites! Michigan's climate is ideal for growing such a wide variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the summer, and especially, for producing very flavorful fruit," said Janice Benson, executive director of Michigan Agritourism.

Strawberries are the quintessential summer fruit. Since they tend to arrive just as school gets out, for many people they mark the beginning of summer. Benson explained that Michigan strawberries are generally smaller than the huge berries that are typically shipped in to grocery stores, but nothing beats fresh, ripe, local strawberries and their sweetness. An added bonus: Children love to visit a strawberry U-pick patch to pluck their own berries, she added.

With Michigan produce, there is definitely never a dull moment.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHIGAN AGRITOURISM

Strawberries are a tasty treat enjoyed by many.

"The landscape of summer produce looks different from month to month," said Hailey Lamb, director of communications for the Michigan Farmers Market Association. "In June, you can expect to find spring favorites like strawberries, asparagus and peas. In July, cherries and blueberries are common sights alongside popular veggies like carrots and celery."

Michigan farmers produce a bounty of good eating. Visit a local farm, farmers market or roadside fruit and veggie stand for a rainbow of produce at the peak of its freshness, flavor and nutrition. Visitors also can discover unique varieties of common fruits and vegetables and may even be able to speak directly with the grower about how to use these new finds in recipes.

"I always encourage people to take a farm tour whenever you can. You can learn so much and you can't help but come away with a new appreciation for our farmers and the hard work that it takes to grow food," Benson said.

The possibilities are endless.

"In August, there are almost too many choices to count! Look for everything

from sweet raspberries and apples to savory cabbage and cucumbers," said Lamb, adding that there are a few staples people can expect to find all market season long, like leafy salad greens and mushrooms.

Some wait all year for their favorite produce to become available. Michigan blueberries are a good example. Benson said they are so versatile and can be en-

joyed both fresh and frozen.

"I recommend purchasing or picking an extra quart or two, so you can freeze them and enjoy in pancakes, muffins, pies and smoothies throughout the year," she said.

Don't overlook the Great Lake State's plump peaches, either. Benson said people tend to think peaches are a southern fruit, but Michigan grows some very lovely peaches.

"If you haven't tried a fresh, juicy donut peach or a Michigan peach pie, you are missing out on one of our state's spectacular summer fruits," she said.

Many of these produce varieties can be enjoyed long after the growing season has ended if they are canned, dried or frozen. Plus, their versatility allows them to be prepared in many different ways: Fry some potatoes in a skillet, roast carrots in the oven, bake blackberries into a cobbler, toss a bundle of asparagus on the grill or add fresh strawberries to the blender for a smoothie, for example.

Another way to savor the seasonal harvest is to take it with you in a picnic basket, a beach cooler or on a family road trip. When doing this, Lamb suggests looking for items that can withstand time spent in warm weather.

"Items like cut fruit and vegetables, dairy products and cooked foods are not safe to consume without careful time and temperature control. Look for



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAILEY LAMB — MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

Visit a farmers market for a variety of Michigan-grown products.

Michigan farmers market items like dried fruit, granola bars, baked goods and popcorn to enjoy on the go,” she said.

When packing a cooler with perishable food, make sure to pack these items directly from your fridge or freezer. If you’re bringing a combination of ready-to-eat and raw foods you plan to cook on site, like raw meat, keep them wrapped separately to avoid cross-contamination, Lamb said. Also, don’t forget to wash the produce — and your hands — before digging in. As always, safety comes first.

“Food safety is always in season, whether you’re enjoying a meal at home or on the go,” she said.

Lamb offered these tips:

- When grilling, always use a food thermometer to ensure the food you’re cooking reaches a safe internal temperature to enjoy. What’s considered safe will depend on the type and cut of meat you choose.

- Use separate utensils for raw and cooked foods.

- Keep an eye on the clock. All leftovers must be stored in clean containers and refrigerated promptly. If food is left out at room temperature, it must be dis-

carded after two hours.

- Choose a picnic location near running water so you can properly wash your hands before, during and after handling food. You also should wash all fresh produce under cool, running water before enjoying it as is or preparing it.

Want to share your favorite flavors with friends and family out of state? Send them a Michigan-themed basket filled with specialty items straight from the local farmers market.

“Loose leaf herbal tea paired with local honey is a lightweight and easy-to-ship way to share Michigan farmer market fresh flavors. If you’re gifting locally, make it even more special by including a handmade mug by a Michigan artisan,” Lamb said.

Local farms and food producers use Michigan’s harvest in a variety of specialty foods and products, including jams, jellies, salsas, fruit toppings, pies, baked goods, beverages and snacks, like potato chips, kale chips, dried berry nut mixes and strawberry, blueberry and peach ice cream. Chefs use local produce in an endless variety of entrees, sandwiches, salads and desserts, Benson said.

Shipping fresh produce and delicate products isn’t always practical, but there are ways to share the season’s best offerings, including jams and jellies made with Michigan fruit, that can be enjoyed anywhere across the country.

“If you’re shopping for someone who has a more adventurous palette, look for one-of-a-kind items like specialty hot sauce or condiments made with Michigan peppers and herbs, dried herb blends or specialty jerky,” recommended Lamb.

*To find what you need, use MIFMA’s Find a Farmers Market Feature to search for markets by ZIP code, county, day of the week and food assistance programs accepted. Visit [mifma.org/find-a-farmers-market](http://mifma.org/find-a-farmers-market).*

*The 2024 Michigan Farm Directory is another resource to help you find farms that you can visit throughout Michigan. It comes in a printed version or online at [michiganfarmfun.com](http://michiganfarmfun.com). Printed copies are available at Farm Bureau Insurance offices across the state, Michigan welcome centers and many tourist offices and farm locations.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHIGAN AGRITOURISM

A little guy picks some berries.

## FEATURE

# HEALTH MEETS FLAVOR

## STOP TO SMELL (AND TASTE!) THE LAVENDER

By Dawn McCormick

McCormick Farmz

Health is on everyone's mind and it's reflected in our flavor choices. The flavor forecast for 2024 is bold, adventurous and conscious. According to Newsweek, lavender is the food trend of 2024 because of its floral taste and relaxing benefits.

First-time visitors to a lavender farm frequently exclaim, "I thought it was just a purple bush!" Even enthusiasts are amazed to find out how many varieties exist. Currently, there are over 45 different species with over 450 varieties with more lavender species/varieties yet to be classified.

Lavender from the *Angustifolia* family is "true lavender," with good flavor and good for cooking, but the *intermedia* family produces bitter and overly pungent (camphor) buds. If we were to compare the two:

### Lavandula Angustifolia (English Lavender, Culinary Lavender)

- Known for its calming and relaxing properties.
- Effective in alleviating stress, anxiety and promoting restful sleep.
- Commonly employed in aromatherapy practices seeking a tranquil ambience.

### Lavandin, Grosso

- Exhibits robust antimicrobial and expectorant properties.
- Energizing and invigorating, making it suitable for respiratory issues.

A good rule when choos-

### Homemade Lavender Honey



**Ingredients**

1 cup raw clover honey  
1 tablespoon McCormick Farmz Culinary Lavender

**Directions**

Warm the honey in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir in the lavender. Remove from the heat, cover, and let stand at room temperature for 24 hours.

Warm the honey again over low heat until it is liquid enough to pour freely. Strain through a wire sieve (I place a clean paper coffee filter inside the mesh strainer), into a clean jar. Cool and cover.

Store in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.  
Serve at room temperature.

McCormickFarmz.com





PHOTO COURTESY OF MCCORMICK FARMZ

Lavender Honey

ing the right lavender is to taste the bud. If it tastes good to you, it will taste good in your recipe. When you learn how to cook with lavender properly, it can bring a beautiful floral quality to a number of sweet and savory dishes but the key to keeping your food from tasting like your mom's favorite hand lotion? Culinary lavender and restraint.

The sweet scent of lavender makes it a natural addition to dessert and cocktail recipes, but lavender is also suited to balancing flavor in savory dishes:

- Add chopped flowers to butter or sugar to infuse a sweet lavender flavor through a baked des-

sert, such as shortbread or sugar cookies. Use 1 tablespoon of chopped blooms to one stick of softened butter. To create lavender sugar, 1 tablespoon dried lavender bud to 1 cup of sugar — 1-2 pulse, store in an airtight container for a week. Use this sugar to sweeten beverages or cookies.

- Use as a stand-in for fresh rosemary in most recipes. Use lavender leaves, stems and flowers in marinades and meat rubs, or toss whole lavender stems on the grill to infuse meat with a complex, herbal smoke flavor. To create a lavender dry rub, 4 tbsp dark brown sugar; 4 tbsp smoked paprika; 2 tbsp coarse salt; 1 tbsp ground black pep-

per; 1 tbsp culinary lavender, pulsed/crushed; 2 tsp garlic powder; 2 tsp onion powder; 1 tsp cumin; 1 tsp ground coriander; 1 tsp cayenne pepper.

- Make a brown butter sauce where the lavender is briefly fried in the fat to tame the edginess that some people find cloying. Then use that sauce over roasted veggies like sweet potatoes or fennel.

Lavender can be bitter for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, the lavender itself can be bitter. Other times, the cooking process may be too hot, causing the ingredient to be bitter. Finally, adding too much lavender can also make a dish or beverage bitter (and soapy).

**Consuming essential oils is controversial partly because of their concentrated and powerful effects. Essential oil experts tend to advise against the internal use of essential oils.**

equivalent to two or three. Even small amounts of essential oils can be poisonous if ingested. Therefore, if you plan to use essential oils in a dish, it's important to remove the dish from heat first. If the dish is boiling, wait for five minutes or so for the boiling stage to subside before adding the essential oils.

Consuming essential oils is controversial partly because of their concentrated and powerful effects. Essential oil experts tend to advise against the internal use of essential oils. Essential oils are extracted from plants — either the seeds, roots, leaves, bark, fruit or flowers. Distillation or steaming allows the water-based compounds of the plant to evaporate away, leaving the concentrated oils, also known as essential oils. I generally advise against using culinary essential oils unless you have proper training or experience. When heated, the viscosity of oils can change, and what you thought was one drop may actually be

Lavender pairs well with rich and fatty foods because it cuts through and lifts the overall flavor. On the sweet side, lavender pairs well with many fruits, tart berries, vanilla, chocolate, citrus, ginger and pecan and almond flavors. Lavender has a particular affinity for dairy, which means that adding it to ice cream, custards, hot chocolate, shortbread cookies or butter-rich frostings is always a good idea. For savory dishes, lightly toast your lavender in a skillet over medium heat to remove the perfume notes from the lavender, but don't worry as this does not remove any of



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCCORMICK FARMZ

According to Newsweek, lavender is the food trend of 2024 because of its floral taste and relaxing benefits.

the flavor. Lavender can be used in marinades or rubs for chicken, lamb and pork. Add to a savory sauce such as hollandaise or bechamel for a subtle floral note.

### Spilling the (lavender) tea

1 cup lavender balsamic vinegar + 20 minutes stovetop simmer = lavender balsamic glaze/reduction

### Herbes de Provence

7 ½ teaspoons dried oregano  
7 ½ teaspoons dried thyme  
2 tablespoons dried savory  
2 tablespoons dried, crushed lavender  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
1 teaspoon dried sage  
1 teaspoon crushed dried rosemary

Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place.

### Lavender Blueberry Simple Syrup

1 cup water  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup blueberries  
1 ½ teaspoons culinary lavender buds

Combine the first three

ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat to a low simmer. Add dried lavender and keep on low heat for 10 minutes. Pour through a fine-mesh strainer, pressing the blueberries to get all the juice. This makes the syrup a beautiful purple color. Store in a glass jar in the fridge. It will last for a few months if kept refrigerated.

### The Herbie

1 pint of fresh blueberries, muddled (squished)  
1 cup basil, chopped  
½ cup lemon juice, freshly squeezed  
½ – ¾ cup lavender simple syrup

1 ½ cups soda water  
In a medium-sized pitcher, muddle the blueberries, basil and lemon juice. Add in about 2 cups of ice, your simple syrup and the soda water. Stir and enjoy.

*Dawn McCormick owns McCormick Farmz, a Michigan lavender farm that produces finished culinary lavender products with a delightful blend of subtle floral notes and a slight sweetness. Learn more about the farm at McCormickFarmz.com.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCCORMICK FARMZ

The Herbie

## MEALS

## HEAT IT UP... WITH CAUTION

## YOU CAN STILL USE YOUR OVEN IN THE SUMMER. JUST GO LOW AND SLOW

By Virginia Willis

*Special To The Washington Post*

The saying “If you can’t take the heat, get out of the kitchen” sounds all well and good, but in the sizzling summer, kitchens are hot and we still have to eat. Takeout or delivery for three months simply isn’t an option. How many times can you rework a store-bought rotisserie chicken? And yes, salads and slaws are great, but sometimes you want something a bit more toothsome.

Let’s flip this adage, and take the heat, rather than yourself, out of the kitchen.

Sous vide is an option, as are multicookers such as the Instant Pot. Both, however, involve special and non-inexpensive equipment. What about using what’s already available?

Low-temperature oven roasting was a serious revelation for me. Typically, roasting is a fairly high-heat affair, and it enhances flavor through caramelization and browning on the surface of the food, a process known as the Maillard reaction. Slow-roasting takes the temperature down to 300 degrees or lower. We all think low and slow for braised meats in winter, but it can work in summer, too. And slow roasting keeps the kitchen a heck of a lot cooler. Sure, things take a lot longer to cook, but that can be an advantage. Since the temperature is lower, less moisture is lost, and that gives tender, juicy results. There’s also a whole lot of forgive-



PHOTO BY GORAN KOSANOVIC FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. FOOD STYLING BY THE WASHINGTON POST'S BONNIE S. BENWICK

Slow Cooker Barbecue Pulled Chicken

ness with timing because it takes so much longer for your food to overcook.

Slow-roasting is a perfect technique for fish, which, because it’s satisfying without being too heavy, also makes it great for summer. But cooking fish at home can be incredibly intimidating. Most fish recipes rely on the 10-minutes-per-inch-of-thickness rule of thumb — that’s not much room for

error. Slow-roasting over 30, 40 or even 60 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fish, results in a beautifully tender, evenly cooked piece that’s especially appropriate for dinner parties and folks less familiar with cooking seafood. It’s fish cookery with training wheels.

You don’t have to prepare such tender proteins as fish to appreciate slow cook-

ing. Take meat. Undoubtedly, there’s nothing like meat that has been kissed by flame and enveloped in smoke. We’re accustomed to pork ribs on the grill or smoker, even in the heat of summer. But, if it’s hot outside, it’s even hotter in front of that grill! Slow-roasting works here, too. The keys to success are using a dry rub to help accentuate the flavor and lifting the ribs

above the baking sheet on a rack to allow the heat to circulate all around. After a few hours, the meat nearly falls off the bone.

Another way to keep heat out of the summer kitchen is to use a slow cooker. Sure, it involves special equipment, but the barrier to entry is exceedingly affordable, and if you don’t have one, you can pick one up at most major grocery stores.

Opening the door on a cold night and being greeted by the inviting smells of stew from a slow cooker can be a dream come true. But winter is not the only time a slow cooker is useful. On a steamy hot night, it’s just as dreamy to be met with those dinner aromas along with a cold blast of air conditioning.

One of my favorites to make in the slow cooker in



summer is pulled chicken. Boneless, skinless breasts simmer in a concoction of diced tomatoes, honey and spices until the meat is meltingly tender.

With a bit of planning, all of these recipes are simple enough for a weeknight supper and exceptionally agreeable for weekend dinner parties. No sweat.

Willis is the author of "Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South" (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018)

### Slow-Roasted Snapper With Olive and Tomato Salad

6 servings

Oven-roasting this beautiful slab of fish at a low temperature means it will take more time than the standard 10 minutes per inch thickness you might be used to for cooking fish. But the snapper is guaranteed not to dry out in the process.

Chef and cookbook author Virginia Willis calls this "fish cookery with training wheels." In other words, not intimidating.

Adapted from "Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South," by Virginia Willis (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018)

#### Ingredients

One 2-pound firm white fish fillet, such as halibut, snapper or grouper, (about 1 ½ inches thick)

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Coarse kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

½ cup green olives, preferably Castelvetrano, crushed and pitted

1 lemon, thinly sliced

8 sprigs fresh thyme

2 bay leaves

1 ½ pounds tomatoes, hulled, seeded and diced

1 shallot, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

½ teaspoon ground co-



PHOTO BY GORAN KOSANOVIC FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. FOOD STYLING BY THE WASHINGTON POST'S BONNIE S. BENWICK

Slow-Roasted Snapper With Olive and Tomato Salad

riander

6 basil leaves, chopped

#### Steps

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Place the fish in a shallow baking dish and coat it with 4 tablespoons of the oil. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

Scatter the olives, lemon slices, thyme and bay leaves around the fish. Bake (middle rack) for 60 to 75 minutes, or until the fish is very tender and slightly opaque. (Start checking it at 50 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillet; Its flesh should be moist and barely separate when the tines of a fork are inserted.)

Meanwhile, combine the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, tomatoes, shallot, garlic and sherry vinegar. Season lightly with salt and pepper and all the ground co-

riander while the fish cooks; the salt will bring moisture out of the tomatoes and make the mix slightly soupy.

Once the fish is cooked, leave the fillet in the baking dish or use a spatula to carefully transfer the fish and olives to a platter. Discard the thyme stems and bay leaves.

Spoon the tomato salad with the juices over the fish, then garnish with the basil. Serve hot.

Nutrition | Calories: 230; Total Fat: 17 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 20 mg; Sodium: 320 mg; Carbohydrates: 7 g; Dietary Fiber: 2 g; Sugars: 4 g; Protein: 14 g.

#### Rainy-Day Ribs

4-6 servings

When it comes to deciding what type of ribs to cook, you have basically two choices: spare ribs and baby back ribs.

Spare ribs are cut from the ribs closest to the belly and are meaty, bony and thick. Baby back ribs are cut from where the rib meets the spine. They're only called "baby" because they are shorter and thinner than spare ribs; they don't refer to the age of the pig. Each baby back rib rack averages 10 or so curved ribs that are 4 to 6 inches long and weighs about 1 ½ pounds, which easily feeds two people as a main course.

Baby back ribs also typically have a slightly higher price tag, but they are generally leaner, more tender and quicker cooking.

Serve with Sweet and Tangy Barbecue Sauce (see related recipe).

MAKE AHEAD: Rubbed with the spice mixture, the ribs need to sit for 30 minutes to 1 hour at room tem-

perature, and then refrigerate overnight.

Adapted from "Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South," by Virginia Willis (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018)

#### Ingredients

¼ cup packed light brown sugar

¼ cup sweet paprika

2 tablespoons coarse kosher salt

1 tablespoon granulated garlic (garlic powder)

1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon piment d'espelette, Aleppo pepper or crushed red pepper flakes, or as needed

2 racks baby back ribs (2 ¾ to 3 pounds total)

Sweet and Tangy Barbecue Sauce, for serving (see related recipe)

#### Steps

Use a fork to stir together the brown sugar, paprika, salt, granulated garlic, black pepper and your choice of red pepper in a small bowl. The yield is ¾ to 1 cup.

Coat each set of baby back ribs with half the spice rub mixture, rubbing it into the meat all over. Let them sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes. Place in a resealable plastic container or seal in plastic wrap. If you use the latter, make sure to place the wrapped ribs on a rimmed baking sheet to catch any seeping liquid, due to the salt in the rub. Refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and set a wire cooling rack on the sheet.

HEAT » PAGE 10



PHOTO BY GORAN KOSANOVIC FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. FOOD STYLING BY THE WASHINGTON POST'S BONNIE S. BENWICK

## Rainy-Day Ribs

## Heat

FROM PAGE 9

Grease the rack with cooking oil spray.

Unwrap/uncover the ribs and place them side by side on the prepared baking sheet. (If you have time, let them come to room temperature here.) Roast (middle rack) for about 2 hours, or until the ribs are done and a knife slides easily into the thickest part of the rib meat.

Let the ribs rest for about 10 minutes, covered loosely with foil, and then cut between the bones to separate the individual ribs. Serve right away, with the barbecue sauce for dipping.

Nutrition (based on 6 servings) | Calories: 560; Total Fat: 38 g; Saturated Fat: 14 g; Cholesterol: 145

mg; Sodium: 1290 mg; Carbohydrates: 12 g; Dietary Fiber: 2 g; Sugars: 8 g; Protein: 41 g.

## Sweet and Tangy Barbecue Sauce

3 cups

With its peppery bite, this sauce works as a fine accompaniment for chef Virginia Willis's Rainy-Day Ribs and for her Slow Cooker Barbecue Pulled Chicken.

**MAKE AHEAD:** The sauce can be refrigerated for several months.

Adapted from "Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South," by Virginia Willis (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018)

## Ingredients

1 teaspoon canola oil  
½ medium sweet onion,

finely chopped  
1 ¼ cups low-sodium ketchup

1 cup apple cider vinegar  
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce  
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon packed light brown sugar  
Juice of ½ lemon  
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

## Steps

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the onion and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, until soft and melted.

Add the ketchup, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, brown sugar, lemon juice and pepper. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for about 10

minutes, stirring a few times, until the flavors have smoothed and mellowed. Cool before storing.

Nutrition (based on 2-tablespoon servings) | Servings Per Container: 24; Calories: 20; Total Fat: 0 g; Saturated Fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 45 mg; Total Carbohydrates: 5 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 4 g; Protein: 0 g.

## Slow Cooker Barbecue Pulled Chicken

8 servings

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts render this dish low calorie and low fat, but packed with flavor. You can make Sweet and Tangy Barbecue Sauce to go with these, or you can use your favorite store-bought brand.

This recipe calls for a 5- to 7-quart slow cooker.

Adapted from "Secrets of

the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South," by Virginia Willis (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018)

## Ingredients

One 14.5-ounce can of no-salt-added diced tomatoes, plus their juices

¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
2 tablespoons honey

1 tablespoon Spanish smoked paprika (pimenton; sweet or hot)

1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, or as needed  
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (4 halves)

Coarse kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper

Hamburger buns or rolls, for serving

Sweet and Tangy Barbe-

cue Sauce (see related recipe), or your favorite barbecue sauce, for serving

## Steps

Combine the tomatoes and their juices, the vinegar, honey, paprika, soy sauce, mustard and crushed red pepper flakes in the insert of your slow cooker. Add the chicken and season well with salt and pepper. Cover with the lid and cook on low for 4-½ to 5 hours, or until the chicken is falling apart.

Taste, and add more salt and/or pepper. Spoon onto buns or rolls and serve hot, with barbecue sauce on the side.

Nutrition | Calories: 170; Total Fat: 3 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 85 mg; Sodium: 310 mg; Carbohydrates: 8 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 6 g; Protein: 26 g.

## MEALS



Garlicky Broccoli and Beans with Pesto  
PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

# Beat the heat with this quick-cooking skillet of garlicky beans, broccoli and pesto

**By Joe Yonan**  
*The Washington Post*

Salads are a big part of the summer strategy, obviously, as are gazpachos and other cold soups. But often I still want to do a little cooking, and I sometimes get a little bored with cold foods.

I found a good option in a book by Ella Mills, the best-selling British author behind the Delicious Ella brand. The dish is basically a quick-cooking skillet of beans, broccoli, zucchini and cherry tomatoes, amped up with lots of garlic and bound in a cheeseless pesto sauce and a smidgen of yogurt.

The beans are canned limas, but you can use whatever you like. The zucchini is grated. But it's the broc-

coli technique that particularly appealed in the midst of summertime heat.

To make everything go faster in the skillet, you first blanch the broccoli, but not by dealing with a big pot of water first; that would defeat the purpose. Instead, you just cover the florets with boiling water from a tea kettle and let them sit for a couple of minutes. They're perfectly crisp-tender this way, and your kitchen stays so cool you'll be dreaming of rain.

## GARLICKY BROCCOLI AND BEANS WITH PESTO

20 minutes

4 to 6 servings

This colorful meal comes together with only a few

minutes of cooking, making it just the thing when you want to keep your kitchen cool. Serve with quinoa, brown rice or bread, if you like.

Adapted from "Deliciously Ella: Quick & Easy" by Ella Mills. Mobius, 2020

### Ingredients

#### FOR THE PESTO

½ cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves  
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed  
¼ cup water, plus more as needed  
¼ cup roasted, unsalted almonds (may substitute toasted sunflower seeds)  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
2 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 teaspoon nutritional yeast (optional)

½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste

#### FOR THE BROCCOLI AND BEANS

1 head broccoli (about 1 ½ pounds), thick stalk removed

Boiling water  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
4 garlic cloves, crushed or minced

3 cups (from two 15-ounce cans) lima beans (may substitute chickpeas or any white beans), drained and rinsed

12 cherry tomatoes, halved

1 small zucchini (4 ounces), coarsely grated

1 tablespoon pure plain coconut yogurt (optional; may substitute plain dairy yogurt)

2 teaspoons finely grated

lemon zest

¼ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper, plus more to taste

### Steps

Make the pesto: In a blender, combine the basil, olive oil, water, almonds, lemon juice, garlic, nutritional yeast (if using) and salt and puree until smooth. (If using a large or less powerful blender, you may need more olive oil or water to blend easily.) Taste, and season with more salt, if needed.

Make the broccoli and beans: Cut the broccoli into small, bite-sized pieces (the smaller, the better). Transfer the broccoli to a heat-proof bowl and cover with the boiling water (this blanches the broccoli). Let

stand until the broccoli is crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes, then drain.

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until it softens, about 2 minutes. Stir in the broccoli, lima beans and tomatoes, and cook, stirring, until warmed through, about 2 minutes. Stir in the pesto, zucchini, yogurt (if using), zest and pepper. Taste, and season with more salt and pepper, if needed. Serve warm.

Nutrition (based on 6 servings) | Calories: 320; Total Fat: 19 g; Saturated Fat: 3 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 569 mg; Carbohydrates: 30 g; Dietary Fiber: 10 g; Sugars: 3 g; Protein: 12 g.

## MEALS

# Take your burgers to the next level

By Sara Moulton

Special To The Washington Post

The Italians don't "do" burgers, but as an American equally in love with burgers and Italian cuisine, I thought it might be fun to engineer a kind of marriage.

What makes this burger Italian? The crispy prosciutto (we would have used bacon), followed by the mushrooms sauteed with rosemary and garlic, topped with Taleggio (one of my favorite Italian cheeses), all of it piled onto large slices of bruschetta instead of buns. This is a certifiably rich combination, but the ingredient that takes it over the top is the truffle oil. Italians might agree that the touch is "un po troppo"; you can use it or lose it.

These burgers are pretty easy to prepare, especially when you buy the mushrooms already sliced. You can saute them a day or two ahead of time and then just bring them to room temperature before mounding them on the burgers. Likewise, you can grate the cheese and crisp the prosciutto a few days ahead, then stash them in the refrigerator, wrapped separately, until it is time to start cooking.

If you can't find Taleggio, fontina will do the trick. If you would rather roll with classic burger buns or English muffins instead of bruschetta, go ahead ... although it means you'll be kissing off the bruschetta's garlicky crunch.

## 'ITALIAN' BURGERS

6 servings

Serve with grilled corn and/or a tomato and cucumber salad.



PHOTO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

Italian burger

### Ingredients

3 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed

8 ounces assorted sliced mushrooms

2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary

Kosher salt

1 teaspoon minced garlic, plus 1 clove cut in half

1/3 cup dry red wine

Freshly ground black pepper

Twelve 4-inch-wide slices rustic bread

1/2 teaspoon good-quality truffle oil, or as needed (optional)

Six 6-ounce burger patties (80-20 ground beef or ground chuck)

6 ounces Taleggio

cheese, coarsely grated (may substitute fontina; semi-soft cheeses like Taleggio are easier to grate when you put them in the freezer for 30 minutes beforehand)

### Steps

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Lay the prosciutto on it in a single layer; bake (middle rack) for 12 minutes. Cool completely, during which time the prosciutto will crisp up.

Prepare the grill for direct heat. If using a gas grill, preheat to medium-high (about 450 degrees). If using a charcoal grill, use a metal chimney to prepare your briquettes; once the charcoal is gray and glow-

ing red, distribute the briquettes evenly under the cooking area. The grill should be ready when you can place your hand about 6 inches over the grate for 3 to 4 seconds without pulling it away.

Heat the 2 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the mushrooms, rosemary and a pinch of salt; reduce the heat to medium and cook for about 6 minutes, stirring occasionally until the mushrooms have started to turn golden. Add the minced garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Pour in the wine; cook until it has evaporated, then season lightly with pepper and remove from the heat.

Brush both sides of the bread slices lightly with extra-virgin olive oil. Place on the grate and grill (uncovered) for 1 to 2 minutes per side, until they are nicely marked. Rub one side of each grilled slice with one of the cut sides of the garlic clove. Place 2 grilled slices of bread on each plate.

Stir the truffle oil, if using, into the cooled mushrooms.

Brush the burger patties lightly with extra-virgin olive oil and season both sides lightly with salt and pepper. Place the burgers on the grate; grill (uncovered) for 3 minutes. Turn the burgers over; close the lid and grill them for 2 minutes.

Working quickly, top each burger with the crispy

prosciutto, one-sixth each of the mushroom mixture, and, last, the cheese. Close the lid and cook until the cheese has melted, 1 to 2 minutes.

Sandwich the burgers between the grilled bread and serve.

### Health tip

The USDA recommends cooking ground meat to well done. These burgers will be medium to medium-rare, which is how I like them. If you do, too, buy the meat from a reliable source. Or DIY grind it. If you don't own a grinder, cut shoulder or chuck meat into 1-inch cubes and freeze it for 30 minutes. Pulse it, in thirds, in a food processor until ground to 1/8- to 1/4-inch pieces.

## MEALS

# Fresh tomatoes are the stars of this bread-filled, comforting and speedy stew

By **Bonnie S. Benwick**  
*The Washington Post*

Ripe tomatoes beg to be consumed immediately, but life may dictate otherwise. That's when I turn to an Italian dish that creates something satisfying from just a few added ingredients. I could go the panzanella route, but this slurpy stew is less acidic than that salad and offers the added comfort of a warming bowl.

Lately, the heirloom specimens I've rescued from the garden or plucked from a bin of "uglies" are what I have been carving up for this recipe.

My stash of bread tends to be not stale, as in a traditional Tuscan preparation, so I either toast the torn chunks in the oven to dry them out a bit (which adds texture and flavor) or I toss them, just-defrosted, straight into the pot of garlic-infused broth.

After you have tasted the stew for seasoning — keeping in mind that Parm will be passed at the table — wait to stir in your fresh basil until the last minute. That way, its perfume will waft up from each serving.

## TUSCAN TOMATO AND BREAD STEW

25 minutes  
4 to 6 servings

If you have an extra 10 minutes, you can toast chunks of fresh bread in the oven at 375 degrees, until dried out and lightly golden, which adds depth to the dish.

Adapted from a Nora Pouillon recipe in "One Pot Recipes," by Ellen Brown.



PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Tuscan Tomato and Bread Stew

Sterling Epicure, 2018

### Ingredients

9 ounces day-old country-style bread (crusts are OK)  
3 cloves garlic  
2 pounds ripe tomatoes, preferably varying in size and color  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling  
1 quart low-sodium or no-salt-added vegetable broth (may substitute chicken broth)  
5/8 ounce fresh basil

leaves (½ cup)

Freshly ground black pepper

Kosher salt

One 2-ounce block Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, for serving

### Steps

Tear or cut the bread into bite-size chunks, to yield 5 packed cups. Mince the garlic. Hull the tomatoes (as needed), then cut them into chunks that vary in size, reserving as much of their

juices as you can.

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Stir in the garlic; cook for 30 to 45 seconds or until fragrant and just turning golden.

Add the tomatoes, their juices and the broth; increase the heat to medium-high.

Once the mixture comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium and cook for about 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, or just until the tomatoes begin to break

down.

Reduce the heat to medium-low; stir the bread pieces into the pot and cook for about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the bread starts to disintegrate a bit. Turn off the heat.

Tear the basil leaves. Stir in half of them, until the stew is fragrant.

Taste, and season generously with the pepper and some salt, keeping in mind that you're add-

ing a salty cheese. Divide among bowls; use a vegetable peeler to shave some of the Parm directly over each bowl.

Drizzle each portion with oil, scatter the remaining basil on top and serve right away.

Nutrition (based on 6 servings) | Calories: 210; Total Fat: 10 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 410 mg; Carbohydrates: 28 g; Dietary Fiber: 3 g; Sugars: 6 g; Protein: 5 g.

## MEALS

## NONTRADITIONAL DELICIOUSNESS

## THERE'S A CHICKEN SOUP FOR EVERY SEASON, AND THIS ONE SAYS SUMMER

By **Bonnie S. Benwick**  
*The Washington Post*

These are the days when food sites thrill for seasonal eating. Tastes like summer! Perfect for picnics! Summer in a bowl! Summer on the grill! I wasn't expecting a hot brothy pot to figure into this line of tropes, but here it is — chicken soup for summer.

Then again, it should be no surprise. America loves chicken soup. Homemade or store-bought, it's always at the top of most-popular lists. It lives up to its hype as comfort food, healing food, healthful food. Recipes can take hours or minutes, and they welcome modification. The stock can be rich and flavored or light and clarified, but plant-based add-ins are the elements that distinguish chicken soup's seasons: kale and roasted garlic in the fall, hearty leeks in winter, carrots and dill in spring.

This one-pot chicken soup relies on the summer calling cards of lemon, tomato and zucchini. Oddly enough, the flavor of chicken takes a back seat. Instead, the bite-size chunks of lean meat lend texture and pair naturally with the light pasta element of slippery orzo. Each bowlful gets topped with a helping of basil pesto, which seals the deal, summerwise.

Slurp it up warm or even at room temperature; it'll be fine. Leftovers morph into stewy territory, as the orzo tends to absorb the broth after a day's refrigeration.

### CHICKEN ORZO SOUP WITH PESTO

25 minutes  
 4 servings

Who's eating chicken soup, even in hot weather? You are, when it's nice and light like this one-pot version.

Serve with cornbread.



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Chicken Orzo Soup with Pesto

**Make Ahead:** For best flavor and texture, leftovers can be refrigerated for up to 1 day.

Adapted from "Better Homes and Gardens Quick Homemade: Fast, Fresh Meals in 30 Minutes." Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019

#### Ingredients

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast halves or thighs  
 32 ounces low-sodium chicken broth

One 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, preferably with basil and garlic (may substitute 2 medium tomatoes, hulled, and 1 teaspoon minced garlic or the same size can of no-salt-added diced tomatoes)

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup dried whole-wheat orzo pasta (may substitute regular dried orzo)

1 medium zucchini or yellow squash, or half of each kind

1 lemon  
 Kosher salt  
 Freshly ground black pepper  
 4 to 6 tablespoons basil pesto, for serving (store-bought or homemade)

#### Steps

Trim/discard excess fat from the chicken, then cut the meat into bite-size chunks, placing them in a large saucepan as you go.

Add the broth, tomatoes and

their juices and the orzo; bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low; cook for 7 or 8 minutes, stirring a few times.

Meanwhile, rinse the zucchini or squash and trim/discard the ends. Cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice, or coarsely chop, to yield 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 cups.

Grate 1 teaspoon of zest from the lemon (about half a lemon's worth) directly into the pot, then cut the fruit in half and squeeze in 1 tablespoon of its juice. Stir in the zucchini and/or yellow squash and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until tender. The chicken should be cooked through.

Taste, and season lightly with salt and pepper if you are using the basil-and-garlic-flavored tomatoes; season with about 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons salt and a few grinds of pepper if you are using fresh or no-salt-added tomatoes.

Divide among individual bowls; top each portion with the pesto (to taste). Cut the remaining lemon into wedges, for serving.

Nutrition (based on white-meat chicken, no-salt-added tomatoes and whole-wheat orzo) | Calories: 380; Total Fat: 13 g; Saturated Fat: 3 g; Cholesterol: 90 mg; Sodium: 590 mg; Carbohydrates: 32 g; Dietary Fiber: 7 g; Sugars: 6 g; Protein: 35 g.

## MEALS

# The sauce that brings together tastes of summer

By Ellie Krieger

Special To The Washington Post

Romesco is a flavorful sauce of roasted red peppers, almonds, tomatoes and garlic that hails from the coast of Spain. It has a savory richness without being heavy, and it's an ideal and healthful accompaniment for just about anything you might be grilling, including seafood, vegetables, poultry and meats.

Most romesco recipes I have seen require turning on the oven to roast the peppers and in some cases, the tomatoes and garlic. But I am loath to do that in the summer, so I thought a tasty, and certainly cooler, way to go would be to cook those ingredients on the grill instead. As a result, this recipe has an added layer of fire-kissed flavor that adds to its appeal.

Chunks of red bell pepper and sliced onion are brushed with oil and go straight onto the grill, where they soften and char. The peppers are then sweated in a bag and their skins are removed. The tomatoes and garlic are drizzled with oil, then wrapped in an aluminum foil pouch that's placed on the grill. After about 12 minutes, they are transformed: the garlic softens, with a more deeply mellow flavor, and the tomatoes collapse, their juices released. All that grilled goodness is blended until smooth with toasted almonds, Spanish smoked paprika, vinegar, salt, pepper and olive oil.

The accompanying recipe makes twice as much sauce as you'll need. It will keep in the refrigerator for about five days. Warmed or at room temperature, it can not only accompany whatever you are grilling, but also can be used on sandwiches or as a dip for crudité; tossed with pasta; or spread on toasts with some cheese — Manchego, for ex-

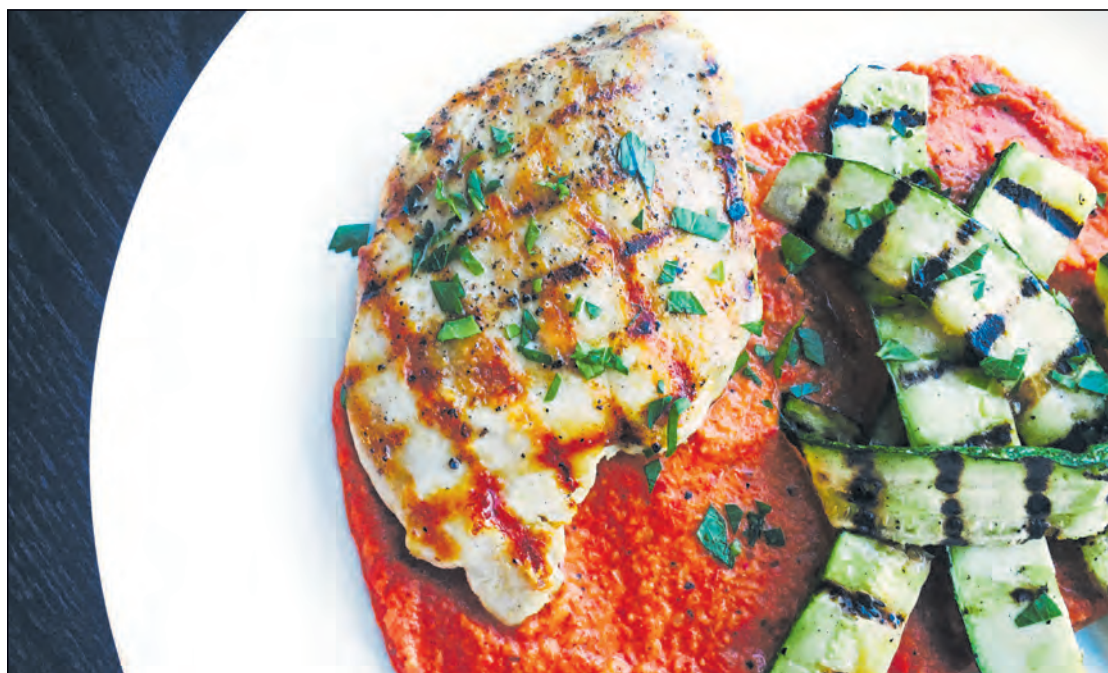


PHOTO BY THE WASHINGTON POST

Grilled Chicken and Zucchini With Romesco Sauce

ample.

To serve, spoon the sauce onto a plate, top with grilled zucchini and chicken breast, and garnish with a fresh, green sprinkle of parsley. This is one very tasty example of how this versatile sauce can transform a simple meal.

## Grilled Chicken and Zucchini With Romesco Sauce

4 servings

**MAKE AHEAD:** You'll have about a cup of leftover romesco sauce, which can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

From cookbook author and nutritionist Ellie Krieger

### Ingredients

For the sauce  
¼ cup slivered almonds

2 medium tomatoes, cored, seeded and cut into 8 wedges each  
3 cloves garlic  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
1 large red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 4 or 5 large pieces  
1 small onion, cut into ¼-inch-thick rounds  
½ teaspoon Spanish smoked paprika  
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the chicken and zucchini  
2 medium zucchini (8 ounces each), trimmed and cut lengthwise into ¼-inch slices  
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 5 ounces each), pounded to ½-inch thickness  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black

pepper  
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves, for garnish

### Steps

For the sauce: Toast the almonds in a small, dry skillet over medium heat, shaking the pan frequently to avoid scorching, until lightly browned and fragrant, 3 to 4 minutes. Let cool.

Preheat a grill or large grill pan over medium-high heat. Place the tomatoes and garlic cloves on a large sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the oil, then fold the foil to form a packet, sealing it tightly. Brush the bell pepper and the onion rounds with oil on both sides, using 1 tablespoon of the oil total.

Place the onions, foil packet and red bell peppers on the grill or in the grill pan; cook until the on-

ions are softened and grill marks have formed, about 4 minutes per side; the tomatoes and garlic are steaming and softened, about 12 minutes; and the peppers are well charred and tender, about 8 minutes per side. Once the onions are done, transfer them to a plate. Once the tomatoes and garlic are done, let cool for 10 minutes before opening the packet. Once the peppers are done, transfer them to a paper or plastic bag, seal and steam for 10 minutes, then remove the charred peels with your fingers and/or a paring knife, as needed.

Transfer the tomatoes and garlic, along with their accumulated juices, to a bowl. Peel and discard the skins. Transfer the tomato flesh and its juices and the garlic to a blender along with the bell pepper, onion, paprika, vinegar, the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, the toasted almonds, salt and pepper. Puree until smooth. The yield is 2 cups; you'll need 1 cup for this recipe. Refrigerate the rest in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

For the chicken and zucchini: When ready to serve, preheat a grill or grill pan. Brush the zucchini and then the chicken with the oil, then sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Grill the zucchini until it is tender and grill marks form, 3 to 4 minutes per side; grill the chicken until it is cooked through and grill marks form, about 5 minutes per side.

To serve, spread ¼ cup of the sauce on the center of each plate. Place a few slices of zucchini on top of the sauce, then top each plate with a piece of chicken and sprinkle with parsley. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Nutrition** | Per serving (using 1 cup of sauce): 390 calories, 32 g protein, 8 g carbohydrates, 26 g fat, 6 g saturated fat, 90 mg cholesterol, 400 mg sodium, 2 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugar

## MEALS

## SEAFOOD SENSATION

THESE MAINE-STYLE LOBSTER ROLLS DELIVER  
A TASTE OF NEW ENGLAND SUMMER

**By Olga Massov**  
*The Washington Post*

Name an iconic dish, and you're likely to find factions of fans debating that theirs is better. New York- or Chicago-style pizza; New England- or Manhattan-style clam chowder; or the proper style of barbecue, with Kansas, North Carolina and Texas among the states claiming superiority.

And then, there are lobster rolls.

There are also dueling lobster-roll-loving factions: the Connecticut-style fans and the Maine-style lovers. The former is served warm, the lobster meat generously drizzled with melted butter, while the latter is the veritable zenith of summer flavors: chilled lobster salad in a warm, just-toasted bun. I don't want to denigrate anyone's favorite way to "roll," but it is the Maine-style one I want to write sonnets about.

After immigrating from Russia, I grew up in Massachusetts, and those formative years instilled a deep love for a Maine-style lobster roll. Every summer, I looked forward to sitting at those A-frame picnic tables, with their built-in benches, covered with red-gingham tablecloths, and taking that first-of-the-season bite of cool, creamy lobster salad inside a just-off-the-grill, slightly crisp, buttery bun.

The contrast of temperatures, textures and flavors remains one of those taste memories you can spend a lifetime chasing.

Proust had his madeleines; I have my lobster rolls.

But, as I got older and my taste buds got more discerning, I started to notice that my platonic ideal of a lobster roll was not the norm, but rather the exception. Often, the lobster meat would be upstaged by too much mayo, heavy and bland; or there would be no crunchy celery, and without it, there wasn't enough texture to yield a truly summery sandwich.

Guided by memories of that elusive, perfect lobster roll, I knew there was a way to achieve that dreamy result — the perfect balance of luscious meat, crunch and bright flavors.

Crisp celery delivers the crunch and refreshing, herbaceous cool. Lemon juice and zest give the lobster meat a sunny lift and enhance its sweet, buttery flavor. And a subtle kick from Dijon mustard — a trick I picked up working with chef Marc Murphy — adds dimension to the salad.

Finally, mayonnaise in a supporting role — used sparingly — binds the ingredients together.

I like to steam my own lobsters. It's easy and makes lobster rolls a lot more af-

fordable as three small lobsters make enough for six rolls. After 15 minutes in the freezer, the lobsters get sleepy, at which point I place them in a large pot with a few inches of boiling water and a steamer basket. After the cooked lobsters are thoroughly chilled, I crack their shells and pick out their meat. (I use the remaining shells and carcasses to make a lobster stock to stretch the pricey ingredient and use the stock to flavor bouillabaisse, risotto or bisque.)

The bun is as important as the salad. If you're a lover of butter, consider upgrading to brioche hot dog buns, as they'll elevate the roll to luxury. If, however, you long for a classic lobster roll, a split-top bun is what you want. Toast it in the broiler — I like to use a little melted butter to crisp it up — then pile chilled lobster salad on top and eat right away.

With that first bite, I'm transported to New England beaches with sky-high dunes, cool breezes off the Atlantic and cloudless skies — even if this summer I'm nowhere near them.

### MAINE-STYLE LOBSTER ROLLS

40 minutes  
6 servings

In this classic Maine-style lobster roll, lemon juice and zest accentuate the crusta-

cean's natural sweetness and salinity, and a touch of Dijon mustard adds dimension to the traditional mayonnaise dressing. Served in lightly toasted, split-top hot-dog buns brushed with melted butter, the contrast of warm, crisp bread and cold, crunchy lobster salad is the very epitome of summer. These rolls pair well with steamed corn on the cob and a pile of potato chips.

**Make Ahead:** The mayonnaise dressing can be made up to 1 day ahead and refrigerated in an airtight container. The lobster salad can be prepared up to 3 days in advance and refrigerated. The lobster needs to be steamed and well-chilled before being shelled — at least 2 hours ahead of serving.

**Storage Notes:** Leftover lobster salad can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

### Ingredients

1/3 cup mayonnaise, store-bought or homemade  
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste  
1 ½ teaspoons Dijon mustard, or more to taste  
1 generous pinch kosher salt, or more to taste  
Sweet paprika (optional)  
Chilled meat from 3 cooked lobsters (each weighing 1 ¼ to 1 ½

pounds, see note below)

½ cup finely chopped celery (1 to 2 stalks), leaves reserved

6 split-top hot dog rolls, preferably potato, such as Martin's, or brioche

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Sliced scallions, for serving (optional)

### Steps

In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise with the lemon zest and juice, mustard, salt and a pinch of sweet paprika, if using. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

Using lobster crackers and pick, remove the lobster meat from the claws and tails (save the legs for a cook's snack, and discard the torsos or reserve them and the shells for stock). Dice the lobster meat into bite-size chunks (you should get 3 to 3 ½ cups) and transfer to a large bowl. Add the chopped celery and fold in the mayonnaise mixture. Taste, and season with more lemon juice, mustard and/or salt, if needed. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Position a baking rack about 6 inches from the broiling unit and preheat the broiler on high. Place the hot dog buns on a baking sheet, split side up, brush with the melted butter and broil until golden, 1 to 2 minutes (start check-

ing on the rolls after 1 minute so they do not burn).

To serve, divide the lobster salad among the rolls, then top with scallions, if using, and celery leaves. Add a pinch of paprika, if you like, and another squeeze of lemon juice, if desired, and serve.

**Note:** To cook the lobsters, put them in the freezer for 15 minutes (the cold sedates them). In a very large pot over high heat, bring a few inches of water to a boil. Place the lobsters in the pot, cover, and reduce the heat to medium-low. Steam for 13 to 15 minutes, until the lobster shell turns red. To check on the lobster doneness, pull on an antenna. If it comes off easily, the lobster is done. If you're making lobster rolls, transfer the lobsters to a large bowl with ice and refrigerate until cold, about 2 hours, before cracking open the shell. Inside the lobster torso, you'll find the tomalley (green) and sometimes coral (lobster roe if you get female lobsters, which turns red once cooked). You can add the cooked coral to your mayonnaise dressing for a deeper lobster flavor.

**Nutrition |** Calories: 408; Total Fat: 21 g; Saturated Fat: 7 g; Cholesterol: 247 mg; Sodium: 1012 mg; Carbohydrates: 23 g; Dietary Fiber: 1 g; Sugars: 3 g; Protein: 31 g.





Maine-Style Lobster Rolls

PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## MEALS



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Fish Grilled on Citrus

# Give your fish a bed of citrus, and it will be so much easier to grill

**By Bonnie S. Benwick**  
*The Washington Post*

Are you wary of cooking fish on the grill, because it can tear so easily? We borrowed an easy technique from prolific cookbook authors Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough: Lay a bed of thin citrus slices across the grate or grill basket before you add the fillets.

Depending on which citrus you use, you can chop up those grilled slices and use them to make a salsa

for the fish. We've used limes in this recipe, but oranges and lemons — or better, yet, a mix of all three — would be lovely.

Because the fish cooks so quickly, you have time to let it defrost and marinate for a few minutes. We found this makes a world of difference, flavorwise, when it comes to mild-tasting cod.

Cook this fish on the grill or in a grill pan on the stovetop, as we've shown here. Look for thick-cut fillets.

Serve with roasted/smashed fingerling potatoes.

## Fish Grilled on Citrus

2 servings

Adapted from “Kitchen Shortcut Bible: More Than 200 Recipes to Make Real Food Real Fast,” by Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough (Little, Brown and Co., 2018)

### Ingredients

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling

Kosher salt  
1 teaspoon za'atar (a Mediterranean spice blend; may substitute dried oregano)  
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

Two 6- to 8-ounce frozen cod or other white-fleshed fillets, preferably thick-cut  
2 limes

### Steps

Prepare a gas grill for direct heat, on medium-high (450 degrees). Grease the grate with cooking oil spray.

Meanwhile, whisk together the 3 tablespoons of oil, a small pinch of salt, the za'atar and the crushed red pepper flakes on a plate. Add the fillets and turn a few times to coat; let sit at room temperature while the grill heats up for about 15 minutes.

Cut the limes into thin slices and divide them into 2 piles; make a bed of slightly overlapping slices for each fish fillet, directly on the grate or grill basket (or grill pan).

Place the cod on them

and close the lid (or place on the grill pan, uncovered); cook for 10 to 12 minutes, until the flesh turns a brighter shade of white and firms up.

Place a fillet on each plate and drizzle with a little more oil; if desired, serve with a slice or two of grilled lime.

Nutrition | Servings Per Container: 2; Calories: 270; Total Fat: 15 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 75 mg; Sodium: 240 mg; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 0 g; Protein: 31 g.

## MEALS

# A quick way to infuse the taste of summer tomatoes right into your pasta

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

It's so easy to take advantage of summer's tomato bounty: The triple-S rotation of sandwiches, salads and soups will dispatch the beauties effectively and deliciously. And then there's pasta. Even when the weather is so unbearably hot, I resist bringing a pot of water to boil. I can't keep tomatoes separate from noodles for too long; the marriage is too right.

Speed is key. I like my summertime pasta-with-tomatoes dishes to come together in as little time as possible, which cuts down on that boiling-pot steam, but also keeps the tomatoes tasting bright and fresh. That's where angel-hair pasta (capellini) comes in, cooking to tenderness in just a few minutes.

The sauce is little more than ripe tomatoes, chopped and cooked down with olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper and a pinch of sugar (just to bring out the best in the fruit). After it thickens — which can happen in as little as 15 minutes or as long as a half-hour, depending on the texture and juiciness of the fruit and the size of your saucepan — you stir in a fistful of chopped basil and a little butter, which pulls it all together.

That capellini comes with another bonus: When you finish cooking it in the sauce, it absorbs some, meaning you get fabulous tomato flavor in every bite.

## Perfect Pomodoro Sauce With Capellini

6 to 8 servings

Use the best tomatoes you can find, ripe and fragrant, and don't skip the pat of butter, which helps pull everything together.

Adapted from "Fresh Italian Cooking for the New Generation," by Alexandra Caspero Lenz (Page Street Publishing, 2016)

### Ingredients

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
4 to 5 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more as needed  
Pinch freshly ground black pepper  
2 pounds ripe red tomatoes, stemmed, hulled and chopped (about 5 cups), includ-

ing their juices

1 teaspoon sugar, plus more as needed  
1 pound dried capellini (angel-hair pasta)

½ cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves, coarsely chopped, plus a few small whole leaves for optional garnish

1 tablespoon unsalted butter (may substitute non-dairy butter)

### Steps

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the garlic (to taste), salt and pepper; cook, stirring frequently, until the garlic is fragrant but not burned, 30 seconds to 1 minute. (If you burn the garlic, use a slotted spoon to scoop it out of the oil and proceed; if you leave it in, it will ruin the sauce.) Add the tomatoes and their juices and the sugar; cook until reduced and thickened, 15 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, depending on the juiciness of the tomatoes. Taste, and add more salt and/or sugar, as needed.

While the sauce is cooking, prepare the pasta: Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the pasta and cook until just under-done, about 1 minute before the cooking time recommended in the package directions. Drain, reserving ½ cup of the pasta cooking water. Return the pasta to its (now empty) pot.

Check on your sauce. If you like it chunky, leave it as is. Or pulse it a few times using an immersion (stick) blender, to make it smoother. Stir in the chopped basil and butter.

Pour into the cooked capellini; use tongs to incorporate it and coat the pasta. Let the capellini finish cooking in the sauce over medium heat until just tender, 1 to 2 minutes. Taste, and add a little more salt, as needed. If the sauce has become too thick, stir in 1 to 2 tablespoons of the reserved pasta cooking water at a time until you like the consistency.

Serve right away, garnished with a few basil leaves, if desired.

Nutrition | Per serving (based on 8): 310 calories, 8 g protein, 47 g carbohydrates, 10 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 6 g sugar



PHOTO BY DIXIE D. VEREEN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Perfect Pomodoro Sauce With Capellini

## MEALS

# The cozy-season path to easy tomato soup starts with roasting

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

There's a cruel irony when it comes to tomato soup: I want to use fresh tomatoes in it, but by the time sweater weather comes around and has me in a soup frame of mind, good local tomatoes are a thing of the past. That has previously left me with just two choices: Wait until next year or use canned tomatoes.

The open-a-can route is an excellent option, really: Those tomatoes are super flavorful and a great timesaver. But Bobby Flay's new book inspired another way to turn out-of-season tomatoes and a mere handful of other ingredients into something good enough to slurp by the spoonful. You roast them, along with a chopped sweet onion, fairly slowly, which concentrates them. Then you simmer them with white wine and herbs.

The topper is everything: Flay's recipe includes instructions for frichi, the crisp Italian disks made from grated and baked cheese. His book, "Bobby Flay Fit" (Clarkson Potter, 2017), is a collection of lighter recipes, and this is his way to evoke the crunch and fat of a grilled cheese sandwich without the butter or bread.

To be fair, Flay instructs you to start this recipe by getting "your hands on great tomatoes." I'll keep that in mind when the local beauties are piling up at the farmers market next summer. It won't be sweater weather, but I suppose I can always chill the soup down and call it gazpacho.

## Tomato Soup With 'Grilled Cheese'

4 servings. Healthy

This recipe works well with peak-season tomatoes, of course, but roasting off-season specimens can yield good results, as well.

Adapted from "Bobby Flay Fit: 200 Recipes for a Healthy Lifestyle" by Bobby Flay with Stephanie Banyas and Sally Jackson (Clarkson Potter, 2017)

### Ingredients

2 pounds vine-ripened tomatoes, hulled and halved if large (see headnote)

1 medium sweet onion, such as Vidalia, coarsely chopped

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more as needed

1 cup dry white wine

Water

4 ounces Gruyere cheese, finely grated

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup packed fresh cilantro, flat-leaf parsley or basil leaves, plus more, chopped, for garnish

### Steps

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.

Toss together the tomatoes, onion, oil,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of the salt and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of the pepper on a rimmed baking sheet, until evenly coated. Roast (middle rack) until the tomatoes and onion are soft but not browned, about an hour. Increase the oven temperature to 400 degrees.

Transfer the mixture to a medium saucepan, add the wine and cook over medium-high heat until the liquid has reduced by half, stirring frequently to prevent scorching. Add enough water to barely cover the tomatoes, and stir in the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of salt and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of pepper. Once the mixture comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium or medium-low so that the liquid is barely bubbling; cook, stirring occasionally, until the flavors come together and the mixture begins to thicken, about



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CHASE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Tomato Soup With 'Grilled Cheese'

20 minutes.

While the soup is cooking, make the "grilled cheese" frichi: Wipe clean the baking sheet you used for the tomatoes and onion, then line it with parchment paper or a silicone liner. Divide the grated cheese into four equal portions, and pile each on the sheet, leaving at least 2 inches between them. Roast (middle rack) until flat, lightly golden

brown all over and crisp at the edges, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then use a metal spatula to carefully transfer them to a plate to cool completely.

Once the soup has thickened, stir in the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of herbs. Use an immersion (stick) blender to puree the soup until smooth. Increase the heat to medium; cook the soup for 5 minutes more.

Taste, and add more salt and pepper, as needed.

To serve, divide the soup among bowls, and top each portion with a frico and some of the chopped herbs.

Nutrition | Per serving: 280 calories, 11 g protein, 13 g carbohydrates, 17 g fat, 6 g saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 430 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 8 g sugar

## MEALS

# Curried corn on the cob is crazy good and made for summer

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

I've long seen many parallels between Indian and Mexican cooking: the layering of complex spices, the love of chiles and beans, the vast diversity of regional cuisines — and plenty of misconceptions on the part of outsiders.

Maybe that explains why, when I first tasted the results of an Indian recipe I tried recently, I thought: It's crazy corn! You know, the fantastic classic Mexican street snack *elote loco*: a grilled cob slathered in mayo, rolled in cheese and sprinkled with ground chile and lime juice. Similar treatments are popular in Central American countries, while American chefs have taken great liberties with the dish, changing up the sauce and spices and adding other crunchy bits to the corn.

At first glance, the dish of Corn on the Cob Curry I made, a recipe featured in Meera Sodha's "Fresh India" (Flatiron Books, 2018) and from Gujarat state, seems nothing like any of those. These cobs (or half-cobs, actually) nestle in a thick, creamy sauce made from ground peanuts, chickpea flour, yogurt and spices, with whole peanuts on top. And you eat them with flatbread or rice. But when I picked up a cob, scattered even more peanuts on it and took a bite, the comparison was impossible to avoid. It was messy and crazy-corn wonderful.

For what it's worth, if the mess bothers you, take note of the fact that *elote* is sometimes served with the corn kernels cut off and tossed in its coatings instead. I tried that with this recipe after my first couple of cobs, and it was delightful that way, too, though perhaps not quite as crazy.



PHOTO BY GORAN KOSANOVIC FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Corn on the Cob Curry

## Corn on the Cob Curry

4 to 6 servings, Healthy

If you can find only salted peanuts, reduce the added salt in this recipe to ½ teaspoon, before tasting and adjusting. You may also substitute the nuts with ¾ cup natural peanut butter.

Serve with rice or flatbread.

Adapted from "Fresh India: 130 Quick, Easy and Delicious Vegetarian Recipes for Every Day," by Meera Sodha (Flatiron Books, 2018)

## Ingredients

6 ears corn, still in their husks  
1 cup unsalted peanuts, preferably red-skinned for visual appeal, plus more for serving (see headnote)  
5 tablespoons canola oil

¾ cup chickpea flour  
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons plain whole-milk Greek yogurt (may substitute low-fat)  
1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed (see headnote)  
½ teaspoon ground turmeric  
1 ½ teaspoons ground red chile, such as Kashmiri  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 ½ cups water, or more as needed

## Steps

Dip the corn cobs, husks and all, in water until thoroughly moistened. Microwave on high until very hot, 10 to 12 minutes.

When they are cool enough to handle, use a sharp knife to cut crosswise through the husk and cob an inch or two from the wide/stem end (opposite from the end

with the tassel of silk). Hold the silk end, then push the corn cob out the other end. Discard any stray silks. Cut each cob in half.

Place the peanuts in a dedicated spice grinder or food processor; grind to a fine consistency.

Pour the oil into a large skillet over medium heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the chickpea flour, whisking to smooth out any lumps (forming a kind of roux). Cook until slightly darkened, about 4 minutes. Add the ground peanuts; reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes, until the mixture is the consistency of thick peanut butter.

Whisk in the yogurt, salt, turmeric, chile powder and sugar. Increase the heat to medium and gradually ladle in the water,

whisking until smooth. Taste, and add more salt, as needed.

Nestle the ears of corn into the sauce, reduce the heat until the sauce is barely bubbling, cover and cook for 5 minutes, until the sauce is the consistency of heavy cream. Add more water as needed to loosen the sauce. The sauce will continue to thicken as it sits (and if you refrigerate leftovers), so you may need to whisk in more water still when you reheat.

Transfer to a serving dish or individual wide, shallow bowls, scatter more peanuts over each portion and serve.

Nutrition | Per serving (based on 6): 470 calories, 15 g protein, 42 g carbohydrates, 31 g fat, 6 g saturated fat, 10 mg cholesterol, 240 mg sodium, 6 g dietary fiber, 14 g sugar

## MEALS

# If you hate a dry sandwich, this vegetable-packed, delectably messy ciabatta is for you

By Joe Yonan

The Washington Post

Nothing disappoints me more than a dry sandwich. So intense are my feelings on this subject that I once threatened on social media to ship a case of mayo to a popular — and now-closed — D.C. sandwich chain before I would ever place another order.

Mayo isn't the only way to get good moisture into a sandwich, naturally. There are your other standard condiments, and I've also had (and made!) great ones enlivened by romesco, vinegar and oil, salsa and more. You name the sauce and it can probably find a place on the right sandwich.

My dear friend Pati Jinich, beloved host of the public television series "Pati's Mexican Table," thinks the same way I do on this subject, even for sandwiches without meat. For a few years now, I've occasionally made one from her most recent cookbook that has you bathe grilled vegetables in a tart cilantro vinaigrette before piling them between ciabatta rolls and topping with cheese.

They're packed with personality — and plenty messy, but that's a trade-off I'm willing to make.

## GRILLED EGGPLANT, ZUCCHINI AND POBLANO CIABATTAS WITH QUESO FRESCO

Active: 30 minutes | Total: 45 minutes  
6 servings

These Mexican-style sandwiches are packed with personality, thanks to grill-



Grilled Eggplant, Zucchini and Poblano Ciabattas With Queso Fresco

WASHINGTON POST PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE

kissed vegetables bathed in a tart cilantro vinaigrette.

Adapted from "Mexican Today" by Pati Jinich. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016

### Ingredients

1 pound poblano chile peppers (3 or 4)  
1 ½ pounds zucchini (about 2 large), trimmed  
1 ½ pounds Italian eggplant (about 1 large), trimmed  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the grill or pan

1 ½ teaspoons fine sea salt, or more as needed

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 cup tightly packed fresh cilantro leaves and upper stems, coarsely chopped (may substitute parsley or mint)

¼ cup canola oil or safflower oil

¼ cup red wine vinegar

2 garlic cloves

½ teaspoon packed dark brown sugar (optional)

6 ciabatta, sourdough or other large crusty rolls  
1 ½ cups (6 ounces)

crumbled queso fresco, mild feta or farmer's cheese (optional)

### Steps

If using a gas grill, pre-heat to medium-high (about 375 degrees). If using a charcoal grill, light the charcoal or wood briquettes; when they are ready, distribute them evenly under the cooking area for direct heat. For a medium-hot fire, you should be able to hold your hand about 6 inches above the coals for about 4 to 5

seconds.

Grill the poblanos until they are blistered and completely charred on the outside, 6 to 8 minutes, turning them frequently with tongs. Transfer them to a bowl and cover with a plate. Let them steam for at least 10 minutes and up to 2 hours. Fill the bowl with water and use your fingers to remove the charred skin, then split open each pepper and discard the stem, cluster of seeds and veins. Pat the peppers dry and tear into strips. (If desired,

you can char the poblanos under an oven broiler instead.)

Cut each zucchini and eggplant in half crosswise, then cut them lengthwise into ¼-inch slices. Brush the zucchini and eggplant slices with the olive oil. Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon of the salt and the pepper. Grill the zucchini and eggplant slices on one side until lightly charred and fork-tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Allow to cool slightly. (If desired, you can cook the eggplant and zucchini until lightly charred on one side under the broiler instead.)

In a blender, combine the cilantro, canola or safflower oil, vinegar, garlic, brown sugar (if using) and the remaining 1 teaspoon salt and puree until smooth. Taste and add more salt, if needed. Pour the vinaigrette into a large bowl. Add the eggplant and zucchini and the poblano strips and gently toss. Let the vegetables sit for at least 5 minutes and up to 30 minutes before assembling the sandwiches.

Split the rolls in half and toast them lightly. Place a generous amount of the dressed vegetables on the bottom halves and top each with ¼ cup of cheese. Put the top halves of the rolls on top, press together, and serve. (If you'd like, you can split the rolls on the top, leave them hinged and stuff the vegetables inside, hot-dog-style.)

Nutrition | Calories: 370; Total Fat: 15 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 940 mg; Carbohydrates: 50 g; Dietary Fiber: 7 g; Sugars: 5 g; Protein: 12 g.

## MEALS

# This genius sauce turns your pasta into a seasonal stunner

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

Some cookbook authors have earned my complete trust, and Amy Chaplin is one of them. I've never made a thing I didn't love from her stunning first book, 2014's "At Home in the Whole Food Kitchen," and have recommended it countless times. So I knew that when the Australian teacher, consultant and personal chef came out with another book, history would surely repeat itself.

Chaplin's "Whole Food Cooking Every Day" (Artisan, 2019) starts with the same philosophy as her first — that cooking with ingredients as close to their natural state as possible can be inspiring and nourishing. But this time, she sets out to make the prospect even more accessible, using base recipes for pastas, soups, nut butters, sauces, beans, muffins and more, and then expanding each with multiple variations.

I plan to cook my way through the book, and I started with a base recipe for pine nut pasta sauce that coated a bowl of whole-wheat spaghetti so beautifully it almost didn't become one of the variations. The chunky puree of toasted pine nuts, olive oil, lemon and salt created the cheesiest nondairy sauce I think I've ever tasted. I immediately added this technique — with pine nuts or another nut — to my repertoire. (A similar thing happened with her first book, when I tried her way with

tempeh, an ingredient I had not yet mastered, and now I rarely make it any other way.)

As instructed by Chaplin, I then tossed the pasta with raw tomatoes I had marinated in more olive oil, balsamic vinegar, basil and garlic and, well, another star was born. Suffice it to say that when my colleagues and I tasted it, we were floored.

In the winter, I'll make another variation, with lemon, red chile pepper and parsley; come spring, there's a bowl of green-pea pasta with pea shoots to be had. If either of them tastes half as good as this summery tomato dish — and I know they will — I'll be so happy.

## SUMMER TOMATO AND BASIL PASTA WITH PINE NUT SAUCE

Active: 15 minutes | Total: 25 minutes  
4 to 6 servings

All the exquisite flavors of the season come together beautifully in this easy-to-make dish. Make it when local tomatoes are at their peak. For extra visual appeal, choose a variety of tomato colors: We used Green Zebra, yellow and red.

Make ahead: The tomatoes can be prepared up to 3 hours in advance.

### Ingredients

½ cup raw pine nuts  
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice



PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Summer Tomato and Basil Pasta With Pine Nut Sauce

¾ teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more as needed

1 ½ pounds ripe tomatoes, cored and cut into ½-inch chunks

1 cup (½ ounce) fresh basil leaves, torn

2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar

1 large garlic clove, pressed or grated

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more as needed

1 12-ounce package pasta, such as penne, spaghetti or fettuccine

### Steps

Warm a medium skillet over medium heat. Toss in the pine nuts and toast, stirring frequently, until fragrant and golden, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a mini food processor and add 3 tablespoons oil, the lemon juice and ½ teaspoon salt. Blend until smooth, scrape the sides and blend again.

(Alternatively, you can use a mortar and pestle to crush the nuts and grind until a paste forms. If you want to use a regular-size food processor, you may need to double the sauce

recipe to get it to blend smoothly. The sauce can be stored in a glass jar in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.)

In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes and their juices, basil, the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, the vinegar, garlic, the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt, and the pepper and toss thoroughly. Taste, and add more salt and pepper, if needed. Set aside to marinate while you cook the pasta. (You can prepare the tomatoes up to 3 hours in advance.)

Cook the pasta in a large

pot of salted water according to the package directions. Drain the pasta well and return to the pot. Add the pine nut sauce and toss to evenly coat the pasta.

Add the pasta to the bowl of tomatoes and gently toss to combine. Taste and season with more salt and pepper, if needed, and serve.

Nutrition (based on 6 servings) | Calories: 400; Total Fat: 21 g; Saturated Fat: 3 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 300 mg; Carbohydrates: 48 g; Dietary Fiber: 8 g; Sugars: 6 g; Protein: 10 g.

## SIDES AND SALADS



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Nectarine Corn Muffins and two variations, including one that's gluten-free.

# The secret to cooking with your favorite summer produce: Keep it simple

**By Julia Turshen**

*Special to The Washington Post*

When we sit down to eat this time of year, we should toast farmers rather than cooks. They've done the heavy lifting, and their produce, in all its ripe glory, allows us home cooks to do so

little and get so much in return. Since I prefer dishes that require minimal effort, summer is my favorite time to be in the kitchen.

Like all things that come and go, summer produce is best celebrated at its peak.

My beloved of-the-moment ingredients, from

juicy tomatoes to fistfuls of soft herbs, invite you to go in so many directions. Whether you bake muffins studded with nectarines, or marinate tomatoes with lots of garlic and red pepper flakes (and whether you toss the tomatoes with pasta or use them as a bed for grilled

fish), the recipes that follow put the bounty front and center. They also offer variations so those muffins can be made with cherries and almonds, or even be vegan and gluten-free. For the tomatoes, you can swap garlic for ginger, vinegar for fish sauce and basil for cilan-

tro. The effect is something completely different, while the method is exactly the same (and so easy, to boot). How about that?

A bit more about the Garlicky Marinated Tomatoes. While you never cook the tomatoes, warming the garlic and red pepper flakes in

oil makes all the difference. That bit of heat allows the flavors to bloom and take over. The tomatoes then sit in a slightly warm bath until they relax back to room temperature. Combined with the natural juices, plus fresh herbs, the ethereal mixture tastes far more



complex than it was to prepare. Then, use the tomatoes on anything and everything. Turn them into a rustic pasta sauce. Top them with grilled fish, chicken, shrimp or eggs (poached ones are particularly nice). Or use them as the topper, crowning grilled bread, sliced mozzarella or crumbled goat cheese. You can even blend leftovers with chopped onion and a pepper and then chill it down for an easy gazpacho.

And then we have sweet corn.

My main idea is Crispy, Smoky Skillet Corn, inspired by an old recipe in Lee Bailey's seminal cookbook "Country Weekends." Lee had you cut the kernels from the cobs, scrape the milky liquid, mix the whole lot with flour and bake it in a hot cast-iron skillet. I use cornmeal in place of flour to keep the flavor at full volume (bonus: it keeps the side dish gluten-free if that's important to you) and cook it in a skillet on my outdoor grill. Anything to keep the oven off, if possible. Plus, you get all that wonderful smoke flavor. The result is a crumbly corn cake that's so crisp on the bottom and tender on top; the combination is simply heaven.

One variation is to grate the corn rather than slice off the kernels. It's a bit of a job, but the result is a creamy mixture almost like a corn pudding or spoon bread. The final variation forgoes cooking altogether: You leave the kernels raw and toss them with a spicy mixture of pickled jalapeños and their brine, along with fresh cilantro and lime juice. Try this on top of grilled steak or a baked sweet potato.

Every so often, the oven is worth turning on. Try baking Nectarine Corn Muffins first thing in the morning — you can make the batter the previous night — before the heat of the day kicks in. Not only will this be kinder to your

air conditioning, but you'll also have the most tender muffins in time for your coffee. The batter is incredibly simple and holds any soft fruit beautifully. The vegan, gluten-free variation works just as well. If you want to skip baking altogether, slice your ripe stone fruits and put them in the bottom of your wine glasses before topping with ice-cold rosé or white wine. The time of day is unimportant.

Soft herbs are irresistible in summer, whether you grow them in your yard or a window box, or pick them up by the armful at the farmers market. I'm talking Italian parsley, basil, mint, chives, tarragon, cilantro and chervil. I love using them in large quantities in just about everything, including a brown rice salad studded with almonds and raisins, rich pestos and creamy salad dressings.

Last, there's summer squash, which even has "summer" in its name. It's one of the most versatile items I know, and I think it's often underrated. Grate it into simple fritters that turn golden and crisp, and you've got just the thing to go with your evening cocktail. Or grill the squash and top it with crunchy pistachios and fragrant mint.

Or do what I do nearly every night: Slice it thin, toss it with olive oil and lemon, sprinkle it with salt and parsley and add a bit of shaved Parmesan. A knife, a board and a bowl are all you need. It's perfect with a piece of chicken or a hot dog off the grill, alongside eggs in the morning, or on its own in a bowl on a porch with an iced tea nearby, condensation dripping down the outside of the glass.

From my kitchen to yours, it's summer.

### Crispy, Smoky Skillet Corn

4 servings

The secret to this corn is

to get your cast-iron skillet piping hot. Whether you use an outdoor grill or a hot oven, the pan's heat is essential to creating the irresistibly crisp crust on the corn.

See the two variations below.

From cookbook author Julia Turshen

#### Ingredients

6 ears corn, shucked  
1/3 cup coarsely ground cornmeal  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
1 tablespoon bacon fat (may substitute unsalted butter, olive oil or canola oil)

#### Steps

Place an 8-inch cast-iron skillet on an outdoor grill set to medium-high or in a 425-degree oven to heat up for at least 10 minutes.

Cut the kernels off the corn cobs and place them in a large bowl.

Use the blunt edge of your knife to scrape the milky liquid from the cobs into the same bowl; reserve the cobs for another use, if desired. Add the cornmeal and salt to the bowl and stir well to combine.

Place the bacon fat in the scorching-hot skillet and tilt the skillet so that the fat coats the bottom and sides. Add the corn mixture and pat down in an even layer. Cover the grill; cook for 15 minutes, until the top of the corn is bright yellow and the underside has formed a beautiful, crispy crust. Or roast (middle rack) in the oven for about 30 minutes.

Use a round-edged knife to loosen the edges of the corn, and a flexible spatula, as needed, and carefully invert the corn onto a serving platter. Serve right away.

Variations: To make Creamy Grated Skillet Corn, instead of cutting the kernels off the 6 corn cobs, grate them on the large-holed side of a box grater. Omit the cornmeal, but be sure to mix the salt into the grated corn. Proceed with



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Garlicky Marinated Tomatoes with two variations



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Simple

FROM PAGE 25

the rest of the recipe as directed above. The mixture will cook into an almost pudding-like texture.

To make Raw Corn Salad With Pickled Jalapeños and Cilantro, skip the cooking. Combine the kernels and scraped corn cob liquid from the 6 ears of corn with 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt, 3 tablespoons olive oil, 1 ½ tablespoons minced pick-

led jalapeños, 1 tablespoon brine from the jar (or can) of pickled jalapeños, 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice and 1 large handful finely chopped fresh cilantro. The yield is about 4 cups.

**Nutrition | Per serving:** 170 calories, 5 g protein, 31 g carbohydrates, 5 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 590 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 10 g sugar

**Nutrition | Per serving (Raw Corn Salad With Pickled Jalapeños and Cilantro):** 230 calories, 6 g protein, 32 g carbohydrates, 13 g fat, 2 g

saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 570 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 10 g sugar

### Garlicky Marinated Tomatoes

4 servings (makes about 2 cups)

See two flavor variations below.

**MAKE AHEAD:** The tomatoes need to marinate at room temperature for at least 15 minutes, and up to 3 hours, before serving.

From cookbook author Julia Turshen

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 small cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 pound ripe tomatoes, each cut in half if small; cored and coarsely chopped if large
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, or more as needed
- 1 small handful fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

### Steps

Combine the oil, garlic and crushed red pepper flakes in a small skillet over medium heat. Once the garlic starts to sizzle (about 30 seconds), pour the mixture into a mixing bowl, making sure to scrape the pan with a wooden spoon to get every little bit.

Add the tomatoes, vinegar and salt, stirring well to incorporate. Taste and add more salt, as needed (tomatoes love salt). Let the tomatoes sit for at least

15 minutes before serving, or cover them and let them sit at room temperature for up to 3 hours. Right before serving, stir in the basil. The yield is about 2 cups.

**Variations:** To make Vietnamese-Style Marinated Tomatoes, add 1 tablespoon peeled/minced fresh ginger root to the pan along with the garlic and crushed red pepper flakes. Substitute fish sauce for the sherry vinegar (same amount). Just before serving, add 1 small handful each of coarsely chopped fresh cilantro,

mint and basil (preferably Thai basil).

To make Puttanesca-Style Marinated Tomatoes, add 4 broken-up anchovies and 2 tablespoons capers to the pan along with the garlic and crushed red pepper flakes. Just before serving, add a large handful of coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley and a large handful of pitted/chopped green or black olives.

**Nutrition** | Per serving: 120 calories, 1 g protein, 5 g carbohydrates, 11 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium, 1 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar

### Nectarine Corn Muffins

12 muffins

This muffin batter is incredibly easy and creates tender muffins that aren't too sweet.

Try using any type of stone fruit (including cherries) in place of, or in addition to, the nectarines. For gluten-free and/or vegan bakers, try the second variation below.

**MAKE AHEAD:** The muffins can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

From cookbook author Julia Turshen

### Ingredients

1 ¼ cups flour  
½ cup yellow cornmeal  
1/3 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 large egg, lightly beaten  
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted  
¾ cup regular buttermilk  
8 ounces nectarines (from 1 large or 2 small), pitted and cut into ½-inch dice

### Steps

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a 12-well, standard-size muffin pan with paper liners.

Whisk together the flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and

salt in a mixing bowl, until well incorporated.

Combine the egg, melted butter and buttermilk in a large bowl and whisk well to combine.

Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and stir until just combined, then stir in the nectarines.

Distribute the batter evenly among the prepared muffin cups, filling them all the way to the top. Bake (middle rack) for 30 minutes, until the muffins are golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center of each one comes out clean. Cool to room temperature before eating.

**Variations:** To make Any Stone Fruit Muffins, substitute pitted and chopped fresh plums, peaches, apricots and/or cherries for the nectarines. If you use cherries, try adding ¼ teaspoon almond extract to the batter, along with ½ cup sliced almonds.

To make Vegan, Gluten-Free Muffins, substitute your favorite all-purpose gluten-free baking mix for the flour. Instead of the eggs, butter and buttermilk, use 1 tablespoon ground flax seeds, 2 tablespoons water, ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce, ¼ cup olive oil plus ½ cup of your favorite non-dairy milk.

**Nutrition** | Per muffin: 180 calories, 3 g protein, 23 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 8 g sugar

**Nutrition** | Per vegan muffin (using almond milk): 150 calories, 2 g protein, 24 g carbohydrates, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 150 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 7 g sugar

### Brown Rice and Herb Salad

4 to 6 servings, Healthy

When you want a substantial side dish but can't bear the heat, try this cold rice salad — it has nearly as many herbs as there are rice kernels. If you want to make this super fast, pick

up cooked rice from a Chinese takeout restaurant or use frozen/thawed rice.

For other ways to use tons of soft herbs, try either of the two variations below.

**MAKE AHEAD:** The salad can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. Bring to room temperature before serving.

From cookbook author Julia Turshen

### Ingredients

4 cups cooked brown rice (long- or short-grain), at room temperature  
¼ cup olive oil  
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
3 loosely packed cups soft herbs (such as Italian parsley, basil, mint, chives, tarragon, cilantro, and/or chervil), tough stems discarded, coarsely chopped  
¼ cup dried currants (may substitute raisins)  
¼ cup roasted salted almonds, coarsely chopped

### Steps

Combine the rice, oil, vinegar, salt, herbs, dried currants and almonds in a large serving bowl and toss well to incorporate. Serve right away, at room temperature, or let sit covered at room temperature for up to 2 hours before serving.

**Variations:** To make about 1 cup of Any-Soft-Herb Pesto (vegan), combine the following ingredients in a food processor: 2 small chopped garlic cloves, 1/3 cup unsalted nuts and about 3 loosely packed cups of stemmed herbs. Pulse until finely chopped. With the motor running, drizzle in about ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, forming a rich green paste. Taste and season lightly with salt. Some of Julia Turshen's favorite pesto combinations are pistachios and mint; walnuts, pine nuts, flat-leaf parsley and basil; and peanuts with cilantro.

To make about 1 ½ cups of Creamy Any-Soft-Herb Goddess Dressing, combine 2 small minced gar-



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Summer Squash Fritters With Buttermilk Dressing with two variations

lic cloves, about 3 loosely packed cups of fresh soft herbs, ½ cup mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar and 2 tablespoons water in a blender. Puree until smooth. Season lightly with salt.

**Nutrition** | Per serving

(based on 6; with 1 cup of Any-Soft-Herb Pesto in the salad; using walnuts, mint, parsley and basil): 410 calories, 7 g protein, 39 g carbohydrates, 26 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium, 5 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugar

**Nutrition** | Per 2-tablespoon serving of Creamy Any-Soft-Herb Goddess Dressing; using regular mayonnaise, mint, parsley and basil: 70 calories, 0 g protein, 1 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Crispy, Smoky Skillet Corn

## Produce

FROM PAGE 27

mg cholesterol, 80 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 0 g sugar

### Summer Squash Fritters With Buttermilk Dressing

4 servings (makes about 20 fritters)

Try them on a salad and drizzle everything with the buttermilk dressing for an easy vegetarian meal.

See the two variations below — in one, the squash takes a brief turn on the grill, and in the other, there's no cooking at all.

(FYI: No nutritional analysis for the fritters was available.)

From cookbook author Julia Turshen

#### Ingredients

½ cup buttermilk  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
1 large clove garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons minced fresh chives (may substitute flat-leaf parsley)  
Kosher salt  
½ cup flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 pound summer squash (about 4 medium), ends trimmed, coarsely grated  
1 large egg, beaten

About ¼ cup vegetable oil, for frying

#### Steps

Whisk together the buttermilk, mayonnaise, vinegar, garlic, chives and ½ teaspoon of the salt in a medium bowl.

Whisk together the flour, baking powder and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl.

Place the grated squash in the center of a clean kitchen towel and wrap it up tightly. Wring out the liquid over the sink.

Unwrap the squash and add it to the bowl with the flour mixture along with the egg; stir until everything is well combined.

Line a plate with paper towels.

Heat ¼ cup of the oil in a large, heavy nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil shimmers (a little bit of the fritter mixture will sizzle upon contact), drop in tablespoonfuls of the batter, without crowding them, and use the back of the spoon to press each mound into a flat pancake.

Cook the fritters until the undersides are browned, about 3 minutes, then carefully turn them and cook until the second sides are nicely browned, for about 2 minutes. Transfer to the lined plate. Fry the remaining batter in batches, adding the remaining oil to the skillet as needed.

Sprinkle the warm fritters with a little salt. Serve

right away, with the buttermilk dressing for dipping.

Variations: To make Grilled Summer Squash With Pistachios and Mint, cut the squash into planks or thick rounds, coat lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Cook on a medium-hot grill until marked all over and tender, then place on a serving platter. Squeeze over a little fresh lemon and top with pistachio kernels that you've toasted and coarsely chopped and plenty of torn mint.

To make a Shaved Squash and Parm Salad, use a very sharp knife, vegetable peeler or a mandoline to cut the squash lengthwise into very thin slices.

Dress lightly with olive oil and fresh lemon juice and season lightly with salt. Arrange on a platter and top with lots of shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and a little finely chopped flat-leaf parsley. Serve right away.

Nutrition | Per serving of Grilled Summer Squash With Pistachios and Mint: 100 calories, 3 g protein, 7 g carbohydrates, 7 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 150 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar

Nutrition | Per serving of Shaved Squash and Parm Salad: 80 calories, 4 g protein, 4 g carbohydrates, 6 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 240 mg sodium, 1 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Fire up your peaches for a bright summer salsa

By Cathy Barrow

Special To The Washington Post

I should have known better.

After all, there was the Thai chile incident, when one plant produced more than 200 chiles. And yet, I added two small jalapeño plants to my terrace garden. I thought it might be handy to have a ready source for the most-used chile in my kitchen. I didn't expect 47 jalapeños every two weeks.

I was enjoying the ability to pluck a jalapeño from the garden for a curry dinner, for pad thai, for bean soup. Then the pace picked up. I was harvesting a dozen or more jalapeños every week. I took "flowers" to friends — two leafy branches, each holding five plump, green chiles. I pickled enough sliced chiles for a year of Taco Tuesdays. And still, they continued to ripen.

Overwhelmed by plump green pods, and with a bowl of ripening peaches on the counter, I was inspired to try something new. It worked out so well, now I don't know if I planted enough jalapeños. Charred peaches and jalapeños join for a sauce or salsa that serves as a snapshot of summer flavors.

It's a straightforward collaboration: Roast the jalapeños, peaches and white onion, and add honey, lime juice and coriander to hold it all together.

At a neighborhood potluck, we pondered: Is this a sauce, a garnish a dip? No one could classify the fruity condiment that made friends with everything on the plate. The high heat brings out the sweetness of the onion, the jammy acidity of the fruit, and the complexity of the chile. The combination tastes like the very best moments of late summer.

Use nearly overripe peaches for the best results. The skin slips right off after roasting. Use a blender to whirl the roasted ingredients into a smooth sauce, to spoon over carnitas or barbacoa tacos, or hand chop for a chunky salsa that sits atop grilled fish or chicken. It's dip-able, it's spoonable. It's a condiment that can be



Peach and Jalapeño Salsa

PHOTO BY JENNIFER CHASE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

splashed over a corn and tomato salad or served alongside grains and greens.

Because the onion is only partially cooked, its bite will increase over time; to keep this peachy salsa bright and delicious, serve it soon after it's made. While it would be tempting to want to keep such a fresh, lively salsa on the shelf to enjoy anytime during the year, this is not a recipe that will can or freeze well. Too little acid, impossible to estimate pH, and too much onion to be safe for canning.

This salsa, like summer, is best enjoyed in the moment.

## Peach and Jalapeño Salsa

8 servings (makes 2 cups)

A handful of ingredients melds with chile heat for a fresh, zingy salsa or sauce, whose nomenclature is entirely dependent on how vigorously you chop or blend. This a peak-summer delight, to be served alongside fish, tofu and

chicken, and as a topping for tacos and a corn and tomato salad.

The fruit and vegetables can be cooked on the grill, a traditional Mexican comal or in a well-seasoned grill pan on the stove top.

Make ahead: The salsa can be refrigerated for up to 1 day; its flavor and color grow dull when kept longer. This is not a candidate for freezing or canning, because of its variable pH.

## Ingredients

- ½ medium white onion
- 3 ripe, baseball-size peaches, cut in half and pitted (1 ½ pounds total)
- 2 plump jalapeño peppers, cut in half from top to bottom, ribs and seeds removed
- 1 teaspoon ancho chile powder
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
- ½ teaspoon coriander seed, crushed

½ teaspoon kosher salt, or more as needed

1 teaspoon minced cilantro leaves, for garnish

## Steps

Position an oven rack about 6 inches from the broiler element; preheat the broiler. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil.

Arrange the onion half, peaches and jalapeños, cut sides up, on the baking sheet. Sprinkle them with the ancho chile powder. Broil for 10 to 12 minutes, turning the sheet as needed, until all the pieces' edges are blistered and blackened.

Transfer the mixture to a cutting board. Discard the peach halves' skins, which should slip off easily.

For a smooth hot sauce, coarsely chop the broiled onion, jalapeños and peaches, then combine in a blender. Puree until fairly smooth, then stop to add the honey, lime juice, coriander seed and salt; pu-

ree until smooth. Taste, and add more salt, as needed.

To make a chunky salsa, combine the onion, jalapeños and peaches in a food processor; pulse just long enough to reduce the mixture to smaller, discrete pieces. (Alternatively, you can chop the ingredients by hand.) Transfer to a bowl; stir in the honey, lime juice, coriander seed and salt. Taste, and add more salt, as needed.

Garnish the smooth hot sauce or chunky salsa with the cilantro and serve right away, with lime wedges.

Nutrition | Per ¼ cup serving of salsa: 30 calories, 0 g protein, 7 g carbohydrates, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 70 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 6 g sugar

Nutrition | Per 1 tablespoon serving of sauce: 5 calories, 0 g protein, 2 g carbohydrates, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 20 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 1 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Soft-Cooked Summer Squash With Onion

# FORGET CRISP-TENDER IN SUMMER, I CHANNEL GRANDMA

**By Emily Horton**  
*Special to The Washington Post*

My grandmother's way with summer's pebble-skinned, canary yellow crookneck summer squash was to cook it with browned onions until it was falling apart, then cook it a little bit past that.

It came out of the pot spreadable as jam, concentrated and melting, its

sweetness hemmed by lashings of black pepper.

Hers is the approach I have in mind when I cook summer squash and zucchini, cut into thin discs and braised slowly just until they start to collapse.

I love squash in other ways, too — grated raw for an herb-strewn salad or seared in a hot pan until its edges caramelize to a deep burnish — but nothing

quite captures its buttery, creamy flavor like sweating it in its own juices.

Cooking vegetables to total tenderness — until, some would say, they're done — isn't the American way with the produce of summer. Braising and stewing and sweating are techniques we turn to in cooler months, when spending time at the stove feels more like respite than duty.

In the hot months of summer, our inclination is toward the salad bowl and the grill, for summoning sensations of taste and texture that contrast, rather than align, with the summer heat and humidity.

But look to the silky braised greens of the deep South, or the slowly caramelized medley of peppers, onions and zucchini known in Turkey as marmouma, or

the sweet and creamy eggplant-sauced pastas of Italy, and you'll see a powerfully delicious reason to keep summer vegetables on the stove.

Cooking them low and slow develops flavors that brief cooking merely skims.

It coaxes them into denser, sweeter, more melon and yet more intensely flavored versions of themselves.

## Let's get started

My favorite example of this transformation is the flat, mossy-hued green bean typically referred to as a Romano bean. Even when raw, this type of bean can have a remarkable depth of flavor; the integrity of its snap is something to marvel over. Sautéed or steamed until al dente, its character is little moved, the flavor still a lit-

tle grassy, its juicy crunch subdued but still intact.

Cooked slowly over a gentle flame for an hour or more, with a little garlic, a glug of oil and a few tablespoons of water, Romanos are transformed. They are dense and meaty, exquisitely beany, the texture tender and supple. They beg to be eaten from the pot over the stove, from the refrigerator with fingers. Paired with some good cheese and a hunk of bread, they can stand in for dinner on a low-key night.

The same general idea can be applied to zucchini, string beans, green peas, asparagus, leafy greens, bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage, and fennel.

For every vegetable, the precise cooking time and the amount of liquid you may add will vary depending on variety, age and size. "It's not really about length of time; it's more about the yield that determines when they're done. Each vegetable will tell you," says chef and author Gabrielle Hamilton.

She compares soft-cooked vegetables to slow-cooked meat, clarifying that the process isn't about overcooking: "It's about opening the vegetable up until it starts to get juicy and starts to run and has a more slippery and delicious quality."

If the heat is too high, the vegetables will cook unevenly, breaking down before sufficiently cooking through. Too much water, and they'll leach much of their flavor into the cooking liquid — a recipe for good pot liquor, but only if you'll be drinking it.

### Just right

Too much of both is just a short step away from boiling, a likely cause of many long-held vegetable grievances. It's also the surest route to nutrient loss, as those vitamins go into the cooking liquid, too. But there's an easy fix: "If the cooking water is to be con-



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Braised Okra With Tomatoes, Peppers and Spices

sumed as a part of the dish ... then overall nutrient retention will be high, regardless of temperature (usually simmering) or time," Robert Parker, professor of nutritional sciences at Cornell University, told me in an email.

So use as little liquid as possible, and serve the vegetables with their concentrated juices. The heat should be low to moderate, the liquid barely enough to burble around the vegetables' contours. If your vegetables are juicy enough to start, you may not need liquid at all.

Higher-water-content

summer squash or broccoli will soften more quickly than denser, lower-water-content choices such as kale or pole beans, but this is not a process to rush.

My favorite recipes for long-cooked vegetables take around an hour on the stove, but it's a relatively idle one; they mostly take care of themselves, as long as you're free to offer a turn of the spatula every now and again.

One advisory: Best not to look to this method as a means of salvation for produce that should have been cooked days before.

You can, to a degree, hide

a tired vegetable's shortcomings by overwhelming it with other flavors, whether in a soup, a stew or a vegetable stock, although it won't pull its own weight in contributions to the dish.

### Hefty and mature

When that vegetable is standing alone, there's nothing to hide behind, not heat or salt or fat. Those things only amplify what you have to begin with, so the more you have — the more you have. (If you don't believe there's much to suffer in cooking old veg, try braising some just-harvested greens alongside a bunch

you purchased a week ago and comparing the results.)

What you should assign to this approach are your oversized and overgrown, those mature specimens whose time on the vine or the stalk has left them deeply flavorful but a little callous. Cooking them slowly and gently lends them some grace and puts a finer point on their complex flavor.

This is especially apt for leafy greens, particularly brassicas such as turnips, cabbage, mustards and kale, which often lose sweetness and tenderness while picking up pungency

in the summer heat. It's in a covered pot this season, not a salad bowl, that they find realization, and some submission.

My favorite recipes will give you a starting point. Try them on a rainy day or a cloudy one. Pair them with something raw, something steamed, something fried; the diversity itself will be refreshing.

Then, if you're fortunate enough to have extra, put up some summer vegetables in the freezer. In the deep of winter, cooked slowly until their flavors deepen, they will issue promises of what lies ahead.

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Picnic-ready, classic slaw gets a healthful upgrade and a flavor boost

By **Ellie Krieger**

*Special To The Washington Post*

Coleslaw is a good friend to me all summer long.

This is the version that's on my table so often that making it feels breezily familiar — thinly slice the cabbage and onion, grate the carrot, then toss it with the creamy-tangy dressing. It is cool company for other summer fare, from whatever's on the grill to picnic sandwiches and salad spreads, and it holds up well in the refrigerator for days, so you can pull it out as needed to fuel the summer fun without missing a beat.

It's flexible, accommodating whatever ingredients are on hand — any type of cabbage will do, plus any other sturdy vegetable, such as fennel, jicama, bell pepper or radish; and something oniony, such as scallion or sweet white onion. Sometimes I gussy it up with a sprinkle of caraway, sunflower or pumpkin seeds, and/or add a fistful of dried fruit, such as golden raisins, chopped apricots or cherries.

Like a trusted friend, this slaw is a dish that makes life more pleasurable and a little easier. I'm happy to introduce you to it here.

## NEW CLASSIC COLESLAW

Active: 15 minutes | Total: 15 minutes, plus 30 mins to 8 hours chilling time

6 to 8 servings

This slaw has all the familiar flavors of a clas-



PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### New Classic Coleslaw

sic coleslaw — cool, crisp cabbage, sweet shreds of carrot and a kick of sliced red onion in a lusciously creamy dressing. But this version is much more healthful, because rather than the typical heaps of mayonnaise, it has just a touch, and it gets much of its creaminess from Greek yogurt.

Make ahead: The slaw needs to sit, refrigerated, for at least 30 minutes and up to overnight before serving.

Storage notes: The slaw can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

### Ingredients

½ cup plain low-fat

Greek yogurt

¼ cup mayonnaise  
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon honey  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

8 cups very thinly sliced green cabbage (from 1 medium cabbage)

½ cup coarsely grated

carrot (1 medium carrot)

¼ cup thinly sliced red onion

### Steps

In a large bowl, whisk together the yogurt, mayonnaise, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper. Add the cabbage, carrot, onion and toss well to combine. Cover and refrigerate for at least

30 minutes and up to overnight, so the cabbage softens a bit. Toss well before serving.

Nutrition (based on 8 servings) | Calories: 86; Total Fat: 6 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 8 mg; Sodium: 226 mg; Carbohydrates: 7 g; Dietary Fiber: 2 g; Sugars: 5 g; Protein: 1 g.



## SIDES AND SALADS



PHOTO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST BY TOM MCCORKLE

Ceviche-Style Shrimp Cocktail With Green Grapes

# HALF CEVICHE, HALF SHRIMP COCKTAIL

## THIS COOL, BRIGHT DISH IS THOROUGHLY REFRESHING

**By Ellie Krieger**

*Special To The Washington Post*

In the height of summer, my appetite often settles into a no-man's land where I'm genuinely hungry but find myself stuck in a lackadaisical funk in which I just don't feel like eating. It's as if the act of consuming food generates more heat than it's worth. Luckily, there are recipes like this cool, fresh shrimp cocktail to snap me out of it, satisfying my hunger while also cooling me down.

This recipe is made in the style of ceviche where citrus-marinated seafood gets tossed

with a little jalapeño, scallions and a handful of cilantro. Riffing on that traditional flavor, I added a hydrating crunch of cucumber, and — a move I think really completes it — sweet, juicy, green grapes.

I went with cooked shrimp instead of the raw fish traditional ceviche calls for, in part because I wanted that shrimp-cocktail vibe, and also because cooking shrimp eliminates any sense of urgency. (Although the fish in ceviche is often referred to as “cooked” in the citrus, the acidic marinade only changes its texture so it seems cooked.) Using cooked shrimp, and holding back

the cilantro just before serving, means you can refrigerate this dish for up to a day.

Served chilled, with cool hues of green, pale pink and white, I can't think of anything more delightfully appetizing on a sweltering day.

### Ceviche-Style Shrimp Cocktail With Green Grapes

Tested size: 4 servings

#### Ingredients

1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
1 cup seeded and diced Eng-

lish cucumber

1 cup (about 6 ounces) halved green grapes

3 large scallions, thinly sliced, light green and white parts only

1 medium jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped

½ cup fresh lime juice (from about 5 limes)

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

½ cup fresh cilantro leaves

#### Directions

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and prepare a large bowl of ice water. Cook the shrimp in the boiling water until they are just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a large slotted spoon or

spider, transfer the shrimp to the ice bath to cool completely, then drain well. Chop each shrimp into three pieces.

Transfer the shrimp to a large bowl and add the cucumber, grapes, scallions and jalapeño. Season with the lime juice and salt and toss to combine. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Add the cilantro just before serving and toss to combine. Serve cold.

Nutrition: Calories: 127; Total Fat: 1 g; Saturated Fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 143 mg; Sodium: 740 mg; Carbohydrates: 13 g; Dietary Fiber: 1 g; Sugars: 8 g; Protein: 16 g.

## SIDES AND SALADS

# A simple, tasty pasta recipe that will help you dispatch that zucchini

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

Every year, there's a zucchini problem, and it goes something like this: Too many zucchini, not enough ideas.

Oh, sure, you can avoid them. That is, if you're not a gardener who planted them, or a community-supported-agriculture subscriber who gets them in your box, or a market shopper who was seduced by the stacks of green.

As a vegetarian dedicated to seasonal eating, I usually eat my fill for as long as they're around, and even miss them when they're gone. Well, maybe a few months after they're gone.

Until then, here's another idea for cooking them simply: You coarsely grate the zucchini, cook it with onion and garlic, brighten the lot with lemon juice, and toss it with pappardelle pasta and pine nuts.

The zucchini almost disappears (a boon if you — or your dinner guests — aren't a fan), and the dish tastes summery and fresh. Best of all, you've dispatched another couple of zucchinis in the process.

## Zucchini and Lemon Pappardelle With Pine Nuts

4 servings, Healthy

Adapted from "15 Minute Vegan: Fast, Modern Cooking" by Katy Beskow (Quadrille, 2017)

### Ingredients

½ teaspoon fine sea



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Zucchini and Lemon Pappardelle With Pine Nuts

salt, plus more as needed  
8 ounces dried pappardelle

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped (about 1 cup)

1 clove garlic, chopped

2 medium zucchinis (12 ounces total), trimmed and coarsely grated

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or

more as needed

¼ cup pine nuts, toasted (see note)

Handful fresh basil leaves

### Steps

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the pappardelle and cook according to the package directions, until al dente, then drain.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Stir in the onion and garlic; cook until the onion starts to soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the zucchini and increase the heat to medium; cook, stirring frequently, until the zucchini is tender but not mushy, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice, the

½ teaspoon of salt and the pepper.

Toss the cooked pappardelle into the pan with the zucchini to coat evenly. Taste, and add more salt and pepper, as needed.

Transfer to a serving platter, drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil, and scatter the pine nuts and basil on top.

Note: Toast the pine

nuts in a small, dry skillet over medium heat until fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes, shaking the pan a few times to avoid scorching. Let cool completely before serving or storing.

Nutrition | Per serving: 380 calories, 10 g protein, 46 g carbohydrates, 19 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 75 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium, 4 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS

# A spicy, smoky potato salad with Spanish aspirations

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

If you've ever had the classic Spanish dish patatas bravas, you understand its power.

Fried potatoes with a spicy, smoky sauce: If they're within my reach at a good restaurant, they're history. And if any of my dining companions are foolish enough to reach too slowly for their share, they're out of luck. Best order your own portion.

I confess to never making them at home because, well, I fear that they wouldn't even make it to the table. But I recently discovered how to get my fix in a healthier way. It's a brilliant idea, really, from the team behind the vegan restaurant Smith & Daughters in Melbourne, Australia.

They're Mo Wyse, a U.S. expat who is the business mind behind the restaurant, and Shannon Martinez, the cook. Martinez isn't vegan, and the pair says that is the secret to her ability to make vegan food that appeals to everyone. "Thanks to Shannon's ingenuity and direct contact," Wyse writes in the book, "she's convinced some serious meat eaters that her creations aren't missing anything, least of all the meat."

I haven't been to Melbourne (yet), so I can't speak firsthand to whether the restaurant succeeds in that regard. But based on one recipe I've tried in their book, they do seem to be onto something.

Martinez has Spanish roots on her father's side, and the Spanish Potato Salad With Chickpeas is enrobed in a dressing with the same smoky punch as the bravas sauce I can't get enough of at, say, Jaleo. By using it on boiled, not fried potatoes, and adding sliced tomato, onion and chickpeas, Martinez manages to lighten up the dish while keeping the variety of textures that is part of its appeal.

The dressing recipe calls for a few tablespoons of ajvar, a Serbian red pepper relish that's not so easy to find. Rather than make some myself, I subbed in simple



PHOTO BY GORAN KOSANOVIC FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Spanish Potato Salad With Chickpeas

jarred roasted red peppers.

There are so many other flavor boosters in the dressing — sherry vinegar, crushed red pepper flakes, smoked paprika and more — that it turned out beautifully.

The recipe makes a lot of dressing — up to ½ cup more than you might want or need. But you won't be surprised to read that I don't think that's a problem. Save it for another potato another day, and you'll be happy.

## Spanish Potato Salad With Chickpeas

6 servings

This riff turns the classic Spanish dish of fried potatoes with spicy sauce (patatas bravas) into a cold salad. The potatoes are boiled rather than fried, which makes it lighter, while tomatoes, sliced onions and chickpeas offer

more texture and protein.

Make ahead: The sauce can be refrigerated for up to 1 week; bring it to room temperature before making the salad.

Adapted from "Smith & Daughters: A Cookbook (That Happens To Be Vegan)," by Shannon Martinez and Mo Wyse (Hardie Grant, 2017)

### Ingredients

For the salad  
2 pounds fingerling or new potatoes, scrubbed  
1 tablespoon kosher salt  
½ small red onion, thinly sliced into half moons (about ¼ cup)  
2 large tomatoes, cored, seeded and cut into thin strips

One 15-ounce can no-salt-added chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Small handful flat-leaf parsley, chopped

For the dressing

¼ cup jarred roasted red pepper, drained

2 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
½ large tomato, seeds removed  
1 large clove garlic

½ to 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

¼ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon ground turmeric

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

½ teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

### Steps

For the salad: Place the potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Add the salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook until the potatoes can be just pierced through with a knife, about 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and cut into thick slices, then transfer to a large bowl.

Meanwhile, make the dressing: Blend the roasted peppers, sherry vinegar, ½ tomato, garlic, crushed red pepper flakes (to taste), cumin, turmeric, oregano, smoked paprika, salt and pepper in a blender. With the motor running, slowly add the oil until an emulsified dressing forms. The yield is 1 ¾ cups.

To assemble, add the onion, tomatoes, chickpeas and parsley to the potatoes. Pour about 1 ¼ cups of the dressing over the salad, then gently lift and toss to coat. The potatoes will soak up some of the dressing as the salad sits; add the remaining ½ cup if you'd like. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.

Nutrition | Per serving (using 1 ¼ cups dressing): 250 calories, 4 g protein, 30 g carbohydrates, 14 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 380 mg sodium, 4 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Creamy burrata and spicy salsa verde make this a Caprese salad like no other

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

The Caprese salad is classic for a reason: In the summertime, when tomatoes are at their peak, combining them with basil and fresh mozzarella, sprinkling on a little salt, olive oil and maybe some vinegar is a simple path to a refreshing dish.

And yet, you can easily take things up a notch or three, as I did when I made a version from Jessica Elliott Dennison's "Salad Feasts" (Hardie Grant Books, 2018). It's smart enough to add in some nectarines for their floral sweetness, but she also subs in burrata for regular mozzarella, for extra creamy indulgence. And instead of basil, she drizzles on an Italian-style salsa verde made with chopped herbs, garlic, capers, anchovies, olive oil and vinegar.

I wanted to pull back on the number of ingredients, so in place of Dennison's salsa verde, I chose a store-bought Mexican one (my favorite brand is Rick Bayless's Frontera), based on tomatillos, cilantro and chiles. I blended in some fresh basil leaves to straddle the two cuisines — and loved the punch of spice it brought to the dish.

## Tomato, Nectarine and Burrata Salad

4 servings

This is a simple step up from the classic Caprese salad, with store-bought salsa verde (enlivened with fresh basil) adding a punch of spice.

Adapted from "Salad



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CHASE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Tomato, Nectarine and Burrata Salad

Feasts: How to Assemble the Perfect Meal," by Jessica Elliott Dennison (Hardie Grant, 2018)

### Ingredients

1 ½ pounds ripe tomatoes, at room temperature, cored and chopped into big, irregular shapes

2 large, ripe nectarines, at room temperature,

halved, pitted and torn into large chunks

2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

½ teaspoon flaky sea salt

1 teaspoon sugar

4 slices sourdough bread

½ cup store-bought salsa verde (such as Frontera brand)

¼ cup packed basil leaves

2 medium balls burrata (may substitute fresh mozzarella or best-quality imported feta)

### Steps

In a medium bowl, combine the tomatoes and nectarines with the vinegar, oil, salt and sugar, and gently toss to combine. Let mari-

nate while you toast or grill the bread on both sides.

In a food processor, combine the salsa verde and basil leaves and blend until incorporated but not super-smooth. (Alternatively, chop the basil and stir it into the salsa verde.)

Spoon the tomato mixture, including all the marinade juices, onto a large

serving platter. Tear the burrata into large pieces and add to the platter. Drizzle the salsa verde to finish, and serve with the bread.

Nutrition | Per serving: 430 calories, 23 g protein, 43 g carbohydrates, 21 g fat, 13 g saturated fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 850 mg sodium, 4 g dietary fiber, 13 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CHASE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Roasted Zucchini, Potato and Burrata Salad

# The dinner salad you could eat every week through summer

**By Bonnie S. Benwick**  
*The Washington Post*

Just the look of this salad is enough to make you want to dig right in, isn't it? It features the interplay of warm and cool, roasted and toasted, soft and crisp.

There's minimal prep work and one-pan ease for the oven-browned chunks of zucchini and tender yellow-fleshed potatoes.

I especially like the mix of different greens: Dandelion greens, mache and basil work well here, but keep the combination of watercress, purslane and butter lettuce in mind for another time.

You don't even have to make a dressing. Drizzles of extra-vir-

gin olive oil and sherry vinegar do the trick.

## Roasted Zucchini, Potato and Burrata Salad

4 servings

Adapted from "Dinner Made Simple: 35 Everyday Ingredients, 350 Easy Recipes," by the editors of Real Simple magazine (Oxmoor House, 2016)

### Ingredients

8 ounces burrata cheese (may substitute fresh mozzarella)  
2 or 3 medium zucchini (11 to 14 ounces total)

1 pound small Dutch gold or Yukon Gold potatoes

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed

¼ cup pine nuts

About 12 ounces mixed greens, such as watercress or dandelion, plus mache (lamb's lettuce; about 6 cups total)

¼ cup packed basil leaves

2 tablespoons sherry vinegar (may substitute red wine vinegar)

### Steps

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Let the burrata come to

room temperature.

Meanwhile, trim the zucchini, then cut crosswise into 1½-inch-long rounds or half-cylinders. Cut the potatoes into halves or quarters, depending on their size.

Place the vegetables on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil and season with the salt and pepper, tossing to coat and making sure the cut sides are facing down. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, until tender. When you turn the zucchini pieces and potatoes over, they should be nicely browned on the cut sides.

While they're in the oven, toast the pine nuts in a small, dry skillet over medium-low heat for a

few minutes, shaking it to avoid scorching, until they are fragrant and golden brown. Let cool.

Arrange the greens on a platter. Tear the basil leaves, letting them fall on the greens. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Add the roasted zucchini and potatoes and toasted pine nuts. Cut or tear the burrata, arranging dollops of the cheese around the platter.

Drizzle the salad with the vinegar and the remaining tablespoon of oil. Serve right away.

**Nutrition** | Per serving: 420 calories, 17 g protein, 29 g carbohydrates, 29 g fat, 10 g saturated fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 380 mg sodium, 5 g dietary fiber, 4 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Chickpeas and fresh herbs make this brown rice salad a satisfying summer star

By **Bonnie S. Benwick**  
The Washington Post

More often than not, when I offer a recipe that deploys white rice as a main ingredient, readers respond with: Can I use brown rice instead?

The answer's not as simple as the question. Research shows there are health benefits and more nutrients to be gained in choosing whole grain (brown) over what is basically starch (white). But swapping them in recipes depends on taste and time: Nutty and chewy brown takes longer to cook, and white can be quite delicate, fragrant and flavor-absorbing, taking about half as long to make.

The playing field leveled a bit when parboiled brown rice, aka the instant kind, hit the U.S. market in 1990. As far as I can tell, there's no reason to think of it as a lesser product than its original kin. It is a processed, convenience product with nutrients and nuttiness intact, pretty much. The texture's not quite the same, but when prepping a quick meal, I'm comfortable with the trade-off.

So stock it in your pantry and put instant brown rice to work in this satisfying and healthful dinner salad, graced with a tonnato-type dressing that blends canned tuna, chickpeas, yogurt and herbs into something creamy and packed with protein and flavor. The only bit of cooking here is the rice via microwave, to keep the kitchen cool.

And for you quinoa fans, yep, you can spend a few extra minutes and cook up a



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Summer Brown Rice Salad With Vegetables

pot to use for this salad, instead of the brown rice.

## SUMMER BROWN RICE SALAD WITH VEGETABLES

35 minutes

3 to 4 servings

Cooking the instant brown rice in the microwave keeps the kitchen cool as you put together this creamy-dressed bowl.

### Ingredients

1 ½ cups Minute brand instant brown rice (uncooked)

1 ½ cups water or no-salt-added vegetable broth, plus

more water as needed

One 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added chickpeas

One 5-ounce can of good-quality tuna packed in olive oil

¼ cup plain, full-fat yogurt or low-fat yogurt

6 to 8 stems fresh herbs, such as rosemary, thyme and parsley

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

½ medium fennel bulb

½ orange or red bell pepper

½ medium red onion

6 to 8 ounces salad greens of your choice (5 packed cups)

### Steps

Combine the rice and water or broth in a microwave-safe bowl or deep measuring cup; cover with a paper towel and microwave on high for 9 to 10 minutes, stopping to stir once halfway through, until the liquid is absorbed. Spread the rice on a rimmed baking sheet to cool, fluffing it with a fork as needed.

Meanwhile, drain the chickpeas and measure out ½ cup, then pour that into the jar of your blender. Add the tuna and about 2 tablespoons of its oil and all the yogurt; strip the herbs

from their stems and drop them in as you work. Puree to form a smooth dressing, adding water as needed to make it pourable. Taste, and season lightly with salt and pepper. Let it sit in the blender while you prep the vegetables. The yield is about 1 ½ cups.

Rinse all your vegetables, and pat dry with paper towels. Cut away the core from the fennel bulb and the bulb's tough exterior layer; reserve those to make broth, if desired. Cut the remaining bulb into ¼- or ½-inch dice. Coarsely chop the bell pepper. Cut the red onion into thin

slices.

Toss together the cooled rice, the remaining drained chickpeas, the fennel, bell pepper, red onion and salad greens in a mixing bowl. Add half the dressing and toss to coat evenly. Taste, and add more salt and/or pepper, as needed.

Divide among individual plates, and serve with more dressing at the table.

Nutrition (based on using full-fat yogurt and half the dressing) | Calories: 440; Total Fat: 8 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 5 mg; Sodium: 190 mg; Dietary Fiber: 8 g; Sugars: 3 g; Protein: 17 g.

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Beans build the salad; bread makes it shine

By Joe Yonan  
*The Washington Post*

On my annual list of summer salads, there's always fattoush. Like panzanella, its Italian cousin, fattoush makes use of leftover bread and combines it with fresh produce.

This Middle Eastern dish often employs pomegranate molasses and tart sumac in its dressing, but variations abound.

I may like it even better than panzanella, and not just because it represents the cuisine of my people (or close to it, anyway). It's because of the bread: not cubes of sourdough or the like, but pieces of pita, which I love here for their firm texture.

As with any bread salad, fattoush changes as it sits. If you eat it immediately after it's tossed, that pita — which I like to char in a grill pan before tearing into pieces — will still be crisp, and to my mind, this is not when the salad is at its best.

After 10 minutes, once the dressing starts to soak into the pita? That's when I love it — the pita has contrasting textures, a little crunchy still in spots but starting to soften here and there — and all the other flavors have started to marry.

That stage lasts for a good hour or so. Soon thereafter, the pita pieces start getting soft through and through: not a bad thing, just different.

Traditional Lebanese versions of the dish are typically based on such simple vegetables as tomatoes, lettuce, onion and radish.

But I couldn't resist an iteration I found in the new "Martha Stewart's Vegetables" (Clarkson Potter, 2016), a compendium of

produce-centric (but not always vegetarian) recipes that include invaluable tips on storage, selection, cooking, flavor pairings and more. Martha's fattoush combines crunchy fresh green beans with creamy shell beans, along with chopped sweet onion, cucumber, feta, mint and parsley.

The dressing isn't traditional, either: It's a simple, vibrant lemon-garlic concoction. But somehow, the sum total feels perfectly in sync with the salad's guiding principles: bread, crunch, tartness and summer.

## Green Bean, Shell Bean and Sweet Onion Fattoush

4 to 6 servings

Here, the two types of beans are cooked in the same pot, one after the other: Make sure to cook the green beans first, as the shell beans release a lot of starch into the cooking water.

Make ahead: The fattoush needs to sit for at least 10 minutes and up to 1 hour before it's served. You'll have a little more vinaigrette than you need for this salad, but it's wonderfully versatile and can be refrigerated for up to 1 week.

Adapted from "Martha Stewart's Vegetables: Inspired Recipes and Tips for Choosing, Cooking, and Enjoying the Freshest Seasonal Flavors," by the editors of Martha Stewart Living (Clarkson Potter, 2016)

## Ingredients

1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest and ¼ cup juice (from 2 lemons)  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
Coarse sea salt  
Freshly ground black

pepper

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing  
8 ounces haricots verts, trimmed

About 8 ounces (¾ cup) shelled fresh shell beans, such as limas (may substitute frozen)

Three 6-inch pita breads  
½ large Vidalia onion, coarsely chopped (about 1 cup)

1 English (seedless) cucumber, quartered and cut into 1-inch pieces

4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

½ cup torn fresh mint, plus more for garnish

1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

## Steps

Whisk together the lemon zest, lemon juice and garlic in a small bowl. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Whisking constantly, pour in the oil in a slow, steady stream, until emulsified. The yield is ¾ cup.

Fill a mixing bowl with lots of ice and cold water. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat.

Add the haricots verts to the pot; cook just until crisp-tender and bright green, about 1 minute. Use a slotted spoon or tongs to transfer the beans to the ice-water bath; let cool, then remove and pat dry. Place in a large bowl. Keep the salted water boiling.

Add the shell beans to the pot; cook just until tender, 18 to 20 minutes. Transfer to the same ice-water bath, adding ice as needed; let cool, then drain in a colander and pat dry. Combine with the haricots verts.

Heat a grill (or grill pan) to medium. Split each pita in half. Brush both sides of the pita halves with oil; season lightly with salt



PHOTO BY Goran Kosanovic for The Washington Post

Green Bean, Shell Bean and Sweet Onion Fattoush

and pepper. Grill the pita breads, turning once, until golden and crisp, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Let cool, then tear into 1-inch pieces.

Add the onion, cucumber, feta, ½ cup of the mint, all the parsley and

the grilled pita pieces to the beans; drizzle with ½ cup of the vinaigrette and toss well to combine. Taste, and season with salt and pepper, as needed, then garnish with the remaining mint.

Let stand for at least 10

minutes and up to 1 hour. Toss just before serving.

Nutrition: Per serving (using ½ cup vinaigrette): 320 calories, 9 g protein, 33 g carbohydrates, 18 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 500 mg sodium, 5 g dietary fiber, 7 g sugar

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Lighten up your summer potato salad with cauliflower and feta

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

Summer is potato salad season, and if you're like me, the only problem with that is a little thing called self-control. Potato salad is like egg salad, guacamole, hummus, french fries: Once I start, I can't stop.

I wasn't really looking for a solution to that, but I found one anyway, in Joshua McFadden's book, "Six Seasons" (Artisan, 2017). The book's premise, by the way, is that seasonal cooking is more nuanced than just the big four: He divides summer into three sub-seasons, which makes so much sense to us farmers market shoppers.

What's available in late June is certainly not the same as what's shiny and new in early September, with lots of ebbs and flows in between.

Back to that potato salad idea. McFadden's take is to sub in roasted cauliflower for half of the potatoes, which makes the whole affair lighter and less starchy. Even better, he triples down on the tart elements that are a big part of what keeps me eating the stuff.

There are olives, pickled peppers and, best of all, feta that you whip smooth with a little olive oil and fold in instead of mayo.

I had every bit as much trouble keeping myself from devouring it as I do a more traditional potato salad, but I didn't feel nearly as guilty.

## Potato and Roasted Cauliflower Salad

4 to 6 servings

Make ahead: The salad can be refrigerated for up to 3 days; reserve the arugula and add at the last minute.

Adapted from "Six Seasons: A New Way with Vegetables," by Joshua McFadden (Artisan, 2017)



PHOTO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST BY DEB LINDSEY

Potato and Roasted Cauliflower Salad

### Ingredients

1 pound new (small) potatoes, rinsed and lightly scrubbed, as needed

½ teaspoon salt, plus more as needed

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or more as needed

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more as needed

1 pound cauliflower, cut or broken into small florets (no bigger than 1 ½ inches)

½ cup chopped pitted olives (preferably a mix of black and green)

1/3 cup thinly sliced red onion (from one-quarter of a small on-

ion)

¼ cup chopped pepperoncini or other pickled peppers (about 4)

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves

½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

3 ounces feta cheese

½ cup lightly packed arugula leaves, chopped (see headnote)

Lemon wedges, for serving

### Steps

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Put the potatoes in a large pot of cold, salted water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat until it's gently bubbling (medium-low), and cook until the potatoes are tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Drain and return them to

the pot.

Use a fork to crush and smash the potatoes, creating lots of crevices. Add the lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of the oil, ¼ teaspoon of the salt and the pepper, and toss gently. Let cool.

While the potatoes are cooking, toss the cauliflower on a rimmed baking sheet with another 1 tablespoon of the oil and ¼ teaspoon of the salt. Roast (middle rack) until tender and browned around the edges, 20 to 30 minutes.

Add the just-roasted cauliflower to the smashed potatoes. Add the olives, red onion, pickled peppers, thyme and crushed red pepper flakes, and toss gently to incorporate.

Crumble the feta into the

bowl of a mini food processor or blender; pulse until creamy. With the motor running, drizzle in the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil until well incorporated.

Add the whipped feta to the salad and fold gently. Add the arugula and fold again (unless you plan to serve the salad later; see headnote). Taste, and add more salt, pepper and lemon juice, as needed.

Serve slightly warm or at room temperature, with lemon wedges on the side.

Nutrition | Per serving (based on 6): 240 calories, 5 g protein, 19 g carbohydrates, 17 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 640 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar



## SIDES AND SALADS



PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Corn, Radish, Tomato and Tortilla Chip Salad

## FOR LAZY SUMMER DAYS

## THIS CORN, TOMATO AND TORTILLA-CHIP SALAD DOES ALL THE WORK FOR YOU

**By Joe Yonan**  
*The Washington Post*

We're starting to hit that time of year when summer's glorious produce demands to be used, just when you may be too heat-fatigued to feel like doing much with it. To the rescue: a recipe made for those days when an hour spent mowing the law, pulling weeds or strolling the farmers market needs to be followed by a tall glass of iced tea and a nap.

This salad demands very little of you and gives so much in return. It's hearty enough to be a main-course lunch, light enough to play side-dish status.

It also employs smart ways to make your vegetables sing with even more clarity: Soaking sliced scallions in cold water crisps

them up. Salting tomatoes 10 minutes in advance of assembly brings out more of their flavor. Briefly microwaving corn brightens it and helps you more easily remove the ears' husk and silks. Cutting the radishes into matchsticks (or running them along the coarse side of a box grater) helps spread their peppery bite more evenly. Honestly, though, if any of those steps seem like too much work, just skip it and use your favorite shortcut.

The rest of the job entails nothing more than dressing, tossing and serving. Before you do the latter, though, you'll shower on the crowning touch of crushed, crunchy tortilla chips. If you've got the en-

ergy, you could fry your own tortillas, of course, but trust me: Opening a bag is much more seasonally appropriate. They don't call them the lazy days of summer for nothing.

### CORN, RADISH, TOMATO AND TORTILLA CHIP SALAD

30 minutes  
4 servings

This couldn't-get-more-summery salad is hefty enough to be a main-course lunch.

Adapted from "A New Way to Food" by Maggie Battista. Roost Books, 2019

#### Ingredients

4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced

1 pound large ripe heirloom tomatoes, stemmed  
½ teaspoon sea salt, plus more to taste

4 ears fresh corn, still in their husks  
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste

2 small radish bunches (about 16 very small radishes), cleaned and coarsely grated or julienned (about 1 ½ cups)

About 20 salted tortilla chips (1 ounce), crushed

#### Steps

Soak the scallions in cold water for at least 20 minutes to crisp them up. Drain and pat dry with a clean

dish towel.

While the scallions are soaking, prep the tomatoes and corn: First, slice the tomatoes into medium wedges. Sprinkle them with ¼ teaspoon of the salt and let them sit for at least 10 minutes to bring out their flavor.

Run cold water all over the corn. Microwave on high until the corn is steaming hot, 6 to 8 minutes. When they are cool enough to handle, use a sharp knife to cut crosswise through the husk and cob an inch or two from the wide/stem end (opposite from the end with the tassel of silk). Hold the silk end, then push the corn cob out the other end. Discard any stray silks. Cut each cob in half, then stand each

half upright and cut off the kernels. (You should have 2 to 3 cups.)

In a medium bowl, whisk together the vinegar, oil, remaining ¼ teaspoon of the salt and the pepper. Add the tomatoes and their juices, corn kernels, radishes and half the scallions, and gently toss. Taste, and add more salt and pepper if needed (keeping in mind that the tortilla chips are also salty).

Arrange the vegetables on a large platter. Sprinkle the tortilla chips and remaining scallions on the salad, and serve.

Nutrition | Calories: 200; Total Fat: 10 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 320 mg; Carbohydrates: 28 g; Dietary Fiber: 5 g; Sugars: 7 g; Protein: 5 g.

## SIDES AND SALADS

# Crunchy salad is a ‘mostly plants’ recipe

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

Anybody who’s read much of anything about food has surely heard the maxim “Eat food, not too much, mostly plants.”

Coined by Michael Pollan, author of “The Omnivore’s Dilemma” and other books influential to the sustainable food movement, the phrase suggests a reasonable path: Avoid processed food, don’t overeat, and put produce at the center of the plate.

His mother and sisters’ cookbook turns that advice into more than 100 recipes. But in the foreword, Pollan says the “mostly” in his signature phrase got people riled up. “Carnivores were upset I had dissed their favorite food by failing to even mention it, while vegans and vegetarians were incensed that by qualifying plants with ‘mostly’ I was being mealy-mouthed or, well, chicken: why not only plants? they insisted.”

Pollan held out, and “Mostly Plants” makes the case. As authors Tracy, Dana, Lori and Corky Pollan put it in their introduction, “We believe that the key to eating well, both for our own health and that of the environment, is not to overturn the dinner table, but simply to change its balance.”

I’m a vegetarian, but I’m not a purist, and I support any ideas that help carnivores reduce their meat consumption. That said, the recipe of theirs I tried — and love — is vegetarian through and through: chopped vegetables, tossed with herbs and sitting on a bed of endive leaves underneath a layer of roasted chickpeas and feta. And it’s simply gorgeous on a plat-



PHOTO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

## Mediterranean Crunch Salad

ter.

If you’re vegan, feel free to leave off the feta. If it’s just too hot for you to imagine turning on the oven, even for a short 15 minutes, skip roasting the chickpeas. They won’t mind — and neither, I’m sure, would the Pollans. They’re flexible.

### MEDITERRANEAN CRUNCH SALAD

Adapted from “Mostly Plants,” by Tracy, Dana, Lori and Corky Pollan (Harper Wave, 2019)

#### Ingredients

1 15-ounce can no-salt-

added chickpeas, drained, rinsed and patted dry

3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil  
½ teaspoon kosher salt, or more as needed

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more as needed

1 12-ounce tomato, hulled and cut into ½-inch dice (2 cups)

½ large English cucumber, peeled and cut into ½-inch dice (seedless; 1 ½ cups)

1 small (4-ounce) red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into ½-inch dice (½ cup)

1 small (4-ounce) yel-

low or orange bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into ½-inch dice (½ cup)

¼ small red onion, cut into ½-inch dice (¼ cup)

¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint, plus whole leaves for garnish

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 Belgian endives (root ends trimmed), leaves separated

4 ounces (1 cup) crumbled high-quality feta cheese

#### Steps

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Spread the chickpeas on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 teaspoons of the oil, season with ¼ teaspoon of the salt and 1/8 teaspoon of the pepper, and toss to coat. Roast for 15 minutes, stirring once halfway through, until the chickpeas have darkened slightly. Transfer to a plate to cool to room temperature.

While the chickpeas are roasting, combine the tomato, cucumber, bell peppers, red onion, parsley and chopped mint in a mixing bowl. Drizzle in the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil and all the vinegar, along with

the remaining ¼ teaspoon of salt and 1/8 teaspoon of pepper. Gently toss to incorporate. Taste, and season with more salt and/or pepper, as needed.

Line a serving platter with the endive leaves. Spoon the chopped vegetable mixture over them. Scatter the roasted chickpeas and the feta on top, then garnish with mint leaves.

Nutrition (based on 6 servings) — Calories: 250; Total Fat: 14 g; Saturated Fat: 4 g; Cholesterol: 15 mg; Sodium: 330 mg; Carbohydrates: 25 g; Dietary Fiber: 10 g; Sugars: 5 g; Protein: 10 g.

## SIDES AND SALADS

# This dairy-free ranch dressing is primed for your summertime salads

By Joe Yonan

*The Washington Post*

When salad season heats up, one thing keeps my kitchen humming — a good homemade dressing. Sure, I'll throw together a makeshift vinaigrette here and there, combining the bits from almost-used jars of condiments with vinegar and oil. I also adore creamy dressings — green goddess, ranch and the like — that typically take a little more thought.

A traditional recipe for one of the latter is all well and good, but when I want an alternative to a mayonnaise or buttermilk base, I get creaminess by including nuts (cashews are classic) in the blend. But what about nut substitutes because of allergies? That's where Terry Hope Romero's salad cookbook comes to the rescue, particularly with a recipe for Sunflower Ranch Dressing. She has you soak raw sunflower seeds and blend them with nondairy milk and a handful of other ingredients — including a good dose of garlic and some fresh herbs.

The punch of garlicky flavor is at home anywhere a traditional ranch would be: Salad greens top the list, naturally, but drizzle or dollop this on any combination of vegetables — try it on baked potatoes, white or sweet — and you'll be happy.

## SUNFLOWER RANCH DRESSING

Active: 10 minutes | Total: 70 minutes

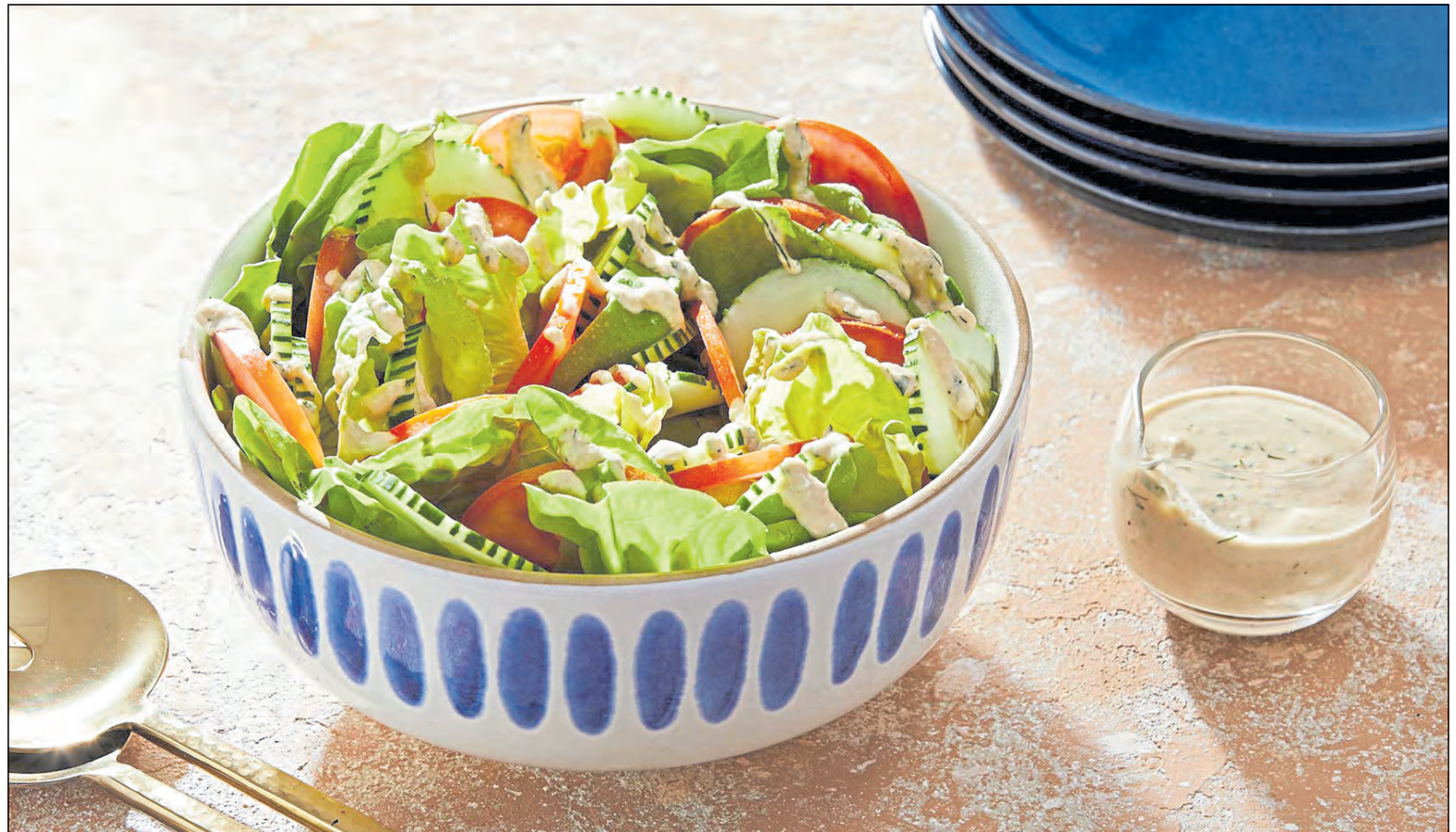


PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### Sunflower Ranch Dressing

8 servings (about 1 cup)

Make ahead: You'll need to soak the sunflower seeds for at least 1 hour, and up to overnight. For best flavor, the dressing can be refrigerated for 2 to 3 days.

Note: Use oat milk, coconut or hemp milk to keep this nut-free.

Adapted from "Show Up for Salad," by Terry Hope Romero. Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2019

### Ingredients

½ cup raw, hulled sun-

flower seeds

½ cup unsweetened plain almond milk, cashew milk or your favorite nut-free vegan milk

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

1 fat garlic clove, chopped  
1 teaspoon dried onion flakes or ½ teaspoon onion powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons grapeseed

oil or mild olive oil

Water, as needed

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill

### Steps

Place the sunflower seeds in a medium bowl and add enough cool water to cover. Soak for at least 1 hour, and up to overnight (at room temperature).

Drain the sunflower seeds, discarding the liquid. Transfer them to a

blender, adding the vegan milk, lemon juice, vinegar, garlic, onion flakes or onion powder, salt and pepper. Puree until as smooth and creamy as possible, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape down the sides of the blender jar several times as needed.

With the motor running, drizzle in the oil a little at a time, processing until the mixture is smooth and emulsified. It will be fairly thick; if you want it thinner, pulse in a tablespoon

of water at a time until it reaches your desired consistency. Add the parsley and dill; pulse once or twice to incorporate.

The dressing is ready to use, or you can transfer it to an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 2 or 3 days.

Nutrition | Calories: 100; Total Fat: 10 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 140 mg; Carbohydrates: 3 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 0 g; Protein: 2 g.

## SWEETS

# Avocado has a sweet side, too, and it's delicious

By Kristen Hartke

Special to *The Washington Post*

Ask cookbook author Pat Tanumihardja about some of her favorite food memories growing up in Indonesia, and avocados will figure prominently in her response.

“Half an avocado, drizzled with palm sugar syrup,” she says with a happy sigh.

In many cultures, from Indonesia to Brazil to Sri Lanka, the avocado is treated as the fruit it actually is, sometimes topped off with a squirt of chocolate syrup or sweetened condensed milk, and, more often, incorporated into sweet drinks. The frosty avocado-based shake known in Vietnam as *sinh to bo* is a simple combination of avocado, condensed milk, ice cubes and sugar syrup that is replicated variously around the world: Indonesians add coffee or chocolate syrup, calling it *Es Alpukat*, while Brazilians enliven the same shake with a squirt of tart lime juice, and a Moroccan version sweetens the mix with confectioners' sugar and a hint of orange flower water.

Known across Asia as “butter fruit,” the avocado has a mild flavor and creamy texture that makes it a remarkably adaptable ingredient for many recipes, including desserts. While avocados are normally consumed raw, and can become bitter if cooked over direct heat, they can be mashed or pureed in baking, and they are increasingly being found whipped into smoothies and bubble teas as Americans discover that avocados can go far beyond standard chip-and-dip fare.

Using avocados for something besides guacamole or



DREAMSTIME — TNS

Avocados have a multitude of uses in the kitchen.

other savory dishes was a tough sell for Pati Jinich, host of the PBS television series “Pati’s Mexican Table,” who grew up in Mexico City.

“The first time I ever heard of using avocados in something sweet was from my sister, Sharon, who is a vegan,” Jinich says. “She made this avocado chocolate mousse, and I was totally disgusted by the thought of it.”

But because of its thick, buttery consistency, avocado does seem to particularly shine when paired with chocolate, notes Tanumihardja. “Chocolate mousse is a great way to introduce someone to avocado as a dessert because you really don’t know there’s avocado in it,” she said.

Indeed, Jinich’s sister had the last laugh because that mousse turned out to be delicious, claim-

ing another convert to the avocado-as-dessert movement. Inspired by her sister’s mousse, Jinich began experimenting with avocados in smoothies, pancakes and popsicles, leading her to create desserts such as Avocado and Coconut Ice Cream, a surprisingly rich dairy-free confection with a velvety mouthfeel reminiscent of gelato.

“I found that avocados could be one of the most luscious, sensuous, silky, exuberant ingredients ever,” says Jinich. “In my house, we use avocados as a savory ingredient 65 percent of the time. We throw it on top of everything. But these days, I’m also putting it in cakes.”

The creamy texture of ripe avocados makes it a natural ingredient for rich desserts that are deceptively healthful, because, although there’s up to 28 grams of fat in a medium-

size fruit, it is largely monounsaturated fat, which can lower LDL cholesterol. A tablespoon of avocado has 25 calories, compared to 100 calories in the same amount of butter, and just over two grams of fat, primarily unsaturated, in contrast to 12 grams of mostly saturated fat in butter. Substitute mashed avocado 1-to-1 for at least some of the butter in baked goods and suddenly that brownie seems like less of a no-no.

When Lara Ferroni set out to research avocado recipes for her book “An Avocado a Day” (Sasquatch Books, 2017), she wasn’t necessarily a fan of the dessert avocado, either. Four months and 300 avocados later, she has seen the light.

“Avocados don’t really have a savory flavor,” Ferroni says, “but they have an umami quality. Once I got over that mental hump

of ‘It’s just for guacamole,’ it was really easy to take avocados in a sweet direction.”

It was a trip to Australia and New Zealand in December 2015, that got Ferroni, who typically writes single-subject cookbooks on such topics as doughnuts and eggs, thinking about exploring avocados: “You’ll find avocados in so many applications there — pickled or mixed with other types of fruit or mashed on toast with goat cheese and balsamic vinegar.”

Indeed, avocado can play as well with mango, pineapple and citrus as it does with chocolate, coffee and vanilla. If you’re having trouble embracing avocado as a fruit, both Jinich and Ferroni recommend tossing chunks of it into smoothies, which Jinich called “a perfect gateway for avocados” — or even margaritas.

“Once you’ve done that,

it’s easier to take the plunge for adding it to cookies and cakes,” Jinich says.

Ferroni’s “Cado-ritas” blend just a smidgen of avocado with lime juice, sugar, tequila and orange liqueur to add a touch of creaminess to a traditional margarita. “Once I started to explore avocado-based beverages, I really became interested in how to achieve different degrees of creaminess without using dairy,” she says.

Her Avocado Key Lime Pie combines many of the same ingredients as her cocktail into a cool green custard inside a graham cracker crust. “It’s deliciously tart and creamy,” she says. Best of all, the no-bake filling makes it a standout summer recipe with a handful of ingredients and a minimum of prep.

A little avocado can actually go a long way, although, for some, that may lead to concerns about how to store any fruit that didn’t make it into that pie or ice cream.

Ferroni thinks she has found the solution: freezing avocado, either in cubes or lightly mashed, then defrosting it for later use in baked goods or smoothies — but not in guacamole or any other applications where fresh is best.

“I’m pretty sure there was a period of time that I was the country’s largest avocado purchaser as a home cook,” says Ferroni. “I had to figure out what to do with all those leftovers.”

## Avocado and Coconut Ice Cream

6 servings (makes 1 quart)

Neither eggs nor dairy is required for this luscious frozen treat, which gets its creamy texture from pu-

reed avocado and rich coconut milk. Calling it “ridiculously yummy,” Mexican American chef Pati Jinich notes that the nutty flavor is enhanced by a topping of toasted coconut flakes or nuts — and a drizzle of chocolate syrup would not be amiss.

This recipe calls for an ice cream maker, but this coconut-avocado mixture can be chilled and served as a cold mousse, or packed into a container and frozen to a dense soft-serve consistency.

**MAKE AHEAD:** For an optimal ice cream consistency, the churned ice cream needs a few hours in the freezer before serving.

Adapted from chef and cookbook author Pati Jinich.

### Ingredients

1 ½ cups regular coconut milk

¾ cup sugar

Flesh of 3 large ripe Hass avocados halved, diced (about 3 cups)

3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

¼ cup dried shredded coconut or sweetened coconut flakes lightly toasted, for garnish (optional); may substitute toasted almonds, pine nuts or pistachios)

### Steps

Combine the coconut milk and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Turn off heat and let the mixture cool for a few minutes, then transfer to a blender or food processor, along with the avocado and lime juice. Puree until completely smooth.

Transfer the puree to an ice cream maker; churn according to the manufacturer's directions. It will still be somewhat soft. Place in a separate, freezer-safe container with a tight-fitting lid and freeze for a couple of hours before serving.

If using, lightly toast the coconut in a small saute pan over medium-low heat, stirring constantly to avoid

scorching. The coconut toasting should take less than a minute. Once the coconut becomes fragrant and acquires a tan, remove from the heat. Sprinkle as a garnish over the ice cream.

**Nutrition | Per serving:** 320 calories, 2 g protein, 34 g carbohydrates, 22 g fat, 12 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 20 mg sodium, 5 g dietary fiber, 25 g sugar

### Iced Avocado and Coffee Drink (Es Alpakat)

4 servings

Singapore native Pat Tanumihardja grew up on refreshing avocado drinks like this one, which combines chunks of avocado in a coffee-laced milk sweetened with a thick simple syrup. This version is blended into a creamy vegan shake, but it can also be made with regular or low-fat milk.

The syrup is steeped with pandan leaves, which have a lightly citrusy vanilla flavor. Use the same syrup to sweeten tea and cocktails; if you have trouble finding pandan leaves, you can substitute a split vanilla bean and add a squirt of lime juice.

**MAKE AHEAD:** You'll have syrup left over, which can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 months.

Pandan leaves are available at Asian markets (typically frozen).

Adapted from a recipe by Seattle food writer and cookbook author Pat Tanumihardja.

### Ingredients

For the syrup

2 cups sugar

1 cup water

2 pandan leaves, trimmed and tied into separate knots (see headnote)

For the drink

Flesh of 1 large ripe avocado

1/3 cup espresso plus

2/3 cup water (may substitute 1 cup strong brewed coffee, cooled)

2 cups almond milk (may substitute other plant-based milk)

½ cup ice cubes, or more as needed

Chocolate syrup, for serving

Instant espresso grounds, for serving

### Steps

For the syrup: Combine the sugar, water and pandan leaves in a large saucepan over medium-high heat; once the sugar has dissolved and the liquid is bubbling, reduce the heat to medium and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until thickened, adjusting the heat as needed.

Discard the leaves, then pour the syrup into a heat-proof container or bottle. The yield is about 2 ½ cups; you'll need ¼ cup for this recipe.

For the drink: Combine the avocado, espresso coffee, almond milk and pandan syrup in a blender. Add ice cubes, cover and blend on high speed until smooth and frothy. Add ice cubes and blend again, as needed, for a thicker consistency.

Divide the drink among individual glasses or cups. Drizzle the top with chocolate syrup, and then sprinkle lightly with ground espresso. Serve right away.

**Nutrition | Per serving:** 100 calories, 2 g protein, 10 g carbohydrates, 7 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 5 mg sodium, 2 g dietary fiber, 1 g sugar

### Avocado Key Lime Pie

6 to 8 servings (makes one 9-inch pie)

The natural creaminess of avocado provides the perfect texture for this tart pie filling, with the added bonus that it requires no stovetop cooking.

If you can't find Key limes, you can substitute regular limes or even use bottled Key lime juice — just don't forget the fresh lime zest.

**MAKE AHEAD:** The baked, cooled crust needs to

**SWEET » PAGE 46**



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Iced Avocado and Coffee Drink, Es Alpakat

# Sweet

FROM PAGE 45

be refrigerated for 1 hour before using. It can be tightly wrapped in its dish and frozen for up to 2 weeks. Defrost before using. The assembled pie needs to be refrigerated for at least 2 hours, and preferably overnight.

Adapted from a recipe by Lara Ferroni, author of "An Avocado a Day: More Than 70 Recipes for Enjoying Nature's Most Delicious Superfood" (Sasquatch, 2017).

## Ingredients

For the crust

2 cups finely ground graham cracker crumbs (from about 10 squares)

¼ cup sugar

Scant ¼ teaspoon sea salt

2/3 cup coconut oil (liquefied) or unsalted butter, melted

For the filling

Flesh of 2 ripe Hass avocados, smashed (2 cups; may use fresh or frozen/defrosted)

4 teaspoons finely grated zest and

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons fresh juice (from about 5 Key limes; see headnote)

½ cup sweetened condensed coconut milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Pinch kosher salt

Whipped cream, for garnish (optional)

Finely grated lime zest and/or thin lime wheels, for garnish (optional)

## Steps

For the crust: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Combine the graham cracker crumbs, sugar and salt in a medium bowl. Add the oil or melted butter and stir until the crumbs are evenly coated, with the consistency of wet sand.

Use a spoon or the underside of a measuring cup to press the mixture evenly into the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Bake (middle rack) for about 10 minutes, until lightly browned. Transfer to a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes, then refrigerate for 1 hour, or until well chilled.

For the filling: Combine the avocado, lime zest and juice, condensed milk, vanilla extract and salt in a blender. Puree un-



PHOTO BY DEB LINDSEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Avocado Key Lime Pie

til smooth and silky. Transfer the mixture to the chilled crust, then use an offset spatula to spread it smooth and evenly. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, and preferably overnight, before serving.

Garnish with whipped cream and the lime zest and thin lime wheels, if using.

Nutrition | Per serving (based on 8, using coconut oil in the crust): 410 calories, 3 g protein, 34 g carbohydrates, 30 g fat, 22 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 280 mg sodium, 4 g dietary fiber, 16 g sugar

Nutrition | Per serving (based on 8, using butter in the crust): 380 calories, 3 g protein, 34 g carbohydrates, 27 g fat, 14 g saturated fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 280 mg sodium, 4 g dietary fiber, 16 g sugar

## Chocolate-Dipped Avocado Cookies

28 to 30 servings

Avocado adds a mild flavor and tenderness to these tea-time-size cookies.

MAKE AHEAD: The dough needs to be refrigerated for at least 1 hour, and up to 1 day. The

dipped cookies need to set for about an hour before serving or storing.

Adapted from a recipe by chef and cookbook author Pati Jinich.

## Ingredients

For the cookies

¼ cup coconut oil (solidified), at room temperature

¼ cup ripe, diced Hass avocado

¾ cup confectioners' sugar

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Finely grated zest of 1 lime, plus 2 tablespoons juice

1 1/3 cups flour, plus more for the work surface

½ teaspoon baking powder

Pinch kosher salt

For the icing

6 ounces bittersweet chocolate coarsely chopped or broken into pieces

1 tablespoon coconut oil

## Steps

For the cookies: Combine the coconut oil and avocado in the bowl of a stand mixer or handheld electric mixer; beat on medium speed, until smooth. Stop to scrape down the bowl.

Add the sugar; beat on me-

dium speed for a few minutes, until fluffy, then add the egg, vanilla extract, lime zest and juice; beat until well incorporated. Stop to scrape down the bowl.

Combine the flour, baking powder and salt on a sheet of parchment or wax paper. On low speed, gradually add the flour mixture, beating to just long enough to form a soft, well-blended dough.

Lightly flour a work surface. Transfer the dough there and sprinkle lightly with flour so you can gather the dough into two logs, each about 9 ½ inches long and 1 ½ inches wide. Roll in plastic wrap, twisting the ends to make a tightly packed log. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, and up to 1 day.

If the logs of dough aren't fairly firm, place them in the freezer for 15 minutes.

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven; preheat to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone liners.

Unwrap the dough logs and place on a cutting board. Use a very sharp knife to cut each one into 14 to 15 thin slices. You may want to wet the blade of the knife

after 4 or 5 slices to make it easier to cut. Arrange the dough slices at least 1 inch apart on the baking sheets. Bake (upper and lower racks) for 9 minutes, rotating the sheets top to bottom and front to back halfway through. The cookie should be pale but lightly browned at the edges.

Cool on the baking sheets for a few minutes, then transfer the cookies to wire racks to cool completely.

Meanwhile, make the icing: Re-line the baking sheets with new parchment paper or wipe clean the silicone liners.

Melt the chocolate and coconut oil in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely bubbling water (medium-low heat), stirring until shiny and smooth. Remove from the heat.

While the icing is warm, dip one side of each cookie halfway into it, then transfer to the baking sheets to set for about 1 hour before serving or storing.

Nutrition | Per cookie (based on 30, using half the icing): 70 calories, 1 g protein, 10 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 5 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 4 g sugar

## SWEETS



PHOTO BY TOM MCCORKLE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Chocolate Pudding Pops

# These 100-calorie chocolate pudding pops will take you back to childhood

**By Ellie Krieger**

*Special To The Washington Post*

No matter how old I get, I will always have a childlike enchantment with summer and all its joys: jumping waves in the ocean, biking around town, biting into big wedges of watermelon, watching the fireflies come out at dusk.

One of those pleasures is the refreshment of a frosty popsicle on a hot afternoon. I remember my mom used to put orange juice into paper cup pop molds and freeze them for us, and I loved those. But it was the occasional splurge on the package of chocolate pops that really excited me.

This recipe taps that same

summertime thrill in a way that is fairly healthful, as desserts go, since it is made with low-fat milk (or plant milk), minimal added sugar and dark chocolate. The chocolate mixture is essentially a simple pudding (albeit somewhat thinner than a typical pudding) that is poured into pop molds. Once frozen, they come out creamy, icy and refreshing, amply rich with the intensity of good dark chocolate, and clock in at just 100 calories apiece. Although enjoying one in the shade on a sweltering day brings me right back to my childhood, they taste so much better than the store-bought ones I remember, and they make me glad I'm all grown up.

## CHOCOLATE PUDDING POPS

8 servings (makes 8 popsicles)

This is a sweet treat you can feel good about serving. Dairy milk is called for, but a plant-based milk can be substituted.

You will need eight 2-ounce popsicle molds or small paper cups and popsicle (craft) sticks.

Make ahead: The pops need to set up in the freezer until solid, about 6 hours.

### Ingredients

¼ cup sugar  
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder  
1 tablespoon cornstarch

2 cups cold, low-fat (1%) milk, or unsweetened plant-based milk such as coconut, almond or oat

2 ounces dark or semisweet chocolate (about 60% cocoa solids), finely chopped

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

### Steps

Whisk together the sugar, cocoa powder and cornstarch in a medium saucepan. Gradually whisk in the milk until the mixture is smooth.

Set the saucepan over medium heat. Cook, whisking constantly, until the mixture is gently bubbling and thickens slightly, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to low;

continue to cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Remove from the heat.

Add the chopped chocolate and stir until it has melted, then stir in the vanilla extract and the salt until well incorporated.

Distribute the mixture evenly among your popsicle molds or small paper cups and place in the freezer. If using paper cups, place a popsicle stick in the center when the mixture is frozen enough for the stick to stand up straight, about 1 hour. Allow to freeze completely, about 6 hours.

**Nutrition** | Per serving: 100 calories, 3 g protein, 15 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 75 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 12 g sugar

## SWEETS

# A customizable cake for all summer

By Cathy Barrow

Special to *The Washington Post*

A few years ago, I was e-gifted a recipe for a simple fruit-topped cake called Cup o' Cup o' Cup o'. The email ended with "I bet my mother made 1,000 of these when we were kids." The straight-up recipe starts with melting a stick of butter in the oven in the cake pan (easier to grease the pan), then pouring the liquid butter into a bowl with a cup of flour, a cup of milk and a cup of sugar, plus a good amount of baking powder. Once these ingredients are stirred together and scraped into the pan, a riot of summer fruit is dumped on top and the cake bakes into either a pudding-like form, warm and gooey, or a firmer cake with well-browned edges, entirely dependent on the amount of time it spends in the oven.

I made the cake a few times and liked it well enough. It was close, but not the treat I thought it could be.

I was less fond of the pudding form and more entranced with those crispy edges. I set to work and made this cake my own, one intended for the potluck table. In the past month, I doled out this cake to friends, family members, workmen and soon-to-be-neighbors, making a dozen versions until it reached, in my mind, its full potential.

From the outset, I knew I wanted this to be a buttermilk cake. Buttermilk from my local dairy is thick and creamy and glugs out of the bottle. For this cake, the buttermilk from the grocery store works as well, but the thicker version makes a cake with a slightly more moist and tender crumb.

Changing from whole milk to buttermilk in the original cake meant adjusting the leavener from baking powder to baking soda (unlike milk, buttermilk does not need cream of tartar, an acidic ingredient in baking powder, to activate the leavening), and I fiddled with the amount of, well, everything else.



Buttermilk Sheet Cake With Peaches and Blueberries

PHOTO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

I added eggs. I upped the flour. I changed the ratio of fruit to batter. And I changed the pan size. The result is a cake that is somewhat muffin-like, a little like a coffee cake, and reminiscent of pound cake.

I used whatever fruit was on hand to top the cake. I combined berries. I used white and yellow peaches. I stirred together sweet and sour cherries. Any fruit fits the bill and scents the cake while it bakes.

This is a cake that any baker will want to make their own. I know because I gave the recipe to two friends and they both changed it up.

I used vanilla to further scent the cake, but my friend Gail used almond extract.

When I added cinnamon, I thought it overwhelmed the flavor of the fruit and the tang of the buttermilk, but Abbie added nutmeg and was happy. I think cardamom might be delicious, too.

Here is your new go-to summer cake. Make it once, and I suspect you'll make it again and again, as I have.

Slice the cake into big square slabs; no one will complain if their piece has a scoop of ice cream snuggling up next to it. Around here, we've been calling it breakfast cake with absolutely no guilt. And if there is buttermilk left over, it makes delicious biscuits, is a first-rate brine for chicken, and is a good sipping drink on a hot day, or so said my grandfather.

## Buttermilk Sheet Cake With Peaches and Blueberries

15 to 20 servings

If you don't have a stand mixer, a hand mixer and a large bowl will work just as well.

**MAKE AHEAD:** Cover the cake tightly and store it on the counter for about 3 days.

## Ingredients

16 tablespoons (226 grams; 2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for the pan

3 cups (360 grams) flour  
½ teaspoon (3 grams) baking soda

½ teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt or fine sea salt

2 cups (400 grams) sugar  
3 large eggs, at room temperature

½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup well-shaken buttermilk, preferably full-fat

3 peeled, pitted peaches, sliced ½-inch thick (about 2 cups; see note)

1 cup (150 grams) blueberries

## Steps

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with parchment paper so the two shorter sides overhang a bit (for lifting the cake

out of the pan.) Grease the paper with a little butter.

Whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium mixing bowl.

Combine the 16 tablespoons of butter and the sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer; beat on medium speed, 3 to 4 minutes, until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Scrape down the bowl from time to time.

Add the vanilla extract to the buttermilk and stir to combine. On low speed, alternately add the flour mixture and the buttermilk mixture in two or three additions, ending with the flour, mixing until just barely incorporated. Use a flexible spatula to gently fold the batter a bit more by hand, making sure to scrape the bottom of the bowl to work in any residual dry ingredients. Once the batter looks combined with no white streaks, scrape it into the prepared pan. Smooth the top with an offset spatula.

Arrange peach slices on the top and scatter the blueberries evenly over the peaches. Bake (middle rack) for about 1 hour (start checking after 50 to 55 minutes), until the cake is golden brown on the edges and begins to pull away from the sides. During the baking, the batter will puff up over the fruit; once the cake cools, it will deflate a bit.

Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely (in the pan). Lift the cake using the parchment paper ends, then discard the paper and cut into 15 to 20 squares.

**NOTE:** To peel peaches, plunge them into boiling water for 30 to 45 seconds, then use a slotted spoon to transfer them to a bowl of ice water. As soon as they are cool enough to handle, slip off the skins. The riper the peach, the less time it needs in the boiling water.

**Nutrition | Per serving (based on 20):** 250 calories, 3 g protein, 37 g carbohydrates, 10 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 125 mg sodium, 0 g dietary fiber, 23 g sugar