

A COPYCAT THANKSGIVING COLLECTION

THE COPYCAT THANKSGIVING COOKBOOK

Your favorite restaurant dishes, made in your own kitchen — hand-picked, researched and fact-checked by the Copycat team.

66 RECIPES

COPYCAT SPICES

A Copycat Thanksgiving Collection

The Copycat Thanksgiving Cookbook

THANKSGIVING EDITION · 66 RECIPES

November 20, 2026

Compiled, fact-checked, and typeset by Copycat Spices Editorial. Set in Playfair Display, Source Serif 4, and Source Sans 3.

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FOREWORD

A Note From Our Kitchen

There's a particular kind of magic in recreating a dish you love. The first bite of something homemade that tastes right. The moment your kitchen fills with a smell that makes everyone wander in to ask what's cooking.

That feeling is why Copycat Spices exists. We spend our days reverse-engineering the dishes people crave most — studying brines, chasing the exact ratio in a signature sauce, and figuring out how a restaurant gets that crust, that pull, that color — so you can make them at home for a fraction of the price, exactly how you like them.

This cookbook gathers 66 of our best Thanksgiving recipes, hand-picked and put together to live on the counter, not lost in a browser tab. Each recipe here was researched and fact-checked by the Copycat team and written to be genuinely easy to follow on a busy weeknight. No mystery steps, no restaurant secrets held back — just the real technique that makes each dish work.

We picked every page for the season — the restaurant favorites and viral hits people make most this time of year, together in one book. Want one that's entirely yours? Pick any recipes free at copycatspices.com/cookbook.

Thank you for cooking with us. We can't wait to see what you put on your table.

Warmly, the Copycat Spices team

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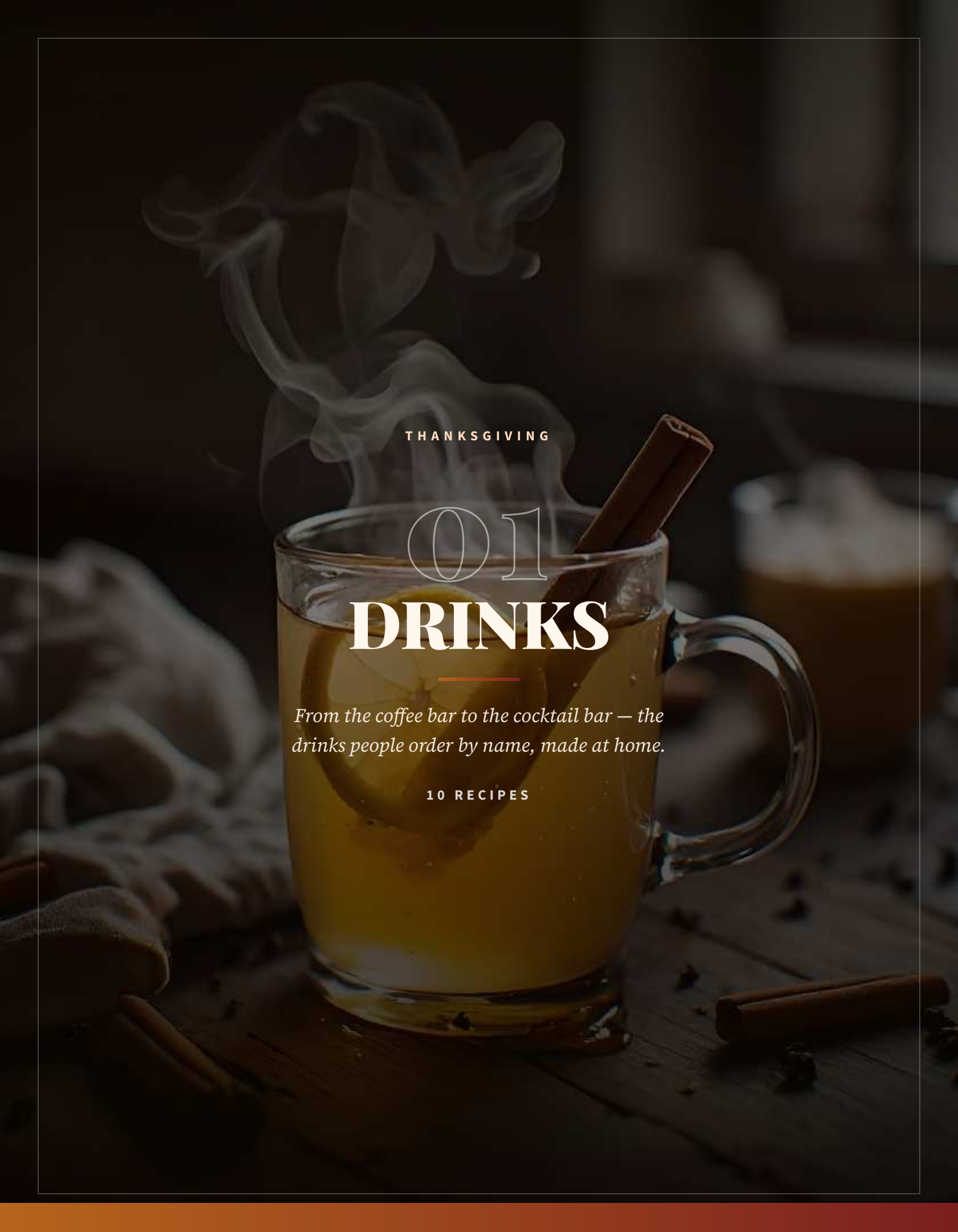
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THANKSGIVING

01 DRINKS

From the coffee bar to the cocktail bar — the drinks people order by name, made at home.

10 RECIPES



№ 01

THE CAPITAL GRILLE

Stoli Doli Pineapple Martini

Capital Grille's famous Stoli Doli pineapple martini at home: one fresh pineapple steeped in a liter of Stolichnaya for 10–14 days, then shaken cold and served straight up. About $20 per glass at the restaurant; under $3 at home.

Stoli Doli Pineapple Martini

Capital Grille's famous Stoli Doli pineapple martini at home: one fresh pineapple steeped in a liter of Stolichnaya for 10–14 days, then shaken cold and served straight up. About $20 per glass at the restaurant; under $3 at home.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	10–14 days	13	Easy	165

01 Ingredients

THE INFUSION (MAKES 13 COCKTAILS)

- 1 fresh pineapple (about 2 lbs of flesh after prep)
- 1 liter Stolichnaya vodka (or other clean premium vodka)

TO SERVE EACH COCKTAIL

- 2½ oz (5 tablespoons) strained pineapple-infused vodka
- Ice (for shaking)

GARNISH (OPTIONAL)

- 1 fresh pineapple spear or chunk per glass

WHY IT WORKS

Stolichnaya is the standard here — the drink is named after it — but a clean, neutral premium vodka works well. Look for a vodka that is smooth enough to drink straight with limited burn, since there are no mixers to soften a harsh spirit.

02 Method

1. **Prep the pineapple.** Slice off the crown and base of the pineapple. Stand it upright and cut the skin off in vertical strips, following the curve of the fruit. Quarter the pineapple lengthwise, remove the fibrous core from each quarter, and cut the flesh into rough 1-inch chunks. You don't need uniformity — the goal is maximum surface area in contact with the vodka.

2. **Combine and seal.** Place the pineapple chunks in a clean 2-liter glass jar, large mason jar, or glass pitcher with a tight-fitting lid. Pour the entire liter of vodka over the fruit. The pineapple should be fully submerged; if any chunks float above the liquid, press them down or weigh them with a small clean weight. Seal the container.

3. **Refrigerate for 10 to 14 days.** Store the covered jar in the refrigerator. The vodka will begin to take on a faint golden color within 48 hours. Taste on day 10: it should smell and taste clearly of fresh pineapple with a clean vodka backbone. Continue infusing until day 14 if you want a more concentrated flavor — stop when the infusion smells tropical and sweet but not overripe. Do not leave the fruit in longer than 14 days.

4. **Strain and store.** When the infusion is ready, pour the vodka through a fine-mesh strainer into a clean bottle or jar, pressing lightly on the fruit to extract the liquid. Discard the spent pineapple. Store the strained infused vodka in the refrigerator, sealed; it keeps well for up to 3 weeks.

5. **Chill your glass.** Before serving, place a martini glass in the freezer for 10 minutes, or fill it with ice water while you build the cocktail. A chilled glass keeps a shaken martini cold far longer.

6. **Shake and serve.** Fill a cocktail shaker two-thirds full with ice. Add 2½ oz of the strained pineapple vodka. Shake hard for a full 10 seconds — the shaker should become frosty and uncomfortable to hold. Empty the ice water from your martini glass, then strain the shaken vodka into it through the shaker's strainer. Garnish with a pineapple spear and serve immediately.



№ 02

MARTINELLI'S

Sparkling Apple Holiday Punch

The Martinelli's holiday punch — both the classic cold sparkling version (Sparkling Apple Cider + cranberry + orange + ginger ale, with a frozen cider ice ring) and a warm mulled-cider version inspired by their hot holiday punch.

MARTINELLI'S · COPYCAT

Sparkling Apple Holiday Punch

The Martinelli's holiday punch — both the classic cold sparkling version (Sparkling Apple Cider + cranberry + orange + ginger ale, with a frozen cider ice ring) and a warm mulled-cider version inspired by their hot holiday punch.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	0 min	14	Easy	125

01 Ingredients

COLD PUNCH (SERVES 14)

- 1 bottle (750ml or 25.4 oz) Martinelli's Sparkling Apple Cider, cold
- 2 cups (16 oz) 100% cranberry juice or cranberry juice cocktail, cold
- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice (about 3 medium oranges)
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 2 lemons)
- 1 liter (33.8 oz) ginger ale, cold
- Apple slices (rubbed with lemon juice to prevent browning), orange rounds, and fresh cranberries for garnish
- 1 frozen cider ice ring (make 1–3 days ahead — see below)

WARM PUNCH (SERVES 20)

- 1 gallon Martinelli's Apple Cider (still, not sparkling)
- 6 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice berries
- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- 3 tablespoons honey (or to taste)
- Orange slices studded with 4–5 cloves each, for garnish

02 Method

1. **Make the frozen cider ice ring (1–3 days ahead, cold punch only).** Fill a standard Bundt pan three-quarters full with Martinelli's Apple Cider or the cranberry-orange juice mixture. Tuck in a few apple slices and cranberries if desired. Freeze solid, at least 8 hours. To unmold, briefly run the outside of the pan under warm water and tip the ring into the punch bowl. The ring keeps the punch cold without diluting it the way ice cubes do.

2. **Mix the juice base (cold punch, up to 24 hours ahead).** In a large pitcher or bowl, stir together the cranberry juice, orange juice, and lemon juice until combined. Taste: the base should be tart and bright, not sweet — the sparkling cider and ginger ale add their own sweetness. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

3. **Assemble the punch right before guests arrive (cold punch).** Place the frozen cider ice ring in a large punch bowl. Pour in the chilled juice base. Then pour in the

ginger ale, tilting the bottle against the side of the bowl to minimize foam. Finally, add the Martinelli's Sparkling Cider the same way. Stir very gently — one or two passes with a ladle — to combine without knocking out the carbonation.

4. **Garnish and serve (cold punch).** Float apple slices, orange rounds, and a scattering of fresh cranberries on top. Serve immediately in punch cups, glasses, or champagne flutes at 8 oz per serving. As the bowl empties, replenish in the same ratio (sparkling cider last) rather than making one very large batch, which will go flat before it's finished.

5. **Simmer the spiced base (warm punch).** Combine the apple cider, cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, allspice, and orange juice in a large pot over medium heat. Bring to a bare simmer — small bubbles at the edges, not a rolling boil. Reduce the heat to low and steep 25–30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the spices have fully bloomed into the cider. The cider should smell like warm apple pie.

6. **Sweeten and finish (warm punch).** Stir in the honey, starting with 2 tablespoons and tasting before adding more. The cider's natural sweetness varies by brand and season; most batches need 2–3 tablespoons. Strain out all whole spices through a fine-mesh strainer or ladle the punch directly from the pot.

7. **Keep warm and serve (warm punch).** Transfer to a slow cooker set to 'low' or 'warm' to hold at serving temperature (160–170°F) for up to 3–4 hours. Ladle into heat-safe mugs and garnish each with a cinnamon stick and an orange slice studded with cloves.

WHY IT WORKS

Martinelli's Apple Cider is a still (non-carbonated) fresh-pressed apple juice with no added sugar or preservatives.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 03

HOUSE RECIPE

Maple Old Fashioned

The three-ingredient Thanksgiving cocktail: bourbon, real maple syrup, and bitters, stirred over one big cube with an orange twist.

HOUSE RECIPE · COPYCAT

Maple Old Fashioned

The three-ingredient Thanksgiving cocktail: bourbon, real maple syrup, and bitters, stirred over one big cube with an orange twist.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
2 min	0 min	1	Easy	180

01 Ingredients

PER DRINK

- 2 oz bourbon (80–100 proof; rye works for a spicier drink)
- ¼ oz pure maple syrup (Grade A Dark for the most flavor)
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 1 strip orange peel, for the twist
- 1 large ice cube (2-inch), plus ice for stirring

BATCH FOR 8 (MAKE-AHEAD)

- 2 cups bourbon
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- 16 dashes Angostura bitters (about 2 teaspoons)

ZERO-PROOF SWAP (PER DRINK)

- 2 oz cold strong black tea (or a non-alcoholic whiskey alternative) + alcohol-free aromatic bitters

WHY IT WORKS

8 : 1 — two ounces of bourbon to a quarter ounce of pure maple syrup, plus two dashes of Angostura bitters. Maple is sweeter and more assertive than simple syrup, so a quarter ounce does the work a half ounce of simple would.

02 Method

1. **Combine.** In a mixing glass, add the bourbon, maple syrup, and bitters. Maple dissolves on contact — no muddling, no pre-made syrup.
2. **Stir, don't shake.** Fill the mixing glass two-thirds with ice and stir 20–30 seconds, until the outside of the glass is cold. Stirring chills and dilutes just enough; shaking would cloud and over-aerate a spirit-forward drink.
3. **Strain over one big cube.** Set a single large cube in a rocks glass and strain the drink over it. One big cube melts slower than a handful of small ones, so the last sip is as strong as the first.
4. **Express the orange.** Hold a strip of orange peel skin-side down over the glass and give it a sharp squeeze — you'll see the oils mist onto the surface. Run the peel around the rim and drop it in.
5. **Batch option.** For a crowd: stir the batch ingredients in a jar, seal, and leave it on the bar. Pour 2½ ounces per drink over a big cube, twist, done — each drink takes ten seconds and you never leave your guests.



№ 04

HOUSE RECIPE

Spiced Cranberry Punch

A make-ahead Thanksgiving punch that serves the whole table: tart cranberry, sweet apple cider, warm baking spices, and bourbon, topped with ginger beer.

HOUSE RECIPE · COPYCAT

Spiced Cranberry Punch

A make-ahead Thanksgiving punch that serves the whole table: tart cranberry, sweet apple cider, warm baking spices, and bourbon, topped with ginger beer.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	5 min	10–12	Easy	195

01 Ingredients

FOR THE QUICK SPICE SYRUP

- ½ cup water
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 whole cloves
- 1 star anise (optional but worth it)

FOR THE PUNCH (BATCH OF 10–12)

- 3 cups 100% cranberry juice (not cocktail), chilled
- 2 cups apple cider, chilled
- 1½ cups bourbon
- Juice of 1 orange (about ¼ cup)
- 2 cups ginger beer, chilled (added just before serving)
- Ice ring (freeze 2 cups cranberry juice in a ring/bundt mold), or ice for glasses

GARNISH

- ½ cup fresh cranberries + 2 tablespoons sugar, for sugared cranberries
- 1 orange, sliced into thin wheels
- A few extra cinnamon sticks

MOCKTAIL SWAP

- Replace bourbon with 1½ cups extra apple cider + juice of ½ orange

WHY IT WORKS

Replace the bourbon with an equal amount of extra apple cider plus the juice of half an orange, and keep everything else the same. The spice syrup and cranberry do the heavy lifting, so the mocktail tastes intentional rather than like something is missing.

02 Method

1. **Make the spice syrup.** Simmer the water, sugar, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and star anise in a small saucepan for 5 minutes, until the sugar dissolves and the kitchen smells like Thanksgiving. Let it cool with the spices in it — it steeps as it cools. (Do this up to a week ahead.)
2. **Build the base.** In a large punch bowl or pitcher, combine the cranberry juice, apple cider, bourbon, orange juice, and the strained spice syrup. Stir well. Refrigerate until serving — up to 24 hours.
3. **Sugar the cranberries.** Toss fresh cranberries in a spoonful of the warm syrup, roll them in sugar, and let them dry on parchment while the punch chills.
4. **Add the fizz last.** Just before guests arrive, pour in the chilled ginger beer and stir once, gently, to keep the bubbles.
5. **Chill without diluting.** Slide in the frozen cranberry-juice ice ring (it melts back into punch, not water), or serve over ice in individual glasses.
6. **Garnish and serve.** Float the orange wheels, scatter the sugared cranberries, and stand a few cinnamon sticks in the bowl. Ladle into glasses and put the kids' pitcher where the kids can reach it.



№ 05

VIRAL HIT

Apple Cider Margarita

The viral TikTok apple cider margarita: 2 oz reposado tequila + 3 oz unfiltered apple cider + fresh lime + a cinnamon-sugar rim. Costs $3 at home vs. $16 at fall cocktail bars.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Apple Cider Margarita

The viral TikTok apple cider margarita: 2 oz reposado tequila + 3 oz unfiltered apple cider + fresh lime + a cinnamon-sugar rim. Costs $3 at home vs. $16 at fall cocktail bars.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	0 min	1 cocktail	Easy	240

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CINNAMON-SUGAR RIM

- 2 tablespoons coarse sugar (or granulated)
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 lime wedge (for moistening the rim)

FOR EACH COCKTAIL

- 2 oz reposado tequila (blanco also works; reposado adds caramel depth)
- 3 oz fresh unfiltered apple cider — NOT filtered apple juice
- ¾ oz fresh lime juice (about 1 large lime)
- ½ oz triple sec or Cointreau (or ½ oz agave syrup for a cleaner version)
- Ice for shaking, plus ice for serving

GARNISH

- 1 thin apple slice (dipped in lime juice to prevent browning)
- 1 cinnamon stick

BATCH FOR 8 (THANKSGIVING)

- 2 cups (16 oz) reposado tequila
- 3 cups (24 oz) fresh unfiltered apple cider
- ¾ cup (6 oz) fresh lime juice (about 8 limes)
- ½ cup (4 oz) triple sec or agave syrup

NON-ALCOHOLIC SWAP (PER DRINK)

- 4 oz fresh unfiltered cider (replaces tequila + cider)
- ½ oz fresh orange juice (replaces triple sec)
- ¾ oz fresh lime juice
- ¼ oz agave syrup
- 1–2 oz sparkling apple cider to top

02 Method

1. **Prep the rim first.** Mix 2 tablespoons coarse sugar and 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon together on a small plate — the 2:1 ratio is important; pure cinnamon alone is bitter. Run a cut lime wedge along only the outer top edge of a rocks glass (not the inside, where it would grit up your drink). Roll the rim through the cinnamon-sugar, tap off the excess, and set the glass aside.

2. **Load the glass with ice.** Fill the rimmed rocks glass with ice and set it aside while you shake. This keeps the glass cold so the drink doesn't warm the moment it hits.

3. **Build the shaker.** Add the tequila, unfiltered apple cider, fresh lime juice, and triple sec (or agave syrup) to a cocktail shaker. Fill the shaker at least two-thirds with ice — a full load of ice is critical for proper chilling and the slight foam on top.

4. **Shake hard for 10–12 seconds.** Seal the shaker tightly and shake with both hands as vigorously as you can. The shaker should be genuinely painful to hold — nearly too cold to grip — when you stop. This is longer than most margarita recipes call for, and it's the right call: cider has more sugar and body than a standard mixer and needs more shaking to integrate and chill properly. The outside of the shaker should be visibly frosted.

5. **Strain into the glass.** Strain the drink through the shaker's built-in strainer directly into the ice-filled, rimmed glass. For a cleaner drink, also use a fine mesh strainer to catch any ice chips. The drink should have a very slight froth on the surface from the shaking.

6. **Garnish and serve immediately.** Dip a thin apple slice in lime juice and perch it on the rim. Drop in a cinnamon stick. Serve right away — like any shaken cocktail, it's at its best in the first 5 minutes before the ice melts further.

7. **Batch version (Thanksgiving).** Combine all batch ingredients in a pitcher, stir, taste, and refrigerate up to 24 hours. At service, shake each drink individually with ice (about 10 seconds) and strain into rimmed glasses. This is exactly how a bar handles volume — the batch stores well, each drink gets properly chilled and diluted fresh.



№ 06

VIRAL HIT

Apple Cider Mimosa

The viral TikTok apple cider mimosa: fresh-pressed cloudy cider meets cold Prosecco in a 2:3 ratio, finished with a cinnamon sugar rim and a cinnamon stick.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Apple Cider Mimosa

The viral TikTok apple cider mimosa: fresh-pressed cloudy cider meets cold Prosecco in a 2:3 ratio, finished with a cinnamon sugar rim and a cinnamon stick.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	0 min	1	Easy	105

01 Ingredients

PER COCKTAIL

- 2 oz fresh-pressed apple cider (cold, unfiltered, from the refrigerator section)
- 3 oz Prosecco, Cava, or Champagne (cold)

OPTIONAL CARAMEL-CINNAMON RIM (THE TIKTOK VERSION)

- 1 tablespoon caramel sauce (store-bought is fine)
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar mixed with ½ teaspoon cinnamon

GARNISH

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 thin apple slice (dipped in lemon juice to prevent browning), optional

FOR A BATCH (8 SERVINGS)

- 2 cups (16 oz) cold fresh-pressed apple cider
- 1 bottle (750 ml / 25 oz) cold Prosecco or Cava

ZERO-PROOF VERSION (PER GLASS)

- 2 oz fresh-pressed still apple cider (cold, unfiltered)
- 3 oz sparkling water or non-alcoholic sparkling white grape juice
- A squeeze of lemon juice (about ½ teaspoon) for brightness

WHY IT WORKS

Two likely culprits: (1) the cider or Prosecco wasn't cold enough — both need to be 38–40°F; warmth accelerates CO_2 loss; (2) you poured the Prosecco in a hard, direct stream into the center of the glass.

02 Method

1. **Chill everything first.** Both the cider and the sparkling wine need to be very cold — 38°F to 40°F. A warm Prosecco poured into warm cider goes flat in about 30 seconds and produces foam that climbs straight out of the glass. Put the bottle of Prosecco in the freezer for 15 minutes if it's not already cold.

2. **Rim the glass (optional but the look that drives TikTok views).** Spread a thin layer of caramel sauce around the outer rim of the glass with your finger or a pastry brush. On a small plate, stir together 1 tablespoon of sugar and ½ teaspoon of cinnamon. Dip and rotate the caramel-coated rim in the cinnamon sugar until evenly coated. Set the glass upright and let it dry for 1 minute — the caramel sets and the sugar doesn't fall in. This step is purely optional for the flavor; it's mostly for the visual.

3. **Add the cider first.** Pour 2 oz of cold fresh-pressed cider into the prepared glass. This order matters. Adding the Prosecco first and then the cider causes a volcano — the carbonation in the sparkling wine reacts violently with the sugars in the cider. Cider first, always.

4. **Top with Prosecco, slowly.** Tilt the glass slightly and pour the Prosecco down the inside of the glass rather than straight down into the center. Alternatively, hold a bar spoon or regular spoon over the glass and pour the Prosecco over the back of it — this breaks the stream and gentles the pour, preserving more carbonation. Fill to about ¾ full.

5. **Garnish and serve immediately.** Drop in a cinnamon stick and a thin apple slice if using. Serve right away — this is not a cocktail that improves with sitting. It takes two minutes to assemble the next round.

6. **For a batch:** Combine the 2 cups of cider in a pitcher. When guests arrive, pour 2 oz of cider into each flute and top with Prosecco individually — do not pre-mix the two in a pitcher, as the Prosecco will go flat within minutes. Pouring to order takes 10 seconds per glass and keeps every one fresh.



№ 07

VIRAL HIT

Apple Cider Sangria

The viral TikTok apple cider sangria: two bottles of Pinot Grigio, fresh-pressed apple cider, bourbon, and fall spices, built the night before and topped with ginger beer at serving time.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Apple Cider Sangria

The viral TikTok apple cider sangria: two bottles of Pinot Grigio, fresh-pressed apple cider, bourbon, and fall spices, built the night before and topped with ginger beer at serving time.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	0 min	10	Easy	165

01 Ingredients

THE SANGRIA BASE

- 2 bottles (750ml each) crisp dry white wine — Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, or Riesling
- 2 cups fresh-pressed apple cider (not hard cider, not sparkling — the cloudy refrigerator kind)
- ½ cup bourbon (or brandy, or Fireball Cinnamon Whisky for extra warmth)
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (or honey)
- Juice of 1 orange (about ¼ cup)

THE FRUIT

- 2 medium Honeycrisp or Fuji apples, cored and thinly sliced (not Red Delicious — too soft)
- 1 medium Bartlett or Bosc pear, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 medium orange, sliced into thin rounds
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced (optional — adds brightness)

AROMATICS

- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 star anise pods
- 4 whole cloves

TO SERVE

- 2 cups chilled ginger beer or sparkling water (added just before serving)
- Ice

MOCKTAIL VERSION

- Replace 2 bottles wine with 3 cups sparkling apple cider + 3 cups sparkling white grape juice
- Omit the bourbon
- All other ingredients remain the same

02 Method

1. **Slice the fruit.** Core and thinly slice the apples and pear — about ¼ inch thick. A mandoline gives uniform rounds that fan out beautifully in the pitcher; a sharp knife is fine. Toss the apple slices in the orange juice right after cutting to prevent browning (the juice works as the recipe's acid anyway). Slice the orange and optional lemon into thin rounds.

2. **Build the sangria.** In a large pitcher (3-quart minimum) or serving bowl, combine both bottles of wine, the apple cider, bourbon, maple syrup, and orange juice. Add the sliced apples, pear, orange, lemon (if using), cinnamon sticks, star anise, and cloves. Stir gently to dissolve the maple syrup.

3. **Refrigerate to macerate — this is the most important step.** Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Overnight (8–12 hours) is better. The wine and cider penetrate the fruit and soften it; the cinnamon and cloves bloom into the wine and turn it from white wine with things floating in it to one cohesive fall drink. A sangria made and served immediately tastes like its parts; one that rested overnight tastes like a recipe. Do not skip this step.

4. **Remove the whole spices before serving.** Fish out the cinnamon sticks, star anise pods, and cloves and discard them. Their job is done — leaving them in past 24 hours can turn the sangria bitter and astringent.

5. **Add the ginger beer at the last moment.** Pour in 2 cups of chilled ginger beer or sparkling water and stir once, gently. Add it now and not earlier — any fizz added during the chill period goes completely flat and leaves a slightly medicinal aftertaste. This is the single step most recipes get wrong.

6. **Serve over ice.** Ladle into large wine glasses over ice, making sure each glass gets some of the macerated fruit. The softened apple and pear slices are genuinely good to eat — they've absorbed wine, cider, and spices and taste like the sangria itself.



№ 08

VIRAL HIT

Bone Broth Hot Chocolate

The viral TikTok bone broth hot chocolate: replace water with bone broth to add 9–10g of protein per mug with zero detectable broth flavor. Rich, warming, and genuinely good — ready in 5 minutes, no blender.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

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The viral TikTok bone broth hot chocolate: replace water with bone broth to add 9–10g of protein per mug with zero detectable broth flavor. Rich, warming, and genuinely good — ready in 5 minutes, no blender.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
2 min	5 min	1 serving	Easy	140

01 Ingredients

- 1 cup bone broth — chicken bone broth gives a cleaner, more neutral base that disappears most completely behind the chocolate; beef bone broth is richer and slightly more assertive but still undetectable once the cacao is in; aim for a low-sodium brand (under 400mg per cup) so you can taste the chocolate without fighting the salt
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cacao powder OR unsweetened cocoa powder — raw cacao (the unprocessed version) has a slightly more intense, fruity-bitter chocolate flavor and retains more natural flavanols; Dutch-process cocoa (Droste, Hershey's Special Dark) is smoother and rounder with less bitterness; either works; natural cocoa (Hershey's regular) is the lightest and most familiar, also fine
- 1½ tablespoons pure maple syrup — adjust to taste; Grade A Dark Color (Robust Taste) has a more pronounced maple flavor that pairs well with the chocolate; Grade A Golden is milder; honey or agave work too, though each adds its own flavor note
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract — adds the warm aromatic baseline that makes the drink taste like hot chocolate instead of chocolate broth; don't skip it
- Pinch of fine sea salt — about ⅛ teaspoon; salt is what ties the sweetener to the chocolate and makes both flavors land more cleanly

OPTIONAL FOR EXTRA PROTEIN

- 1 scoop unflavored collagen peptides (about 10g) — adds another 10g of protein (reaching ~20g total) with almost no flavor, texture change, or calorie impact; whisk in off the heat after removing from the burner; flavored collagen (vanilla, chocolate) also works and can reduce the amount of maple syrup needed

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS

- 2 to 3 tablespoons frothed oat milk — adds a creamy, latte-style cap and softens the drink for anyone who wants less richness from pure broth; barista-formula oat milk froths best
- Pinch of cinnamon or a sprinkle of sea salt flakes — cinnamon heightens the warm chocolate notes; a small pinch of flaky salt (Maldon or similar) plays up the salty-sweet contrast and elevates the drink visually
- Whipped cream — if skipping the protein angle entirely and just making a good low-carb hot chocolate

02 Method

1. **Heat the bone broth in a saucepan.** Pour 1 cup bone broth into a small saucepan over medium heat. You want the broth to warm up before you add the cacao — a cold base causes the powder to clump immediately. Heat for 1 to 2 minutes until just warm to the touch, not simmering.
2. **Whisk in the cacao powder and salt.** Add 2 tablespoons cacao powder and a pinch of salt. Whisk vigorously from the bottom of the pan until no lumps remain and the mixture looks uniform and deep brown. Some powder will resist at first — keep whisking; it takes about 30 seconds of focused stirring for the powder to fully hydrate and incorporate.

3. **Add the maple syrup and vanilla.** Add 1½ tablespoons maple syrup and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract. Whisk to combine. The drink will now look and smell almost identical to regular hot chocolate.

4. **Heat to steaming and taste.** Raise the heat to medium and heat, stirring occasionally, until the drink is steaming and hot to the touch — 3 to 4 minutes. Do not let it boil; boiling drives off the aromatic vanilla and can cause the cacao solids to separate into a grainy texture. Taste off the heat: if you want it sweeter, add maple syrup ½ tablespoon at a time; if you want it more intense, add another ½ tablespoon of cacao powder and re-whisk briefly over low heat.

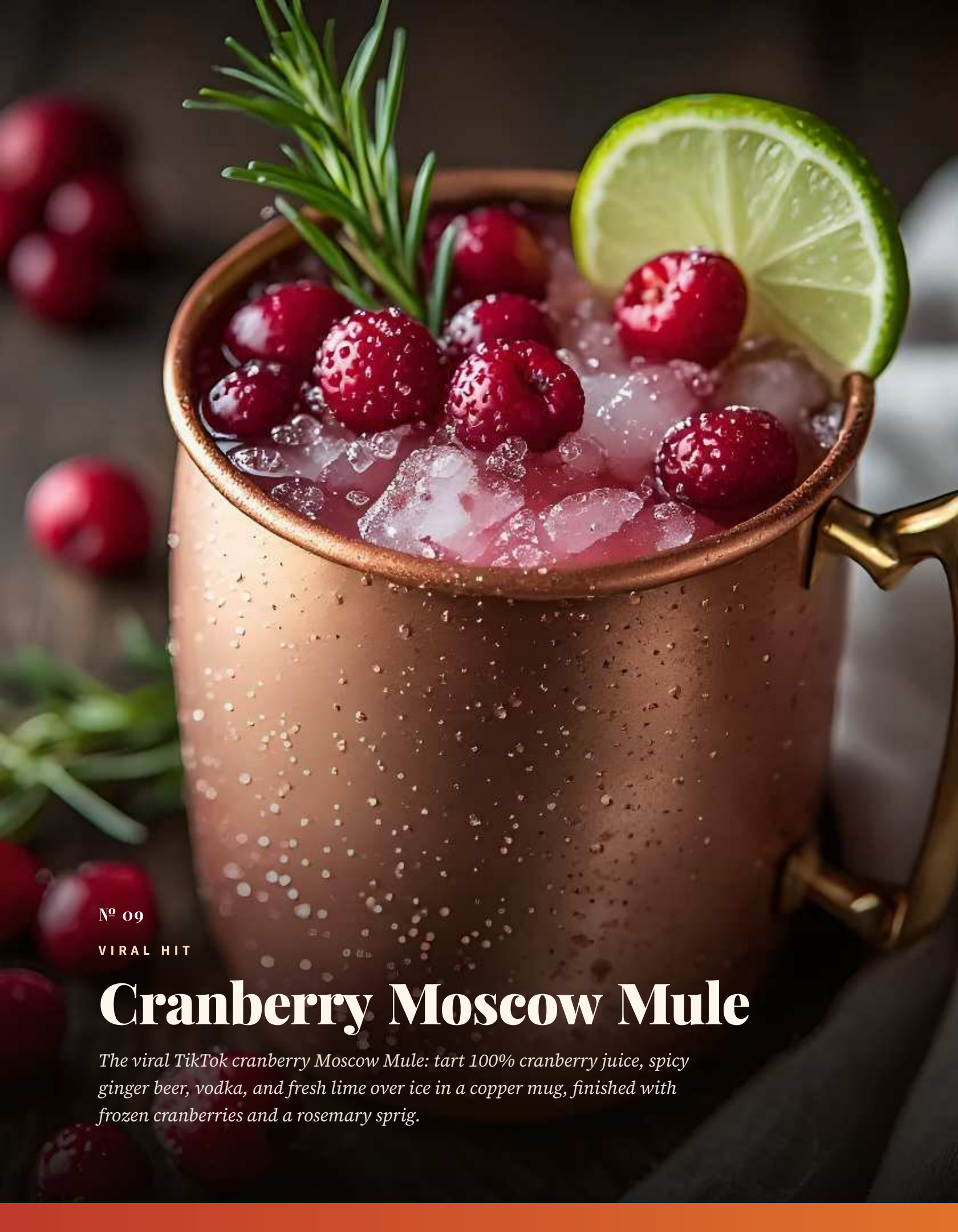
5. **Add collagen peptides off heat (optional).** Remove the saucepan from the heat. If using collagen peptides, add one scoop and whisk for 20 to 30 seconds until fully dissolved — the powder absorbs quickly in hot liquid. Do not add collagen over active heat; the proteins denature at a boil and can produce a slightly chalky texture. Unflavored collagen is completely tasteless and invisible in the finished drink.

6. **Pour and top.** Pour into a mug. If adding frothed oat milk, spoon or pour it on top. Finish with a pinch of cinnamon or flaky sea salt if using. Serve immediately — the protein-enhanced version holds heat slightly longer than milk-based hot chocolate because the broth has a lower fat content.

WHY IT WORKS

Quality bone broth provides roughly 8 to 10 grams of protein per cup, primarily from collagen that has been broken down during the long simmering process.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 09

VIRAL HIT

Cranberry Moscow Mule

The viral TikTok cranberry Moscow Mule: tart 100% cranberry juice, spicy ginger beer, vodka, and fresh lime over ice in a copper mug, finished with frozen cranberries and a rosemary sprig.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Cranberry Moscow Mule

The viral TikTok cranberry Moscow Mule: tart 100% cranberry juice, spicy ginger beer, vodka, and fresh lime over ice in a copper mug, finished with frozen cranberries and a rosemary sprig.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	0 min	1	Easy	185

01 Ingredients

PER COCKTAIL

- 2 oz vodka (a clean, neutral vodka works fine)
- 2 oz 100% unsweetened cranberry juice (not cranberry cocktail)
- ½ oz fresh lime juice (about half a lime)
- 3–4 oz ginger beer (spicier brands like Fever-Tree or Bundaberg work best)
- Crushed ice or ice cubes

GARNISH (THE TIKTOK LOOK)

- Small handful of fresh or frozen cranberries (about 8–10)
- 1 fresh rosemary sprig (about 4 inches)
- Thin lime wheel, optional

FOR SUGARED CRANBERRIES (THE TIKTOK VERSION — OPTIONAL)

- Toss cranberries in 1 tablespoon of simple syrup, let sit 5 minutes, then roll in granulated sugar — they look jewel-like and keep 2 days refrigerated

FOR A BATCH (8 SERVINGS)

- 2 cups (16 oz) vodka
- 2 cups (16 oz) 100% unsweetened cranberry juice
- ½ cup (4 oz) fresh lime juice (about 4 limes)
- 1 bottle (750 ml) ginger beer — add at serving, not ahead of time

MOCKTAIL VERSION (PER GLASS)

- 2 oz 100% unsweetened cranberry juice
- ½ oz fresh lime juice
- 4–5 oz ginger beer
- Splash of sparkling water

02 Method

1. **Fill the mug with ice.** A copper mug packed with crushed ice is the traditional presentation — the metal conducts cold and keeps every sip as cold as the first. A rocks glass or highball glass works fine if you don't have copper mugs. Fill it to the top; you need that ice mass to keep the ginger beer from going flat.

2. **Add the vodka and cranberry juice.** Pour 2 oz of vodka directly over the ice, then pour 2 oz of 100% unsweetened cranberry juice. The order doesn't affect flavor, but adding the juice before the ginger beer lets you check the color — a good cranberry Moscow Mule should be a deep, translucent red, not pale pink. If it looks pale, your cranberry juice is diluted with apple or grape juice.

3. **Add the lime juice.** Squeeze half a lime directly over the ice, or measure ½ oz if you're making a batch. This is not optional for balance — the tartness of the lime works with the cranberry's sourness to cut through the ginger beer's sweetness. Skip it and the drink turns syrupy.

4. **Top with ginger beer.** Pour 3–4 oz of cold ginger beer slowly down the inside of the mug rather than straight into the center — this preserves the carbonation and prevents a foam overflow. A spicier ginger beer (Fever-Tree Spicy Ginger, Bundaberg, Reed's Extra Ginger) gives the cocktail a genuine back-of-the-throat heat that makes it more interesting than a mild variety.

5. **Stir gently — just twice.** Two slow, gentle stirs with a bar spoon or a long spoon integrate the ingredients without beating the carbonation out of the ginger beer. More stirring = flatter drink.

6. **Garnish and serve immediately.** Drop in a small handful of frozen or fresh cranberries (they float and look striking against the red drink), tuck in a rosemary sprig so the fragrant end is above the rim, and add a lime wheel on the edge if you like. This is a drink to serve the moment it's built — it doesn't improve with sitting.

7. **For a batch:** Combine the vodka, cranberry juice, and lime juice in a pitcher and refrigerate up to 24 hours ahead. When serving, pour 4½ oz of the pre-mixed base into an ice-filled mug and top with ginger beer to order. Never add the ginger beer to the pitcher — it goes flat in 20 minutes. Each guest gets a freshly carbonated drink; the pouring takes 15 seconds per glass.

8. **Mocktail:** Fill a mug with ice, add 2 oz cranberry juice, ½ oz lime juice, 4–5 oz ginger beer, and a splash of sparkling water. The ginger beer carries the cocktail's signature heat, and the cranberry-lime combination is strong enough to stand on its own without vodka. These read as intentional drinks, not substitutions.

WHY IT WORKS

The standard ratio is 2 oz vodka, 2 oz 100% unsweetened cranberry juice, ½ oz fresh lime juice, and 3–4 oz ginger beer, built over ice in a copper mug. This creates a drink that's tart and spicy with a deep red color.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 10

VIRAL HIT

Hot Toddy

The viral TikTok hot toddy that reliably trends every cold season: 2 oz whiskey, 1 tbsp honey, ½ oz fresh lemon juice, and 6 oz of 185–195°F water. Honey dissolved first, whiskey last, cinnamon stick in the glass. Ready in 3 minutes.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Hot Toddy

The viral TikTok hot toddy that reliably trends every cold season: 2 oz whiskey, 1 tbsp honey, ½ oz fresh lemon juice, and 6 oz of 185–195°F water. Honey dissolved first, whiskey last, cinnamon stick in the glass. Ready in 3 minutes.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
2 min	1 min	1	Easy	200

01 Ingredients

- 2 oz (60 ml) Irish whiskey or bourbon (Jameson, Bushmills, Maker's Mark, or Bulleit work well)
- 1 tablespoon (21 g) good honey — raw honey or buckwheat honey preferred for stronger flavor
- ½ oz (1 tablespoon / 15 ml) fresh lemon juice — from about ¼ of a large lemon, no bottled juice
- 6 oz (180 ml) hot water, 185–195°F

GARNISH (NOT OPTIONAL FOR THE TIKTOK LOOK)

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 lemon wheel (½-inch slice of lemon)
- 2–3 whole cloves, pushed into the lemon wheel
- **Optional:** 1 star anise, or a thin slice of fresh ginger in the glass

WHY IT WORKS

A hot toddy is a hot whiskey drink — whiskey, honey, lemon, and hot water — that has been a cold-season folk remedy since the 1700s.

02 Method

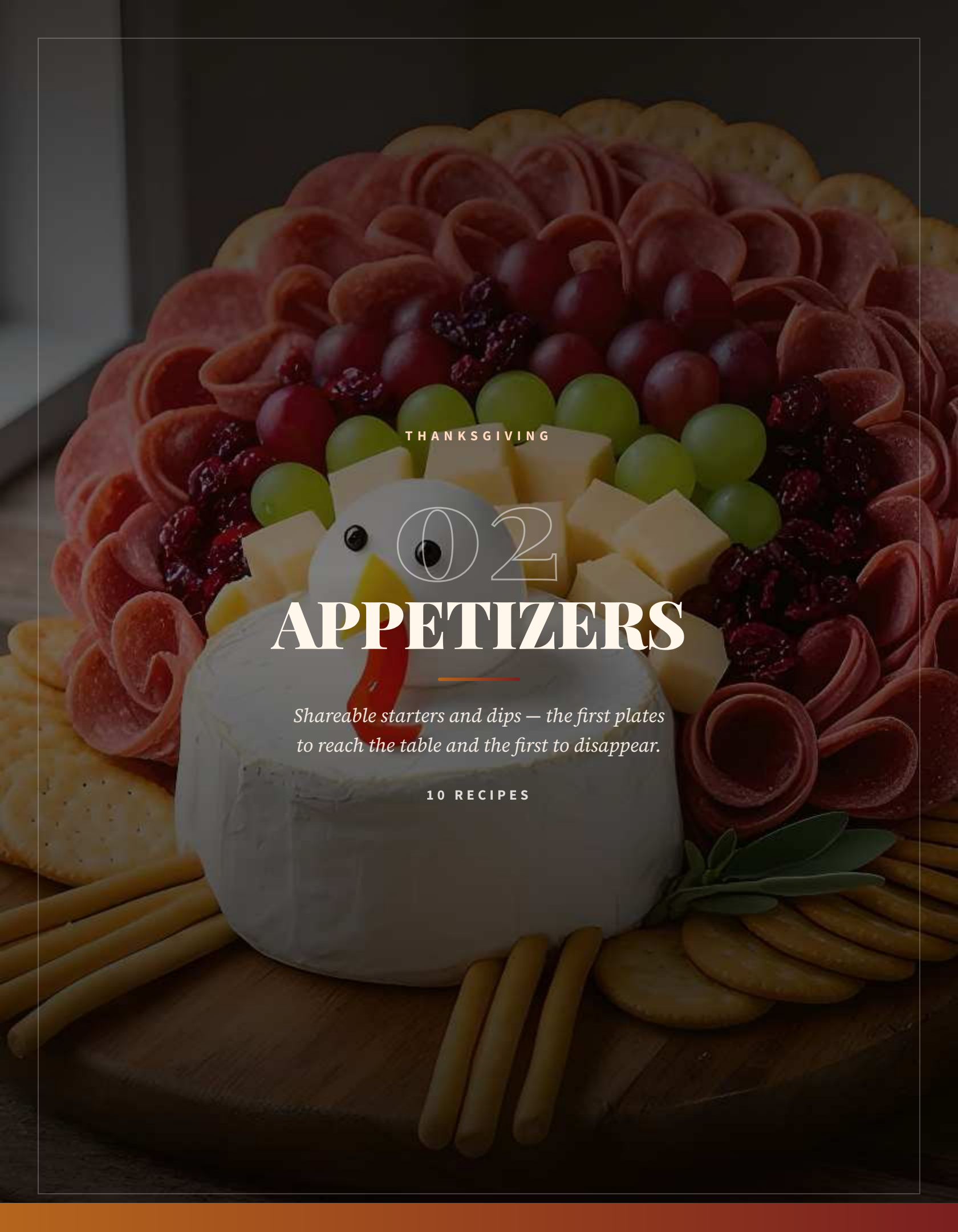
1. **Warm the mug.** Pour a small amount of just-hot water into your mug, swirl it around for 30 seconds, and discard. This keeps the drink hot longer and prevents thermal shock in a glass mug. Skipping this step costs about 15°F of drinking temperature over the first few minutes — not critical, but worth doing when you're already heating water anyway.

2. **Heat the water to 185–195°F.** Use a temperature-controlled kettle, or microwave 6 oz of water for 90 seconds in a 1,000-watt microwave, then let it rest 30 seconds. The water should be steaming steadily but not at a rolling boil — small streams of bubbles rising, not vigorous churning. Boiling water (212°F) is too hot; it drives off aromatic compounds in the honey and makes the drink taste flat.

3. **Dissolve the honey first.** Pour the hot water into the warmed mug. Add 1 tablespoon of honey immediately and stir with a long spoon for 30–45 seconds until no honey is visible on the bottom of the mug and the water looks uniformly golden. This is the step most TikTok recipes skip: they add honey after the whiskey, or drizzle it on top as a garnish, which looks great on camera but leaves sticky honey pooled at the bottom of the glass. Dissolving it first gives you a fully integrated, consistent sip throughout.

4. **Add whiskey and lemon juice.** Pour in 2 oz of Irish whiskey and 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice. Stir once or twice to combine. Taste — the drink should be warming but not sharp, sweet but not cloying, and the lemon should be a background note, not dominant. Adjust: add ½ teaspoon more honey if it's too tart, or another squeeze of lemon if it's too sweet.

5. **Garnish and serve.** Push 2–3 whole cloves into a lemon wheel so they stay anchored (this is how you get them in the drink without fishing them out). Place the clove-studded lemon wheel in the mug. Add a cinnamon stick — it adds aroma with every sip and looks exactly like the TikTok version. Add star anise if using. Serve immediately while the mug is hot.



THANKSGIVING

02 APPETIZERS

Shareable starters and dips — the first plates to reach the table and the first to disappear.

10 RECIPES



№ 11

CHEF-INSPIRED

Bar Americain Pumpkin Soup Shooters with Cinnamon Cream

Bobby Flay's Bar Americain Thanksgiving party move: silky spiced pumpkin soup spiked with chipotle in adobo, finished with crème fraîche, and served in 3-oz shot glasses with cinnamon cream and toasted pumpkin seeds.

CHEF-INSPIRED · COPYCAT

Bar Americain Pumpkin Soup Shooters with Cinnamon Cream

Bobby Flay's Bar Americain Thanksgiving party move: silky spiced pumpkin soup spiked with chipotle in adobo, finished with crème fraîche, and served in 3-oz shot glasses with cinnamon cream and toasted pumpkin seeds.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	20 min	About 16 shooters	Easy	90

01 Ingredients

FOR THE PUMPKIN SOUP

- 2 cans (15 oz each) pure pumpkin puree — NOT pumpkin pie filling
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock (or vegetable stock), plus more if needed
- 2 tbsp chipotle in adobo sauce, seeds removed and pureed smooth
- 3 tbsp honey (or pure maple syrup for vegan)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp ground allspice
- ¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg (or ground nutmeg)
- ⅓ cup crème fraîche (or full-fat sour cream)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE CINNAMON CREAM

- ½ cup crème fraîche (or full-fat sour cream)
- 1 tbsp honey
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of kosher salt

FOR GARNISH

- 3 tbsp raw pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 1 tbsp fresh chives, thinly sliced

02 Method

1. **Toast the pumpkin seeds.** Spread pepitas in a single layer in a dry skillet over medium heat. Toast, shaking the pan frequently, for 3–4 minutes until the seeds are lightly golden and have begun to pop. Transfer to a plate immediately — they burn fast. Season with a pinch of salt. Set aside. (Can be done a day ahead; store in an airtight container.)

2. **Prepare the chipotle puree.** Remove 2 chipotle peppers from the can. Split them open and use a spoon to scrape out and discard the seeds — the seeds concentrate the heat. Add the seeded peppers plus 1 tablespoon of the adobo sauce from the can to a small blender or food processor. Blend until completely smooth. You need 2 tablespoons total of this puree.

3. **Build the soup.** Combine the pumpkin puree and chicken stock in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk until completely smooth with no lumps. Add the chipotle puree, honey, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and nutmeg. Whisk to combine. Bring to a gentle simmer — you want small bubbles breaking the surface, not a rolling boil.

4. **Simmer.** Cook, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes. The soup will deepen slightly in color and the spices will lose their raw edge. The chipotle smokiness will mellow and integrate rather than sitting on top.

5. **Finish with crème fraîche.** Remove the saucepan from heat. Add the ⅓ cup crème fraîche and whisk until fully incorporated and the soup looks silky. Taste and season generously with salt and black pepper. Taste again: if it needs more sweetness, add another teaspoon of honey; if it needs more heat and smoke, add ½ teaspoon more chipotle puree; if it's too thick, add stock 2 tablespoons at a time until it flows easily.

6. **Check consistency.** The soup should pour easily from a ladle into a shot glass — about the consistency of a thin cream soup or heavy cream. Too thick and it will look gloppy in the glass; too thin and the cinnamon cream will sink rather than float. If refrigerating ahead, the soup will thicken as it cools — plan to add a small splash of stock when reheating.

7. **Make-ahead step (optional, up to 48 hours).** Cool the soup to room temperature, transfer to a covered container, and refrigerate for up to 48 hours. The flavor improves overnight. When ready to serve, reheat over low heat, whisking gently — do not boil.

8. **Make the cinnamon cream.** In a small bowl, stir together the crème fraîche, honey, cinnamon, and pinch of salt until smooth. The cream should be thick enough to hold its shape briefly when spooned. Refrigerate in a covered bowl until service (up to 24 hours ahead).

9. **Serve as shooters.** Set out about 16 three-ounce shot glasses (or small espresso cups or demitasse cups). Warm the soup until just steaming — not boiling. Using a small ladle or a pitcher with a spout, pour the warm soup into each glass, filling to about ⅞ full and leaving a small lip. Working quickly, add 1 level teaspoon of cinnamon cream to the center of each glass — the cream should float on the surface. Top each with 2–3 toasted pumpkin seeds and a small pinch of sliced chives. Serve immediately on a tray, passed to guests.

WHY IT WORKS

The answer is the chipotle in adobo. Most pumpkin soup recipes work with warm spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice) plus some form of cream — a combination that produces a sweet, comforting soup with a single flavor direction.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 12

FRITOS

Bean Dip

Make the copycat recipe for Fritos Bean Dip at home — same smooth, mildly spicy pinto bean dip with the exact tangy finish. The secret is white vinegar, which almost every homemade version skips.

FRITOS · COPYCAT

Bean Dip

Make the copycat recipe for Fritos Bean Dip at home — same smooth, mildly spicy pinto bean dip with the exact tangy finish. The secret is white vinegar, which almost every homemade version skips.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	8 min	8	Easy	90

01 Ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons corn oil (or neutral avocado oil)
- 2 tablespoons white distilled vinegar
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and roughly chopped (or 2 tablespoons pickled jalapeño brine)
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 3–5 tablespoons water, added as needed

WHY IT WORKS

The Fritos Bean Dip Original label lists: water, pinto beans, vinegar, corn oil, salt, maltodextrin (from corn), dried onion, sugar, jalapeño peppers, spice, chili pepper, dried garlic, and natural flavors.

02 Method

1. Drain and rinse the pinto beans thoroughly under cold water. Shake off excess water — you want beans, not liquid.
2. Add the beans, corn oil, vinegar, jalapeño, onion powder, garlic powder, chili powder, cumin, salt, and sugar to a high-speed blender (not a food processor).
3. Add 3 tablespoons of water. Blend on high for 2 minutes, scraping down the sides once at the 1-minute mark.
4. Check the consistency: it should be smooth, thick, and spreadable — like hummus or the inside of a Fritos can. If it's too thick to spread, add water 1 tablespoon at a time and blend again. If it's too loose, blend longer without adding liquid.
5. Taste and adjust: more vinegar for tang, more salt for flavor, more jalapeño for heat. The dip should taste slightly over-seasoned at this stage — it mellows as it warms.
6. Transfer to a small saucepan over low heat. Warm through, stirring constantly, for 3–5 minutes. This step cooks out the raw jalapeño bite and melds the flavors.
7. Serve warm in a bowl alongside Fritos Scoops. For a party, transfer to a slow cooker on WARM and stir every 30 minutes.



№ 13

HARRY & DAVID

Moose Munch

Copycat Harry and David Moose Munch: buttery hard-crack toffee popcorn with whole almonds, baked until crisp, then coated in melted milk chocolate.

HARRY & DAVID · COPYCAT

Moose Munch

Copycat Harry and David Moose Munch: buttery hard-crack toffee popcorn with whole almonds, baked until crisp, then coated in melted milk chocolate.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	1 hr 20 min	20	Medium	348

01 Ingredients

FOR THE TOFFEE POPCORN

- ½ cup popcorn kernels (yields about 12 cups popped) — OR 12 cups pre-popped plain or lightly salted popcorn, unpopped kernels removed
- 1½ cups whole roasted salted almonds
- 1 cup (2 sticks / 226g) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 2 cups (400g) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (60ml) light corn syrup — keeps the toffee from crystallizing
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt or kosher salt (use ¼ teaspoon if your almonds are heavily salted)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda — aerates the toffee so it coats the popcorn more evenly

FOR THE CHOCOLATE COATING

- 12 oz (340g) good-quality milk chocolate chips or finely chopped milk chocolate bar — Ghirardelli or Guittard recommended
- ½ teaspoon refined coconut oil or vegetable shortening — helps the chocolate set firmly

02 Method

1. **Pop and prep the popcorn.** If using kernels: heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the kernels in a single layer, cover with a lid, and shake the pot back and forth every 10 seconds. When popping slows to 2 to 3 seconds between pops, remove from heat immediately. Transfer to a very large heat-safe bowl (at least 8-quart capacity — the toffee doubles in volume when baking soda is added, so you need room to toss). Remove any unpopped kernels. Add the almonds to the bowl and toss to combine.

2. **Preheat the oven and prep the pans.** Set the oven to 250°F. Line two large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats. Do this before starting the toffee so you're ready to move fast once it's done.

3. **Make the toffee.** In a heavy-bottomed 3-quart saucepan (medium-heavy gauge — thin pans create hot spots that scorch the toffee), melt the butter over medium heat. Add the sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Stir once to combine, then cook WITHOUT stirring, swirling the pan occasionally to distribute heat evenly. Clip a candy thermometer to the side of the pan. The mixture will bubble vigorously and gradually turn golden — it typically passes through a light amber stage around 280°F before reaching the target. Remove from heat at exactly 300°F (hard crack stage). The toffee will look a deep amber, similar to a dark honey. Do not walk away during the final 5 minutes; the temperature climbs quickly past 275°F.

4. **Add the baking soda.** Working off-heat, quickly stir in the baking soda with a wooden spoon or heat-safe spatula. The toffee will foam up dramatically and lighten in color —

this is correct. The baking soda creates CO_2 bubbles that make the coating airier and help it adhere to the popcorn. Stir only until just combined — about 5 seconds. Do not over-stir, which collapses the bubbles.

5. **Coat the popcorn.** Immediately pour the hot toffee over the popcorn and almonds in the bowl. Using two silicone spatulas, fold and toss the mixture quickly to coat as evenly as possible. The toffee seizes and stiffens within 2 to 3 minutes, so move with purpose. Spread the coated popcorn and almonds across both prepared baking sheets in a roughly single layer — thin enough that the toffee bakes dry evenly. It will be clumped at this stage; that's fine.

6. **Bake.** Place both baking sheets in the oven and bake at 250°F for 1 hour total, removing the sheets every 20 minutes to stir the toffee corn, breaking up large clumps and redistributing from the edges (which dry faster) to the center. After 1 hour the coating should look dry and matte rather than sticky and glossy. If it still looks tacky, bake an additional 10 to 15 minutes. This bake step is not optional — it drives off residual moisture and is what separates a shelf-stable crunchy Moose Munch from a short-lived sticky caramel corn.

7. **Cool completely.** Remove from the oven and let the toffee corn cool on the baking sheets to room temperature — about 25 to 30 minutes. Do not add the chocolate while the popcorn is still warm; it will pool instead of coating evenly and may cause the chocolate to seize.

8. **Melt the chocolate.** Combine the chocolate chips and coconut oil in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 30-second bursts on 50% power, stirring between each burst, until just melted and smooth — typically 2 to 3 bursts total. (Alternatively, melt in a double boiler over barely simmering water, stirring constantly.) Do not overheat: milk chocolate scorches at lower temperatures than dark chocolate. The finished chocolate should be fluid and glossy, about 88–90°F.

9. **Coat with chocolate.** Pour the melted chocolate over the cooled toffee corn spread on the baking sheets. Using a spatula, fold and toss to coat most of the surface — you want enrobing, not just a drizzle. Spread back into a thin layer. The chocolate will look glossy and wet at this stage.

10. **Set the chocolate.** Refrigerate the baking sheets for 15 to 20 minutes until the chocolate is fully set and the clusters are firm. Once set, break into clusters of varying sizes — irregular pieces are part of the charm. Transfer to an airtight container. The Moose Munch is ready to eat immediately and keeps at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

WHY IT WORKS

Pop 12 cups of popcorn and spread in a large bowl with 1½ cups roasted salted whole almonds. In a heavy saucepan, melt 1 cup unsalted butter over medium heat, add 2 cups granulated sugar, ¼ cup light corn syrup, and ½ teaspoon salt.



№ 14

RO-TEL

Famous Queso Dip

The homemade queso dip recipe everyone searches for — Velveeta and Ro-Tel, the two-ingredient back-of-can classic. Melts in under 10 minutes, serves a crowd, costs under $5. Every hack and variation included.

RO-TEL · COPYCAT

Famous Queso Dip

The homemade queso dip recipe everyone searches for — Velveeta and Ro-Tel, the two-ingredient back-of-can classic. Melts in under 10 minutes, serves a crowd, costs under $5. Every hack and variation included.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	5 min	12	Easy	110

01 Ingredients

BASE RECIPE (2 INGREDIENTS)

- 1 block (16 oz / 1 lb) Velveeta processed cheese, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 can (10 oz) Ro-Tel Original Diced Tomatoes & Green Chilies, undrained

OPTIONAL ADD-INS (PICK ONE OR NONE)

- ½ lb ground beef, chorizo, or spicy breakfast sausage — cooked, crumbled, and drained (for a meat queso)
- 4 oz (half a block) cream cheese, cut into cubes (for a creamier, richer dip that holds warm longer)
- 1 can (4 oz) diced green chilies, drained (for extra chili flavor without more tomato)
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed (to stretch servings and add fiber)

WHY IT WORKS

Grainy texture (small lumps, rough mouthfeel): heat was too high. Velveeta's emulsifying salts break down above a vigorous simmer — keep the heat on medium-low and stir constantly.

02 Method

1. **Prep.** Cut the Velveeta block into 1-inch cubes so it melts evenly. Do not leave it in one large block — the outside will melt and scorch before the center softens.

2. **Microwave method (fastest).** Combine the Velveeta cubes and undrained Ro-Tel in a large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on HIGH for 3 minutes. Remove and stir — the edges will be melted but the center likely still chunky. Return to microwave and cook in 1-minute intervals, stirring after each, until the dip is fully smooth and no solid chunks remain (2–3 more minutes total, depending on your microwave). Stir well.

3. **Stovetop method (more control).** Combine the Velveeta cubes and undrained Ro-Tel in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir continuously with a silicone spatula as the cheese melts — do not walk away. The dip is ready when it is completely smooth and just beginning to steam, 8–10 minutes. Do not bring to a boil; high heat breaks the emulsion and produces a grainy or oily dip.

4. **Slow cooker method (for a party).** Combine the Velveeta cubes and undrained Ro-Tel in a 2-qt or larger slow cooker. Cook on LOW for 1 hour, stirring once at 30 minutes, until smooth. Switch to WARM to hold for up to 3 hours.

5. **Add-ins (optional).** If using cream cheese: add the cream cheese cubes with the Velveeta at the start — it melts into the dip evenly without separating. If using cooked ground beef or chorizo: stir the drained, cooked meat into the fully melted dip just before serving. If adding black beans or extra chilies: fold them in after the cheese is fully melted.

6. **Serve.** Transfer to a warm bowl or slow cooker set on WARM. Serve with tortilla chips, sturdy crackers, or fresh-cut vegetables. Stir occasionally to keep the surface from skinning over.



№ 15

VIRAL HIT

Crack Dip

The TikTok crack dip that broke the internet: cream cheese beaten smooth, ranch seasoning, sour cream, sharp cheddar, and a blanket of crispy bacon. Serve cold in 15 minutes or baked bubbly in 25.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Crack Dip

The TikTok crack dip that broke the internet: cream cheese beaten smooth, ranch seasoning, sour cream, sharp cheddar, and a blanket of crispy bacon. Serve cold in 15 minutes or baked bubbly in 25.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	0 min	16	Easy	200

01 Ingredients

THE DIP BASE

- 2 blocks (16 oz / 453g total) full-fat cream cheese, fully softened at room temperature — this is the one non-negotiable step; cold cream cheese produces a lumpy dip
- 1 cup full-fat sour cream (not light — the fat helps the dip hold its texture when served cold)
- 1 packet (1 oz / 28g) Hidden Valley Original Ranch salad dressing and seasoning mix — the dry mix, not the bottled dressing

THE MIX-INS

- 1½ cups (6 oz / 170g) shredded sharp cheddar cheese, divided — preshredded works fine; freshly shredded melts better in the baked version
- 8 strips thick-cut bacon, cooked until crispy and crumbled (about ¾ to 1 cup crumbled), divided — turkey bacon or Canadian bacon works as a lighter swap
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced, white and light green parts, divided

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MIX)

- 1 cup pickled jalapeño slices, drained and roughly chopped — the brine also works stirred into the base for heat without chunks
- 1 can (10 oz) Rotel Original (diced tomatoes and green chilies), drained very well — adds color and a mild Tex-Mex note; drain thoroughly or the dip will be watery
- 1 cup shredded rotisserie chicken — turns this from a dip into a meal; shred fine so it incorporates

FOR SERVING

- Ritz crackers (the classic pairing — the buttery richness is designed for cream-cheese dips)
- Bagel chips, pita chips, or Wheat Thins
- Sliced celery, cucumber rounds, bell pepper strips, or endive leaves for a low-carb option

02 Method

1. **Soften the cream cheese (critical step).** Remove both blocks from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before starting. The cream cheese must be genuinely soft — press a finger into the block and it should give completely with no resistance. If you're short on time, unwrap each block, place it on a microwave-safe plate, and microwave at 50% power for 15–20 seconds. Do not full-power microwave it or the fat separates. If the cream cheese is not fully soft, the finished dip will have white specks and a grainy texture no amount of stirring will fix.

2. **Beat the cream cheese smooth.** Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, a hand mixer, or a sturdy rubber spatula, beat the softened cream cheese alone for 60–90 seconds until completely smooth and fluffy. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl to make sure no lumps remain. This pre-beating step is what separates a silky dip from a lumpy one — the cream cheese needs to be fully aerated before anything else goes in.

3. **Add sour cream and ranch seasoning.** Add the sour cream and the entire packet of ranch seasoning mix. Stir or mix on low speed until fully combined and uniform, about 30 seconds. Taste the base at this point — it should be noticeably tangy, garlicky, and savory. The final dip will taste more mellow once the cheese and bacon are in; if it tastes flat now, add another half-teaspoon of dried dill or a pinch of garlic powder.

4. **Fold in the mix-ins.** Switch to a rubber spatula. Add 1 cup of the cheddar, three-quarters of the bacon crumbles, and most of the green onions (reserve a pinch of green onion and the remaining bacon and cheddar for topping). Fold gently — you want visible pockets of bacon and cheddar rather than a uniform paste. Over-mixing makes everything disappear into the base and you lose the textural hits that make each bite interesting.

5. **Choose your serving style:**

6. **Cold version:** Transfer the dip to a shallow serving dish or bowl. Smooth the top with a spatula. Scatter the remaining cheddar, bacon, and green onions evenly over the surface. Cover and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes to let the flavors meld and the dip firm up slightly. Serve cold with crackers, chips, or vegetables. The dip holds in the refrigerator up to 4 days covered.

7. **Baked version (recommended for gatherings):** Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Transfer the dip to a 9-inch oven-safe dish or a 10-inch cast iron skillet. Smooth the top. Scatter the remaining cheddar evenly over the surface and then the remaining bacon crumbles on top of the cheddar. Bake for 20–25 minutes until the edges are visibly bubbling and the cheddar on top has fully melted. For a golden, slightly crispy top, run under the broiler on high for 1–2 minutes — watch carefully, as the cheese goes from golden to burnt in under 60 seconds. Scatter green onions over the hot dip just before serving. Serve immediately with crackers or chips alongside.

8. **Make ahead:** The unbaked dip (without toppings) can be made up to 48 hours ahead and refrigerated. For the baked version, assemble with toppings in the baking dish, cover tightly with foil, and refrigerate. Pull from the fridge 15–20 minutes before baking (a cold dip takes 5–8 minutes longer to heat through). Bake as directed.

WHY IT WORKS

The name is pure hyperbole from food-blog culture — anything described as addictively good got called 'crack' in the mid-2010s. It has nothing to do with the drug; it just meant 'you can't stop eating this.' The name stuck because it's accurate.



№ 16

VIRAL HIT

Deviled Eggs

Viral TikTok deviled eggs: steam 13 minutes for shells that peel clean every time, use an extra yolk or two for a richer piped-up filling, and choose from three topping variations — classic smoked paprika, dill pickle, or hot honey bacon.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Deviled Eggs

Viral TikTok deviled eggs: steam 13 minutes for shells that peel clean every time, use an extra yolk or two for a richer piped-up filling, and choose from three topping variations — classic smoked paprika, dill pickle, or hot honey bacon.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	13 min	24 halves	Easy	60

01 Ingredients

FOR THE EGGS

- 12 large eggs (the recipe eggs — use cold-from-fridge eggs for steaming)
- 2–3 large eggs (extra, for the extra-yolk trick)
- Ice, for the ice bath

FOR THE FILLING (CLASSIC)

- 4 tablespoons (60g) full-fat mayonnaise (Duke's preferred)
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon finely ground white pepper

TO GARNISH (CLASSIC)

- Smoked paprika, for dusting
- Fresh chives, thinly sliced

DILL PICKLE VARIATION (FOR ⅓ OF THE FILLING)

- 1 teaspoon dill pickle brine (replaces the apple cider vinegar)
- 1 tablespoon very finely diced dill pickles
- Thin dill pickle rounds and fresh dill fronds, to garnish

HOT HONEY BACON VARIATION (FOR ⅓ OF THE FILLING)

- 1 teaspoon hot honey (added to the filling)
- 3–4 strips of bacon, cooked very crispy and crumbled fine
- Hot honey, for drizzling
- Smoked paprika

02 Method

1. **Set up the steamer.** Fill a large pot or saucepan with 1 inch of water. Place a steamer basket inside. Bring to a rolling boil over medium-high heat, covered.

2. **Steam the eggs.** Once the water boils and steam is visible, carefully add the eggs in a single layer to the steamer basket — don't crowd them. Cover immediately. Steam for exactly 13 minutes for fully set yolks with clean edges and no greenish ring. (Use 12 minutes if you prefer a slightly jammy, bright-orange yolk center — these are richer but harder to pipe cleanly.) Adjust the heat during steaming to maintain steady steam without boiling dry.

3. **Ice bath.** While the eggs steam, fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. When the timer goes off, immediately transfer the eggs to the ice bath using tongs or a slotted spoon. Let sit for at least 5 minutes — this stops carryover cooking and creates a slight vacuum between the shell and the membrane, which is what makes them peel cleanly. Peel under a gentle stream of cold running water: crack the fat

end first (there's an air pocket there), then roll the egg gently under your palm, then peel in sections under running water.

4. **Halve and separate yolks.** Slice each egg cleanly in half lengthwise with a thin, sharp knife. Pop the yolks into a medium bowl — they should release cleanly without leaving a crater in the white. If a yolk breaks a white, that half becomes the cook's snack. Arrange the whites on a plate or serving platter, cut-side up. Pat the whites dry with a paper towel — a dry surface lets the filling grip instead of sliding.

5. **Make the filling.** To the bowl of yolks, add the mayonnaise, Dijon, apple cider vinegar, salt, and white pepper. Mash vigorously with a fork until a smooth, uniform paste forms. For the smoothest filling (the TikTok standard), push the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve using the back of a spoon — this removes any remaining lumps and produces the creamy, uniform texture that pipes cleanly. Taste and adjust salt. For the extra-yolk version: add the yolks from 2 to 3 additional hard-cooked eggs at this step before mashing.

6. **Make the variations.** If doing all three variations: divide the base filling into thirds. Leave one third as classic. To the second third, swap the vinegar for 1 teaspoon of dill pickle brine and fold in the finely diced pickles. To the third third, stir in 1 teaspoon of hot honey.

7. **Pipe the filling.** Spoon each filling into a separate piping bag or quart-sized ziplock bag with a small corner snipped (½-inch opening). Hold the bag over a white half and pipe in a tight, clockwise circular motion — start at the outer edge of the cavity and spiral inward and upward to build the mound. Pipe generously: the filling should mound above the rim of the white, not sit flush with it.

8. **Garnish and serve.** Classic: dust lightly with smoked paprika and scatter chives. Pickle: top with a thin pickle round and a frond of dill. Hot honey bacon: scatter bacon crumble over the filling, then drizzle with hot honey from a spoon, and dust with smoked paprika. Serve immediately or cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate up to 4 hours before serving.

WHY IT WORKS

Steaming produces consistently easy-to-peel shells regardless of egg freshness — which is the #1 deviled egg failure point.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 17

VIRAL HIT

Holiday Chex Mix

Viral TikTok holiday Chex mix: the original oven-baked party snack with three Chex cereals, mixed nuts, pretzels, and buttery Worcestershire seasoning.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Holiday Chex Mix

Viral TikTok holiday Chex mix: the original oven-baked party snack with three Chex cereals, mixed nuts, pretzels, and buttery Worcestershire seasoning.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	1 hr	24 servings	Easy	140

01 Ingredients

DRY MIX

- 3 cups (90g) Corn Chex cereal
- 3 cups (84g) Rice Chex cereal
- 3 cups (96g) Wheat Chex cereal
- 1 cup (135g) mixed nuts (peanuts, cashews, almonds — whatever you have)
- 1 cup (60g) bite-size pretzels
- 1 cup (60g) garlic-flavored bite-size bagel chips — or plain bagel chips broken into 1-inch pieces

SEASONING SAUCE

- 6 tablespoons (85g) unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ teaspoons seasoned salt (such as Lawry's)
- ¾ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder

02 Method

1. **Preheat the oven to 250°F.** You need a genuinely low oven — not 300°F or 325°F. The low temperature is what slowly draws moisture out of every piece without burning the cereals. Set a rack in the center of the oven.

2. **Combine the dry mix.** In a very large bowl (at least 6-quart capacity), combine the Corn Chex, Rice Chex, Wheat Chex, mixed nuts, pretzels, and bagel chips. Toss gently to mix the components. The bowl needs to be large enough that you can stir everything vigorously without spilling.

3. **Make the seasoning sauce.** Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat (or in a microwave-safe bowl in 30-second bursts). Remove from heat and whisk in the Worcestershire sauce, seasoned salt, garlic powder, and onion powder until fully combined. The sauce should look like a thin, deeply golden liquid.

4. **Coat the dry mix.** Pour the butter sauce over the cereal mixture in a thin, even stream while stirring with a large spatula — work from the outside edges in, folding from the bottom up, to coat every piece. Take your time here: 2 minutes of thorough stirring ensures even coverage. Every piece should look lightly glossy; no dry white cereal squares should remain. Taste a few pieces — they should be clearly seasoned, not bland.

5. **Transfer to the roasting pan.** Pour the coated mix into a large ungreased roasting pan — a standard 15x11-inch roasting pan is ideal, or use two rimmed sheet pans. Spread into an even layer. The pieces don't need to be perfectly separated, but no deep piles; the goal is roughly a single layer for even toasting.

6. **Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes.** Set a kitchen timer at 15-minute intervals. At each interval, remove the pan from the oven, stir thoroughly (again from the bottom up, rotating the pan to bring edge pieces to the center), and return it to the oven. By the 45-minute mark the mix will smell noticeably toasted and buttery. By the 60-minute mark, each piece should feel completely dry when pressed — not sticky or slightly soft. If a few pieces still feel soft at 60 minutes, bake another 10 minutes.

7. **Cool on paper towels.** Spread the finished mix in a single layer on paper towels. Let it cool completely — at least 15 minutes, ideally 30. The mix crisps up further as it cools, and cooling on paper towels wicks any residual surface oil so the finished texture is snappy rather than greasy. Don't skip this step; sealed into a container while warm, the mix will soften overnight.

8. **Store in an airtight container.** Once completely cool, transfer to a large airtight container or zip-lock bags. The mix stays crunchy at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

WHY IT WORKS

Oven, every time, if you have an hour. The oven method at 250°F slowly drives moisture out of every piece over a full hour, stirring every 15 minutes to prevent scorching and ensure even coating.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 18

VIRAL HIT

Sugared Cranberries

The viral TikTok sugared cranberries — fresh cranberries soaked in simple syrup, rolled in granulated sugar, and dried until they sparkle like frost.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Sugared Cranberries

The viral TikTok sugared cranberries — fresh cranberries soaked in simple syrup, rolled in granulated sugar, and dried until they sparkle like frost.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	5 min	8 servings	Easy	95

01 Ingredients

SIMPLE SYRUP

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- Optional aromatics: 1 fresh rosemary sprig, 1 cinnamon stick, or 2-inch strip of orange peel (choose one; add to the water before heating)

CRANBERRIES

- 12 oz (about 3 cups) fresh cranberries, picked over to remove any soft or wrinkled berries

COATING

- 1 cup granulated sugar (a separate cup from the syrup sugar — do not reuse the syrup)
- **Note on fresh vs. frozen:** Fresh cranberries only. Frozen cranberries thaw into soft, partially-broken berries with compromised skins — they won't hold the sugar coating, they break apart when rolled, and they release too much moisture during drying. If fresh cranberries are unavailable, this recipe cannot be made well with frozen.

02 Method

1. **Pick over the cranberries.** Spread the cranberries on your counter and remove any that are soft, shriveled, or have broken skins. You want every berry to be firm, fully round, and intact — a cranberry with a split or soft spot will absorb too much syrup, turn mushy, and fall apart during the rolling step. This takes about 2 minutes and is worth doing carefully.

2. **Make the simple syrup.** Combine the sugar and water in a medium saucepan. If you're using an aromatic (rosemary, cinnamon, or orange peel), add it now. Set the pan over medium heat and stir gently until the sugar is fully dissolved — about 3 to 4 minutes. You don't need the syrup to boil; it just needs to reach a full simmer with all sugar crystals dissolved. Remove from heat and let the syrup cool for 5 to 10 minutes. It should still be warm — you can hold a hand above the pot and feel heat rising — but no longer simmering. If you add cranberries to boiling-hot syrup, the rapid heat causes the skins to split and burst, which ruins both the appearance and the structural integrity of the berries.

3. **Soak the cranberries.** Add the cranberries to the warm syrup and stir very gently with a spoon — not vigorously, just enough to make sure every berry is coated and submerged. Let them soak for 5 minutes. Set a timer. Five minutes gives the syrup time to penetrate just the outer layer of each berry, creating the sticky tacky surface the sugar will adhere to. Ten minutes is the absolute maximum — any longer and the cranberry skins begin to soften and the interior gets too saturated with syrup, which makes the berries weepy and mushy after coating. You are NOT trying to pickle or macerate the cranberries; you're creating a sticky coating, not absorbing the syrup throughout.

4. **Transfer to the rack and dry — first drying phase.** Use a slotted spoon or spider strainer to transfer the cranberries from the syrup to a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Spread them into a single layer with no berries touching each other. Let them dry at room temperature for 45 minutes to 1 hour. This is the most important step, and skipping or shortening it is the number-one reason sugared cranberries fail. After drying, the surface of each berry should feel tacky and slightly sticky — like the tacky surface of a Post-It note — and look matte and slightly dull rather than wet and glossy. If the surface still looks wet or feels slippery, keep drying. A wet surface cannot hold sugar; the granules will just stick together in clumps rather than coating the berry individually.

5. **Roll in sugar — second phase.** Pour the fresh granulated sugar into a wide, shallow bowl. Add the cranberries in two or three batches (don't crowd them — you want to be able to roll and tumble them freely). Toss them gently in the sugar, turning to coat all sides, and roll each berry briefly between your fingers to press the sugar into the surface. Transfer the coated berries back to the wire rack in a single layer. The berries should look white and frosted immediately after rolling, though the coating will look slightly damp from the tacky surface. Work quickly but gently — cranberries that are rolled too aggressively develop pressure cracks in the skin and weep.

6. **Dry the coated cranberries — second drying phase.** Let the sugared cranberries dry on the rack at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before using, longer if possible (up to 2 hours for the crunchiest, most defined sparkle coating). During this drying phase, the tacky syrup layer between the berry skin and the sugar granules slowly dries and crystallizes. The finished result is a dry, crisp, crunchy coating that doesn't dissolve or smear when touched — the individual sugar crystals visible on the surface give the berry its sparkle-frost appearance. A cranberry used straight off the rolling step (without this second drying) will have a damp, heavy coating that feels sticky and doesn't photograph as well.

7. **Strain and save the simple syrup.** If you used an aromatic, strain it out of the syrup. Let the syrup cool completely, then transfer it to a jar with a lid. It will be faintly pink and lightly tart from the cranberries — this is one of the best holiday drink syrups you can make, with no extra effort. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks and use in cocktails (vodka soda, Campari spritz, gin tonic), hot drinks (it dissolves easily in warm tea), or sparkling water mocktails.

8. **Use, store, and serve.** Sugared cranberries are best the day they're made, but they hold well in the refrigerator in a single layer (not stacked, not in a sealed container — they need airflow) for up to 5 days. The coating softens slightly in the refrigerator's humidity but remains intact and attractive. Do not freeze them. Use them to garnish pies (especially any cranberry, pecan, or pumpkin pie — press a cluster into the top after the pie has cooled completely), cocktails (rest 3 to 5 berries on a cocktail pick over the rim of a coupe, or float them on a punch), a cheese board (scattered among the cheeses and nuts, they add color, contrast, and a sweet-tart bite alongside a sharp aged cheddar), or a holiday dessert platter.

WHY IT WORKS

The berries went into the sugar before they were dry enough from the first drying phase.



№ 19

VIRAL HIT

Thanksgiving Nachos

The viral TikTok Thanksgiving Nachos — shredded turkey, stuffing crumbles, and melted cheese baked on chips, finished with a warm gravy drizzle and cranberry 'salsa.' The best Thanksgiving leftover hack on the internet.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Thanksgiving Nachos

The viral TikTok Thanksgiving Nachos — shredded turkey, stuffing crumbles, and melted cheese baked on chips, finished with a warm gravy drizzle and cranberry 'salsa.' The best Thanksgiving leftover hack on the internet.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	10 min	4–6	Easy	520

01 Ingredients

- 8 oz (225g) thick restaurant-style tortilla chips
- 2 cups (280g) cooked turkey, shredded or pulled — rotisserie turkey breast or Thanksgiving leftovers
- 1½ cups (200g) cooked herb stuffing (cornbread or classic herb), crumbled into small pieces
- 1½ cups (170g) freshly shredded Colby Jack cheese (or pepper Jack, or a cheddar-Colby blend)
- 1 cup (240ml) turkey gravy, warmed to pourable — from a packet, jarred, or homemade
- ½ cup (120ml) whole-berry or jellied cranberry sauce
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced
- Sour cream for serving
- Hot sauce for serving (optional)
- Crispy fried sage leaves for garnish (optional — fry fresh sage in 1 tbsp butter 60 seconds)

WHY IT WORKS

Thick restaurant-style tortilla chips (the kind served at Mexican restaurants) hold up best because they're denser and don't soften as quickly under the weight of turkey, stuffing, and gravy.

02 Method

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a large rimmed baking sheet (18×13 inches) with foil for easy cleanup.
2. Spread the tortilla chips in a single, even layer across the entire baking sheet. Overlapping is fine — stacking chips more than two deep is not.
3. Scatter the shredded turkey in an even layer over the chips, covering the surface generously but leaving a few chip edges exposed around the perimeter for crunch.
4. Crumble the stuffing into small pieces (roughly ½-inch) and scatter it over the turkey layer. It doesn't need to be even — irregular distribution is part of the charm.
5. Sprinkle the shredded cheese over everything in an even layer, ensuring good coverage so there are no bare patches in the center.
6. Bake for 8–10 minutes, until the cheese is fully melted, beginning to bubble, and the edges of the exposed chips have deepened in color. Watch it after 7 minutes — the difference between perfect and overdone is about 90 seconds.
7. While the nachos bake, warm the turkey gravy in a small saucepan over medium heat (or 90 seconds in the microwave) until it's fully pourable and hot. Transfer to a spouted pitcher or squeeze bottle if you have one.
8. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Immediately drizzle the warm gravy in a zigzag over the entire surface — work quickly before the cheese sets. Leave some cheese exposed so it stays slightly crisp.
9. Drop spoonfuls of cranberry sauce across the nachos in 8–10 spots — think of it as the salsa, so distribute it like you would a salsa drizzle rather than spreading it into one corner.
10. Scatter sliced green onions over the top. Add crispy sage leaves if using. Bring the sheet pan directly to the table and serve immediately with sour cream and hot sauce on the side.



№ 20

VIRAL HIT

Thanksgiving Turkey Charcuterie Board

The viral TikTok Thanksgiving turkey charcuterie board — a round brie as the turkey body, a dramatic semicircle fan of salami roses and cheese for the tail feathers, and a small mozzarella head with peppercorn eyes.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Thanksgiving Turkey Charcuterie Board

The viral TikTok Thanksgiving turkey charcuterie board — a round brie as the turkey body, a dramatic semicircle fan of salami roses and cheese for the tail feathers, and a small mozzarella head with peppercorn eyes.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	0 min	12	Easy	420

01 Ingredients

TURKEY BODY

- 1 round brie (5–8 oz), or one 5-oz cheeseball rolled in pecans or dried cranberries

TURKEY HEAD

- 1 small fresh mozzarella ball (1–1½ oz), from a pack of ciliegine or bocconcini
- 2 whole black peppercorns or small blueberries (eyes)
- 1 small triangle of firm yellow cheddar, about ½ inch (beak)
- 1 strip red bell pepper, ½ inch wide (wattle/snood)

TAIL FEATHER BASE

- 24 round butter crackers or water crackers (fanned in a semicircle as the feather base)

TAIL FEATHERS (MEATS)

- 4 oz genoa salami, thin round slices (fold into 8–10 roses)
- 3 oz prosciutto, thin slices (fold into 4–5 roses)
- 2 oz soppressata or pepperoni, sliced

TAIL FEATHERS (CHEESE)

- 3 oz aged Manchego or gruyère, cubed into ¾-inch pieces
- 2 oz sharp cheddar, cubed

TAIL FEATHERS (FRUIT AND PRODUCE)

- 1 cup red seedless grapes
- ½ cup green seedless grapes
- ¼ cup pomegranate arils
- ¼ cup fresh or dried cranberries
- 1 small honeycrisp apple, thinly sliced (toss with 1 tsp lemon juice)
- 2–3 fresh figs, quartered, or 4 dried figs, halved (optional — seasonal accent)

NUTS AND ACCENTS

- ¼ cup candied pecans
- 3–4 fresh sage leaves (tucked into gaps for color and scent)

DRUMSTICKS

- 6–8 thin breadsticks or pretzel rods (grouped into two bundles of 3–4)

ADDITIONAL DIPPERS

- 1 sleeve multigrain crackers or crisps

CONDIMENTS

- 2 tablespoons honey (drizzle over brie or serve in a small jar)
- 2 tablespoons fig jam or cranberry jam, in a small ramekin

02 Method

1. **Make the salami roses.** Fold a thin round slice of genoa salami in half, then fold in half again into a quarter-wedge. Press three to four wedges together at the flat base, with the rounded arcs facing outward and fanning into a loose rose shape. Press the base flat on a small plate or ramekin. Make all 8–10 roses before starting the board, then refrigerate them briefly while you prep everything else. This keeps them from warming up and losing their shape during assembly.

2. **Position the turkey body.** Place the brie round (or cheeseball) in the lower center of the board, leaving roughly one-third of the board below it and two-thirds above. The body should sit about 3–

4 inches from the bottom edge — this space below the body is where the drumsticks will go. If using a brie, score the top rind in a crosshatch pattern so guests can easily slice in.

3. **Fan out the cracker tail base.** Starting directly behind (above) the brie and working outward, fan 20–24 round crackers in a wide semicircle. Place each cracker so its edge touches the edge of the previous one, all pointing outward from the brie's center. The finished arc should span the width of the board in a half-moon shape. This cracker layer is structural — the salami roses and cheese will lean against it, so make the arc snug enough that the crackers don't shift easily.

4. **Build the first layer of feather roses.** Place the salami roses along the cracker arc, pressing each one gently against the cracker row beneath it. Space the roses 1–1½ inches apart so there's room for other ingredients between them. Arrange prosciutto roses in the spaces between the salami roses. Work from the outer edges of the arc toward the center so you can see where gaps are forming.

5. **Add cheese cubes between the roses.** Nestle the Manchego and cheddar cubes in the spaces between and in front of the meat roses, pressing them slightly into the gaps so they're stable. Stand some cubes on a corner for height variation — a flat board of uniform elements looks less dynamic than one with varying heights.

6. **Build the fruit and berry layers.** Cluster red grapes in one area of the fan and green grapes in another, using stems if available for a natural, sprawling shape that fills gaps well. Scatter pomegranate arils throughout — they fit into tiny crevices and add jewel-like color. Tuck dried or fresh cranberries into remaining gaps. Place fig quarters as amber-colored anchors in 2–3 spots across the fan. Fan apple slices in a cluster along one edge of the fan.

7. **Add candied pecans and sage.** Scatter candied pecans throughout the fan to fill any remaining gaps — their irregular shapes fit where nothing else can. Tuck 3–4 fresh sage leaves between sections in the lower half of the fan, where their deep green color contrasts with the red cranberries and salami. The sage also perfumes the board with an autumn scent.

8. **Position the drumsticks.** Bundle 3–4 breadsticks together and prop them against the bottom of the brie body, angled outward at roughly 45 degrees to the left. Bundle the other 3–4 breadsticks and do the same on the right. If the breadsticks won't hold their position, tuck the ends under the board's edge or use a rubber band at the base of each bundle for a moment while you adjust, then remove it. The drumstick bundles frame the bottom of the turkey body and are the detail that ties the whole silhouette together.

9. **Build the turkey head.** Place the small mozzarella ball directly centered on top of the brie body, with a visible gap between the two rounds so the head reads as separate from the body. Press two black peppercorns or small blueberries gently into the mozzarella as eyes — position them in the upper-center of the ball, not dead center. Tuck the small cheddar triangle just below the eyes as the beak, pressing it slightly into the mozzarella surface to hold it. Lay the red bell pepper strip below and to the right of the beak as the wattle, tucked lightly under the beak's lower edge.

10. **Add the condiments and final crackers.** Place the fig jam or cranberry jam ramekin at the lower corner of the board, just outside the turkey's body. Add an additional sleeve of crackers along one edge of the board for guests who want extras. Drizzle honey over the top of the brie body in a thin line so it pools into the scored crosshatch. Add any remaining fresh sage or cranberries in gaps that became visible. Pull the board from the fridge 15 minutes before serving.

WHY IT WORKS

A Thanksgiving turkey charcuterie board is a grazing spread arranged on a large oval or rectangular board in the shape of a turkey. A round brie or small cheeseball acts as the turkey body.



THANKSGIVING

03 ENTRÉES

The main event — the signature plates that made these restaurants famous, made in your kitchen.

10 RECIPES



№ 21

CHEF-INSPIRED

Ancho Chile-Maple Glazed Thanksgiving Turkey

Bobby Flay's Mesa Grill Thanksgiving turkey: a smoky ancho chile dry brine overnight, plain butter basting through the roast for clean browning.

CHEF-INSPIRED · COPYCAT

Ancho Chile-Maple Glazed Thanksgiving Turkey

Bobby Flay's Mesa Grill Thanksgiving turkey: a smoky ancho chile dry brine overnight, plain butter basting through the roast for clean browning.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	3 hr 30 min + 40 min rest	12–14	Intermediate	390

01 Ingredients

FOR THE ANCHO CHILE DRY BRINE (NIGHT BEFORE)

- 2 tbsp ancho chile powder (pure; not chili powder blend)
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 3 tbsp kosher salt (Diamond Crystal; use 2 tbsp if using Morton's) — scale to roughly 1 tbsp per 5 lbs of turkey

FOR THE TURKEY

- 1 whole turkey (14–18 lbs), giblets and neck removed
- 8 tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE ANCHO CHILE-MAPLE GLAZE

- 1½ cups pure maple syrup, Grade A Amber or Dark (not pancake syrup)
- 3 tbsp ancho chile powder
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- ¼ tsp kosher salt

FOR THE ROASTED GARLIC-CILANTRO PAN GRAVY

- 1 whole head garlic, halved across the equator
- Olive oil, for drizzling on garlic
- 2 cups turkey or low-sodium chicken stock
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, packed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Squeeze of fresh lime juice, optional

02 Method

1. **The night before — dry brine.** Mix the ancho chile powder, cumin, garlic powder, and kosher salt in a small bowl until uniform. Pat the turkey completely dry with paper towels — every paper towel's worth of moisture you remove is crisper skin tomorrow. Working gently so you don't tear it, use your fingers to separate the skin from the breast meat on each side to create a pocket. Push about one-third of the dry brine directly onto the breast meat under the skin, then press from the outside to spread it. Rub the remaining two-thirds all over the entire exterior of the turkey — top, legs, thighs, back — and into the cavity. Place the turkey breast-side up on a rack set in a sheet pan or roasting pan. Refrigerate uncovered for 8 to 24 hours. The skin will look slightly darker from the chile and slightly dry — this is correct.

2. **Day of — bring to room temperature.** Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 1 hour before roasting. A cold turkey extends cooking time and leads to uneven cooking where the outer layers overcook before the interior reaches temperature. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C) with a rack in the lowest third of the oven. Transfer the turkey to a large roasting pan (16 × 12 inches minimum, 3-inch sides).

3. **Butter and initial blast.** Brush the turkey generously all over with about two-thirds of the melted butter. The dry brine will have seasoned

the exterior; add a light dusting of black pepper only — no additional salt. Place in the oven at 425°F. Set a timer for 10 minutes.

4. **Baste every 10 minutes for 30 minutes at 425°F.** After the first 10 minutes, brush the turkey with another coat of melted butter. Repeat at 20 and 30 minutes. By the end of 30 minutes, the turkey should be deeply golden and the skin will have set its color and texture. The high-heat blast sets the browning through Maillard reaction early; the lower-temperature main roast that follows avoids driving the surface past done before the interior catches up.

5. **Reduce and continue roasting.** Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (180°C). Continue roasting, basting with the accumulated pan drippings every 30 minutes. For a 14-pound turkey, budget approximately 2 to 2½ hours more at 350°F before starting the glaze phase. The pan will gradually accumulate a pool of amber, chile-scented drippings — these are your gravy base.

6. **Make the ancho chile-maple glaze.** While the turkey roasts, combine the maple syrup, ancho chile powder, Dijon mustard, and salt in a small saucepan. Whisk until smooth over medium-low heat for 3–4 minutes. The mustard emulsifies the glaze so it clings to the hot skin rather than running off. Remove from heat and set aside at room temperature. (This can be made up to 5 days ahead and refrigerated.)

7. **Roast the garlic.** About 45 minutes before you expect the turkey to be done, drizzle the cut halves of the garlic head with olive oil, wrap loosely in foil, and tuck into the corner of the roasting pan. It will roast alongside the turkey and be ready for the gravy.

8. **Check temperature for glaze timing.** When an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh reads 155°F (not touching bone), it is time to begin the glaze phase. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. (Lower heat is essential: maple syrup at 350°F or above caramelizes too fast and scorches before you can build layers.)

9. **Glaze phase.** Brush the entire turkey generously with the ancho chile-maple glaze. Return to the 325°F oven for 5 minutes. Brush again. Repeat every 5 minutes until the thigh thermometer reads 165°F — typically 4 to 6 applications over 25–30 minutes. The glaze will build from a light sheen to a deep, caramelized amber lacquer. This is the visual signature of the dish.

10. **Rest the turkey — mandatory.** Tilt the turkey slightly using a kitchen towel held at the cavity to let cavity juices drain into the pan. Transfer to a large cutting board. Rest uncovered for 35–40 minutes. Do NOT tent with foil — steam will undo the lacquered glaze. The turkey retains heat for a full hour due to its mass; it will still be carving-warm when you slice it.

11. **Make the roasted garlic-cilantro pan gravy.** While the turkey rests, retrieve the roasted garlic from its foil packet. Place the roasting pan over two burners on medium-high heat. Tilt and skim the visible surface fat. Add 1 cup of stock and scrape up every browned, glazed bit from the bottom of the pan — those caramelized ancho-maple drippings are pure flavor. Add the remaining cup of stock, bring to a boil, and reduce for 5 minutes. Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves from their skins directly into the pan. Add the cilantro leaves. Use an immersion blender directly in the hot pan to blend until the garlic and cilantro are fully incorporated and the gravy is smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a warm pitcher, pressing on the solids to extract their flavor. Taste and season with salt, pepper, and a small squeeze of lime juice if desired.

12. **Carve and serve.** The glaze will have set into a glossy, burnished exterior — carve carefully to preserve the lacquered crust on each slice. Serve with the roasted garlic-cilantro gravy on the side.

WHY IT WORKS

The dry brine applied overnight does the deep flavor work: ancho chile powder in the salt rub penetrates the skin and outermost layer of meat during the 8–24 hour refrigerator rest, so the turkey has chile flavor built in before it ever hits the oven.



№ 22

BOSTON MARKET

Thanksgiving Turkey

Boston Market's famous Thanksgiving turkey — the one millions of families pick up every November — made at home with an overnight herb brine, garlic-herb butter under the skin.

BOSTON MARKET · COPYCAT

Thanksgiving Turkey

Boston Market's famous Thanksgiving turkey — the one millions of families pick up every November — made at home with an overnight herb brine, garlic-herb butter under the skin.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	3 hr 30 min	12	Medium	340

01 Ingredients

FOR THE BRINE

- 1 gallon cold water
- 1 cup kosher salt
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 head garlic, halved crosswise
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns

FOR THE TURKEY

- 1 whole turkey, 12 to 14 lbs, fully thawed

FOR THE HERB BUTTER

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature (softened)
- 4 cloves garlic, finely minced or pressed
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried rubbed sage)
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE CAVITY AROMATICS

- 1 large onion, quartered
- 1 head garlic, halved crosswise
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 1 lemon, halved (optional, but brightens the flavor)

FOR ROASTING AND PAN GRAVY

- 2 to 3 cups low-sodium chicken or turkey stock (for basting and gravy)
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour (for gravy)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

02 Method

1. **Brine the turkey (night before).** In a large stockpot, combine 1 gallon cold water, 1 cup kosher salt, brown sugar, garlic, thyme, rosemary, bay leaves, and peppercorns. Stir until the salt and sugar dissolve — no need to heat it. Place the thawed turkey (giblets and neck removed) into a brining bag or a large pot, pour the brine over it, and refrigerate for 12 to 18 hours. The brine must cover the turkey completely; if it doesn't, add cold water. Set a plate on top to keep the turkey submerged if needed.

2. **Dry the turkey.** Remove the turkey from the brine and discard the brine. Rinse the bird thoroughly under cold water inside and out, then pat it completely dry with paper towels — cavity included. Place it uncovered on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours to air-dry the skin. This step is what allows the skin to crisp instead of steam. You can skip it if pressed for time, but don't skip the thorough patting dry.

3. **Make the herb butter.** In a small bowl, mash together the softened butter, minced garlic, chopped thyme, sage, rosemary, 1 teaspoon

kosher salt, and black pepper until fully combined. If making ahead, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate; bring back to room temperature before using so it spreads easily.

4. **Prepare and butter the turkey.** Take the turkey out of the refrigerator 30 to 45 minutes before roasting to take the chill off. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Starting at the neck end, use your fingers to carefully separate the skin from the breast meat, working gently to avoid tearing. Push half the herb butter (about 4 tablespoons) directly onto the breast meat under the skin, spreading it as evenly as possible all the way to the legs. Rub the remaining herb butter all over the outside of the turkey, including the back, wings, and legs. Season the turkey cavity generously with kosher salt and black pepper.

5. **Stuff the cavity loosely.** Place the quartered onion, halved garlic head, fresh thyme, rosemary, and lemon halves into the cavity. Don't pack it tightly — you want air circulation inside the bird. Truss the legs together loosely with kitchen twine, and tuck the wing tips under the body.

6. **Start breast side down.** Set a roasting rack inside a large roasting pan. Place the turkey breast side DOWN on the rack. This is intentional: it protects the breast from direct heat during the first 45 minutes and lets the back fat baste the breast from above. Roast at 325°F for 45 minutes.

7. **Flip and continue roasting.** Carefully flip the turkey breast side UP (use heavy-duty oven mitts or clean kitchen towels — the bird is hot and slippery with fat). Add 1 cup of stock to the bottom of the roasting pan, which prevents the drippings from scorching and gives you liquid for basting. Continue roasting at 325°F, basting the turkey with the pan juices every 30 to 40 minutes using a large spoon or basting brush. Add more stock to the pan if it looks dry. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh (not touching the bone) reads 160°F — about 2 hours 45 minutes more for a 13 lb bird (roughly 15 minutes per pound total at 325°F).

8. **Crisp the skin.** Once the thigh reads 155°F to 160°F, raise the oven temperature to 425°F and roast for 20 minutes more, watching closely to avoid burning. This is the step that gives the skin the deep mahogany color Boston Market's birds are known for. If the skin is already very dark before the temperature comes up, tent the breast loosely with foil.

9. **Rest the turkey.** Remove the turkey from the oven (thigh should read 160°F; carryover will bring it to 165°F). Transfer to a large cutting board and tent loosely with foil. Rest for 30 minutes minimum — this is when the juices redistribute. Don't rush this step: a turkey carved straight from the oven loses those juices immediately onto the board.

10. **Make the pan gravy.** While the turkey rests, pour the drippings from the roasting pan through a fine-mesh strainer into a fat separator or large measuring cup. Let sit 5 minutes; the fat will float to the top. Pour off and discard most of the fat, keeping about 2 tablespoons. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, warm the reserved fat with 2 cups of the strained drippings plus enough additional turkey or chicken stock to make about 3 cups of liquid total. Whisk ¼ cup flour with ¼ cup cold water until completely smooth (no lumps), then drizzle the slurry into the simmering liquid while whisking constantly. Cook, whisking, until the gravy has thickened to a pourable consistency, 4 to 6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

11. **Carve and serve.** Remove the trussing twine and cavity aromatics (discard them). Carve the turkey and arrange on a platter. Serve with the pan gravy and the classic Boston Market sides: creamed spinach, mashed potatoes, cornbread stuffing, and sweet potato casserole.

WHY IT WORKS

A full overnight brine — 12 to 18 hours in the refrigerator — gives the best result and is what produces the Boston Market juiciness.



№ 23

CRACKER BARREL

Turkey n' Dressing Plate

Recreate Cracker Barrel's Thursday Turkey n' Dressing special at home — herb-butter oven-roasted turkey breast smothered in pan gravy, served over sage-forward cornbread dressing with whole-berry cranberry relish.

CRACKER BARREL · COPYCAT

Turkey n' Dressing Plate

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PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	1 hr 30 min	6	Medium	480

01 Ingredients

FOR THE HERB-BUTTER TURKEY BREAST

- 1 bone-in turkey breast (4–5 lbs), patted dry
- 4 tablespoons (60g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves (or 1 teaspoon dried thyme)
- 1 teaspoon fresh sage, finely minced (or ½ teaspoon dried rubbed sage)
- 2 garlic cloves, grated or minced to a paste
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (for the skin)

FOR THE TURKEY PAN GRAVY

- Pan drippings from the roasted turkey breast (about ¼ cup)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups low-sodium turkey or chicken stock, warmed
- ¼ cup whole milk or heavy cream (for richness)
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce (optional, deepens color and flavor)

FOR THE WHOLE-BERRY CRANBERRY RELISH

- 12 oz (340g) fresh or frozen cranberries
- ¾ cup (150g) granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup (80ml) fresh orange juice (about 1 medium orange)
- 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
- ¼ cup water
- Pinch of fine sea salt

TO SERVE

- 1 batch Cracker Barrel Cornbread Dressing (see linked recipe), hot from the oven

02 Method

1. **Start the cranberry relish first.** Combine the cranberries, sugar, orange juice, orange zest, water, and salt in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir to dissolve the sugar, then bring to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until most of the cranberries have burst and the mixture has thickened to a loose jam consistency. It will thicken further as it cools. Transfer to a bowl, cover, and refrigerate. The relish is best made at least 2 hours ahead (or up to 2 weeks ahead) to let the flavors develop.

2. **Prep the herb butter.** In a small bowl, mix the softened butter with the thyme, sage, garlic, salt, pepper, and onion powder until fully combined. The mixture should be thick and spreadable.

3. **Season the turkey breast.** Preheat the oven to 325°F (165°C). Set a wire rack inside a roasting pan. Pat the turkey breast completely dry with paper towels — any surface moisture will steam the skin instead of crisping it. Starting at the neck end, carefully slide your fingers under the skin to loosen it from the breast meat, keeping the skin attached at the edges. Press roughly three-quarters of the herb butter directly onto the meat under the skin, spreading it as evenly as possible. Rub the remaining butter over the outside of the skin. Drizzle the olive oil over the skin and rub to coat.

4. **Roast low and slow.** Place the turkey breast skin-side up on the rack. Roast at 325°F for 1 hour to 1 hour 20 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the breast (not touching bone) reads 160°F. The skin should be golden-brown. If the skin is darkening too fast, tent loosely with foil after the first 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, transfer to a cutting board, and tent loosely with foil. Rest for at least 20 minutes before carving — the internal temperature will carry over to 165°F during this time.

5. **Make the pan gravy while the turkey rests.** Pour the pan drippings into a small bowl, leaving the browned fond in the bottom of the roasting pan. Set the roasting pan over two burners on medium heat. Add the drippings back to the hot pan — you need about 3–4 tablespoons of fat total; if you have less, add unsalted butter to make up the difference. Sprinkle the flour over the fat and whisk vigorously for 2 minutes, scraping up the browned bits from the pan bottom. The mixture should turn a light golden color and smell nutty. Slowly pour in the warm stock, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Add the milk or cream. Bring to a simmer, whisking, until the gravy is smooth and thick enough to coat a spoon, about 5 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and Worcestershire sauce if using. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a warm serving pitcher if you want a very smooth finish.

6. **Carve the turkey.** Slice the rested turkey breast against the grain into ¼-inch slices. Fan the slices out on a warm serving platter. Pour roughly half the gravy directly over the turkey so it soaks in — this is the Cracker Barrel way; the turkey should look glossy and generously sauced, not dry. Serve the remaining gravy in the pitcher on the side.

7. **Plate it the Cracker Barrel way.** Spoon a generous serving of hot cornbread dressing (about ¾ cup) onto each plate. Lay 4–5 slices of turkey over the dressing. Ladle additional gravy over the top. Add a spoonful of cold cranberry relish to the side of the plate — the contrast of the cold tart relish against the hot savory gravy is what ties the plate together. Serve with any country sides you like; sweet potato casserole and green beans are the traditional Cracker Barrel accompaniments.

WHY IT WORKS

Cracker Barrel uses oven-roasted turkey breast — white meat only, sliced. It's not a whole roast turkey, a turkey tenderloin, or a smoked bird.



№ 24

THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY

HoneyBaked Ham

Make the full HoneyBaked Ham at home: a bone-in spiral smoked ham warmed low and slow, then finished with a spiced-sugar crust torched into a hard candy shell. About $30–35 to make at home versus $80–100 at the store.

THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY · COPYCAT

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Make the full HoneyBaked Ham at home: a bone-in spiral smoked ham warmed low and slow, then finished with a spiced-sugar crust torched into a hard candy shell. About $30–35 to make at home versus $80–100 at the store.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	2 hrs 20 min	14	Easy	265

01 Ingredients

HAM

- 1 bone-in spiral-sliced pre-cooked smoked half ham, 7–9 lbs

HONEY-BUTTER WASH

- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional — adds depth)

SPICED SUGAR CRUST

- 1 cup granulated white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon sweet paprika
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard (Colman's or equivalent)

02 Method

1. **Rest the ham and preheat.** Remove the ham from the refrigerator 30 to 45 minutes before cooking. Preheat the oven to 275°F.
2. **Warm the ham low and slow.** Place the ham cut-side down in a large roasting pan. Seal tightly with foil — no gaps, or moisture escapes. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes per pound until a thermometer in the thickest section (not touching bone) reads 130°F. A 7-lb ham takes about 1 hour 45 minutes; a 9-lb ham, about 2 hours 15 minutes.
3. **Mix the crust components.** While the ham warms, combine the white sugar, cinnamon, paprika, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, and dry mustard in a small bowl and stir until the spices are evenly distributed. In a separate small bowl, stir together the honey, melted butter, and Dijon mustard.
4. **Dry the surface.** Remove the ham from the oven and carefully lift the foil. Rest the ham uncovered for 10 minutes. The surface needs to dry slightly — a drier, warm surface grips the sugar better than a wet one.

5. **Apply the honey-butter wash.** Brush the honey-butter mixture evenly over the entire exposed surface, working it into the spiral cuts with a pastry brush. The surface should be uniformly coated and sticky to the touch.

6. **First sugar layer.** Using a fine-mesh sieve or your fingers, sift a thin, even layer of spiced sugar over the entire surface. Thin is the operative word — you should almost see the ham through the sugar. Press lightly into the spiral cuts to get coverage there.

7. **Torch (or broil) the first layer.** Kitchen torch: working in sections 2 to 3 inches from the surface, move the flame in slow, steady circles until the sugar melts clear, then bubbles, then turns deep golden amber. Stop before brown. Broiler method: position the ham 8 inches from the element on HIGH, broil 3 to 4 minutes, rotate the pan once, watch constantly.

8. **Harden, then repeat.** Let the first layer cool and harden for 2 minutes — it will visibly set firm. Apply a second thin layer of spiced sugar over the first hardened crust. Torch or broil again to the same amber color. The two stacked layers produce the signature thick candy shell.

9. **Final rest.** Transfer to a serving platter and rest uncovered 10 minutes. The crust finishes hardening completely as it cools. Do not cover — steam softens it. The spiral slices pull apart easily from the bone. That snap when each slice breaks free is what you are after.

WHY IT WORKS

A bone-in half ham is exactly half a whole ham, cut along the center, and typically weighs 7 to 10 lbs — enough for 12 to 16 people. A whole bone-in ham weighs 14 to 18 lbs and feeds 25 to 30 people generously.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 25

THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY

HoneyBaked Ham Glaze

The famous HoneyBaked Ham glaze copycat recipe: a warm-spiced sugar crust torched or broiled into a hard, crackly shell over a spiral bone-in ham.

THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY · COPYCAT

HoneyBaked Ham Glaze

The famous HoneyBaked Ham glaze copycat recipe: a warm-spiced sugar crust torched or broiled into a hard, crackly shell over a spiral bone-in ham.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	2 hrs 30 min	14	Easy	265

01 Ingredients

FOR THE HAM

- 1 bone-in spiral-sliced pre-cooked half ham, 7–9 lbs (bone-in is non-negotiable for structure and flavor)

FOR THE HONEY-BUTTER WASH

- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional, adds subtle depth)

FOR THE SPICED SUGAR CRUST

- 1 cup granulated white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon paprika (sweet or smoked)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard (Colman's or equivalent)
- Pinch of allspice (optional)

02 Method

1. **Bring the ham to temperature.** Remove the ham from the refrigerator 30 to 45 minutes before cooking. Preheat oven to 275°F.
2. **Warm the ham.** Place the ham cut-side down in a large roasting pan. Cover the entire pan tightly with foil — no gaps, or moisture escapes. Bake 15 to 18 minutes per pound, until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part (not touching bone) reads 130°F. For a 7 lb ham, this is about 1 hour 45 minutes. For a 9 lb ham, about 2 hours 15 minutes.
3. **Mix the spiced sugar.** While the ham warms, combine the granulated white sugar, cinnamon, paprika, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, dry mustard, and allspice (if using) in a small bowl. Stir thoroughly until the spices are evenly distributed. Set aside.
4. **Make the honey-butter wash.** Combine the honey, melted butter, and Dijon mustard (if using) in a small bowl. Stir to combine.
5. **Rest the ham.** When the ham reaches 130°F, remove from the oven and carefully remove the foil. Let the ham rest uncovered for 10 minutes to let the surface dry slightly — a dry surface is essential for the sugar to adhere and caramelize properly.
6. **Apply the honey-butter wash.** Brush the honey-butter mixture over the entire exposed surface of the ham, working it into

the spiral cuts with a pastry brush or your fingers. The surface should be evenly coated and slightly sticky.

7. **Apply the first sugar layer.** Using a fine-mesh sieve or your fingertips, sift or sprinkle a thin, even layer of the spiced sugar over the entire ham surface. Thin is the critical word — you should be able to see the ham surface through the sugar in most spots. Press lightly to adhere into the cuts. Do not dump a thick layer.

8. **Torch or broil the first layer.** Kitchen torch method: working in small sections, hold the torch 2 to 3 inches from the surface and move it in slow, steady circles for 15 to 20 seconds per section. The sugar will first melt (clear), then bubble, then turn amber. Stop when it's a deep golden-amber — not brown, not black. Broiler method: place the ham on the top oven rack 8 inches from the broiler on HIGH. Broil 3 to 4 minutes, watching constantly. Rotate the pan once to even out the caramelization.

9. **Rest and repeat for a second layer.** Let the first caramelized layer cool and harden for 2 minutes — it will visibly firm. Apply a second thin layer of spiced sugar over the hardened first crust. Torch or broil again as described. Two layers produces the thick, signature crackly shell.

10. **Final rest.** Transfer the ham to a cutting board or serving platter and let rest uncovered for 10 minutes. The crust hardens fully as it cools. Do not cover — steam will soften the crust.

11. **Serve.** The spiral slices will separate easily. For presentation, serve on the bone and let guests pull slices. The crust will crackle as each slice is removed — that's the sound you're after.

WHY IT WORKS

White granulated sugar caramelizes into a harder, more glass-like crust than brown sugar. Brown sugar contains molasses, which stays slightly sticky and hygroscopic — it absorbs moisture from the air and keeps the crust soft and tacky even after it cools.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 26

THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY

HoneyBaked Ham Co. Smoked Turkey Breast

The HoneyBaked Ham Smoked Turkey Breast copycat recipe: an overnight honey brine, apple-wood smoke at 275°F, and a spiced honey glaze applied in stages at the end.

THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY · COPYCAT

HoneyBaked Ham Co. Smoked Turkey Breast

The HoneyBaked Ham Smoked Turkey Breast copycat recipe: an overnight honey brine, apple-wood smoke at 275°F, and a spiced honey glaze applied in stages at the end.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	2 hrs 30 min	8	Medium	210

01 Ingredients

FOR THE BRINE

- 1 gallon (16 cups) cold water
- ½ cup Diamond Crystal kosher salt (or ⅓ cup Morton kosher salt)
- ¼ cup light brown sugar, packed
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns

FOR THE TURKEY

- 1 bone-in, skin-on turkey breast half, 4–6 lbs

FOR THE SPICED HONEY GLAZE

- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon light brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- Pinch of dry mustard (Colman's or equivalent)

FOR THE SMOKER

- Apple wood chunks or chips (2–3 chunks or 1½ cups chips, soaked 30 minutes if using chips)

02 Method

1. **Brine the turkey breast.** Whisk together the cold water, kosher salt, brown sugar, and honey in a large pot or container until the salt and sugar fully dissolve — this takes about 2 minutes. Add the garlic, bay leaf, and peppercorns. Submerge the turkey breast in the brine (it needs to be fully covered — weigh it down with a small plate if needed). Refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours. Do not brine longer than 12 hours.

2. **Dry and rest the breast.** Remove the breast from the brine and discard the brine. Pat the breast thoroughly dry with paper towels — pay special attention to the skin and around the bone cavity. Place it on a wire rack over a sheet pan and refrigerate uncovered for 1 hour to air-dry the surface further, or let it sit at room temperature for 45 minutes. A dry surface is essential for smoke adhesion and a cleanly set glaze.

3. **Set up the smoker.** Preheat your smoker (or kettle grill set up for indirect heat) to 275°F. Add the apple wood: for a dedicated smoker, place 2–3 chunks in the firebox; for a kettle grill, place the chunks directly on the coals on one side. For a gas grill, place soaked chips in a foil pouch with small holes poked on top, directly over a lit burner. If you have a water pan, fill it — it keeps the chamber humid and helps the breast stay moist over the long cook.

4. **Smoke the breast.** Place the turkey breast skin-side up on the grate, away from direct heat. Close the lid and maintain 275°F. Insert a probe thermometer into the thickest part of the breast, not touching the bone. Smoke for approximately 2½ to 3 hours for a 4–5 lb bone-in breast. Resist opening the lid frequently — temperature swings lengthen the cook and reduce smoke adhesion.

5. **Make the glaze.** While the breast smokes, stir together the honey, melted butter, brown sugar, smoked paprika, garlic powder, cinnamon, and dry mustard in a small bowl until fully combined. Set aside at room temperature — the glaze should be fluid; if your honey is thick, set the bowl in warm water for a few minutes.

6. **Glaze in stages.** When the internal temperature reaches 130°F (approximately 90 minutes in), brush a light coat of the spiced honey glaze over the entire skin surface. Close the lid. Brush a second coat at 145°F, and a third coat at 155°F. Each layer caramelizes against the heat before the next is added, building the glistening amber exterior layer by layer. Don't rush this step by applying all the glaze at once — individual thin coats set properly; a thick application just runs off.

7. **Pull and rest.** When the internal temperature reads 160°F, remove the breast from the smoker and place it on a cutting board. Tent loosely with foil (don't seal tightly — you don't want steam to soften the glaze) and rest for 20 minutes. Carry-over heat will bring the breast to 165°F.

8. **Carve and serve.** Slice across the grain in ¼-inch to ½-inch slices, working alongside the bone. The exterior will show a visible smoke ring — a pinkish layer just beneath the skin. This is correct and not undercooked meat; it's nitric oxide in the smoke binding to the meat's myoglobin and fixing its color, a reaction that occurs in properly smoked meat. Serve warm or at room temperature.

WHY IT WORKS

The company doesn't disclose its wood. But the flavor profile — mild, sweet, with a light smoke that doesn't overpower the honey glaze — is consistent with apple or pecan wood, both of which produce a gentle, slightly sweet smoke that is standard for poultry.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 27

POPEYES

Cajun Turkey

The copycat Popeyes Cajun Turkey: a whole bird dry-brined overnight in kosher salt, garlic pepper, white pepper, and cayenne — the same bold Louisiana spice profile as the famous $59 Thanksgiving bird.

POPEYES · COPYCAT

Cajun Turkey

The copycat Popeyes Cajun Turkey: a whole bird dry-brined overnight in kosher salt, garlic pepper, white pepper, and cayenne — the same bold Louisiana spice profile as the famous $59 Thanksgiving bird.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	3 hrs 30 min	10–12 servings	Intermediate	310

01 Ingredients

THE CAJUN DRY RUB (FOR ONE 11–13 LB TURKEY)

- 3 tablespoons kosher salt (Morton or Diamond Crystal)
- 2 tablespoons garlic pepper (a pre-ground blend of garlic, black pepper, and sometimes onion; find it in the spice aisle; see substitution)
- 1 tablespoon ground white pepper (provides the distinctive hot, floral heat that separates Cajun seasoning from standard black-pepper blends)
- 1½ teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon onion powder

THE TURKEY

- One 11–13 lb whole turkey, thawed completely, giblets removed
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil (vegetable or canola), for the skin

BUTTER INJECTION (OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED)

- 4 tablespoons (57g) unsalted butter
- ¼ cup (60ml) chicken broth, low-sodium
- ½ teaspoon of the Cajun dry rub (from above)

02 Method

1. **Mix the dry rub.** Whisk together the kosher salt, garlic pepper, white pepper, cayenne, smoked paprika, and onion powder in a small bowl until evenly combined. The blend should look reddish-brown and smell heavily of garlic and spice with a sharp pepper note. Set aside ½ teaspoon for the butter injection (step 3) and use the rest for the bird.

2. **Dry brine the turkey.** Pat the turkey completely dry with paper towels — moisture on the skin inhibits the rub from adhering and delays browning during roasting. Place the bird on a rimmed sheet pan fitted with a wire rack, or in a large roasting pan. Starting at the neck end, carefully slide your fingers under the skin over both breast halves and both thighs, loosening the skin without tearing it. Rub half the spice blend directly onto the exposed meat under the skin — use your fingers to spread it as evenly as possible, working it into the thigh meat too. Rub the remaining half of the spice blend all over the outside of the bird, including the back, wings, and drumsticks. Do not rub the inside cavity — internal rubs can make the juices that collect during roasting unpleasantly salty. Refrigerate uncovered on the rack for 12–24 hours. The uncovered refrigeration is not optional: it dries the skin further, which is what produces the mahogany color and crispness during roasting.

3. **Make the butter injection.** About 1 hour before roasting, melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat or in the microwave. Add the chicken broth and ½ teaspoon of the Cajun rub. Whisk vigorously until the butter emulsifies into the broth — it will look cloudy and slightly thickened. Let cool to warm (not hot) before loading into the injector. Using a meat injector, inject the mixture into the thickest parts of both breast halves in 3–4 injection points per side, pressing slowly to allow the liquid to distribute rather than pool. Also inject the inner thigh once per side. The breast meat, which dries out most easily during oven

roasting (unlike a deep-fried bird where the oil surrounds and seals the whole bird simultaneously), benefits most from this extra step.

4. **Prep the bird for roasting.** Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 45–60 minutes before roasting to take the chill off — a cold bird extends the roasting time and causes the outer meat to overcook before the interior reaches temperature. Rub the skin lightly with 2 tablespoons of neutral oil; the oil helps the already-seasoned skin brown evenly and prevents the Cajun rub on the surface from scorching. Tuck the wing tips under the body (or use a small piece of foil to shield them). If you'd like to truss the legs, tie them together with kitchen twine over the cavity — this helps the thighs cook more evenly, though it is not required.

5. **Roast.** Preheat the oven to 325°F with the oven rack in the lowest third. Place the turkey breast-side up on a rack in a large roasting pan — the rack keeps the bird out of the drippings and allows air to circulate under the bird, which helps the skin on the back and thighs crisp rather than steam. Roast at 325°F without opening the oven door for the first 2 hours. The rule of thumb is about 15–18 minutes per pound at 325°F for an unstuffed bird (do not stuff this turkey — the dense stuffing prevents the cavity from reaching safe temperature in a reasonable time). A 12 lb bird takes about 3 to 3½ hours total. At the 2½-hour mark, begin checking the internal temperature with an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh without touching the bone. The turkey is done when both the thigh and the thickest part of the breast each read 165°F. If the skin is already deeply browned at the 2-hour mark, tent a piece of aluminum foil loosely over the breast (not the whole bird) to slow the color development while the interior catches up.

6. **Check the color.** The Cajun spice blend will make this turkey look much darker than a standard roasted turkey — the white and black pepper and smoked paprika on the skin will darken to a deep reddish-brown as the bird roasts, and at 165°F the skin will look almost mahogany. This is correct and is one of the visual signatures of the Popeyes Cajun look. Do not pull the bird early because it looks well-done on the outside; only the internal thermometer reading matters.

7. **Rest and carve.** Remove the turkey from the oven and let it rest uncovered on the roasting rack for 30 minutes before carving. The resting period is not optional — it allows the juices that have been pushed toward the center of the bird during roasting to redistribute back toward the surface. A turkey carved immediately after roasting loses significantly more juice on the cutting board. After resting, carve by removing the legs and thighs first (cut through the joint), then the wings, then the breast (slice against the grain of the breast meat for the most tender result). Arrange on a platter. The skin, which has been dry-brined and oiled, should be crisp, deeply colored, and intensely seasoned; the meat directly beneath the skin in the breast and thigh will be noticeably more flavorful than the interior, which is where the injection compensates.

8. **Optional outdoor deep-fry method.** For those with an outdoor turkey fryer: heat peanut oil (enough to fully submerge the bird) to 350°F. Lower the dry-brined turkey very slowly into the oil using the fryer's basket or a hook — never walk away from an outdoor fryer, and never fry indoors. Fry at 350°F for approximately 3–3½ minutes per pound (about 36–42 minutes for a 12 lb bird). The bird is done at 165°F internal temperature. The skin will be dramatically crispier and the meat moister than the oven-roasted version. Pull from the oil and drain for 10 minutes on a wire rack before carving.

WHY IT WORKS

The key is the dry rub applied under and over the skin and left overnight: 3 tablespoons kosher salt, 2 tablespoons garlic pepper, 1 tablespoon ground white pepper, 1.5 teaspoons cayenne, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika, and 1 teaspoon onion powder.



№ 28

WAWA

Turkey Gobbler

Wawa's cult-favorite seasonal hoagie at home — hot sliced turkey, savory cornbread stuffing, whole-berry cranberry sauce, and rich turkey gravy piled into a soft roll.

WAWA · COPYCAT

Turkey Gobbler

Wawa's cult-favorite seasonal hoagie at home — hot sliced turkey, savory cornbread stuffing, whole-berry cranberry sauce, and rich turkey gravy piled into a soft roll.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	25 min	4	Easy	600

01 Ingredients

FOR THE TURKEY

- 1 lb roasted turkey breast, sliced
- ¼ cup low-sodium chicken or turkey stock (for warming)
- Salt and black pepper

FOR THE QUICK CORNBREAD STUFFING

- 1 package (6 oz) cornbread stuffing mix (such as Pepperidge Farm)
- 1 stalk celery, finely diced
- ½ small yellow onion, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken stock
- ½ teaspoon dried sage (or 1 teaspoon fresh, minced)
- Black pepper to taste

FOR THE TURKEY PAN GRAVY

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken or turkey stock
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste

FOR THE CRANBERRY SAUCE

- 1 can (14 oz) whole-berry cranberry sauce
- OR: 12 oz fresh cranberries + ¾ cup sugar + ¼ cup water + ¼ cup orange juice (15 min stovetop)

FOR ASSEMBLY

- 4 soft Italian hoagie rolls, 6–10 inches each
- Optional: 4 slices provolone cheese, crispy fried onions, extra cranberry sauce

02 Method

1. **Make the stuffing first.** Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the diced celery and onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the stock and sage and bring to a boil. Stir in the stuffing mix, cover the pan, remove from heat, and let stand 5 minutes per the package instructions. Fluff with a fork and season with black pepper. Keep covered and warm.

2. **Make the gravy.** Melt the butter in a separate small saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour all at once and whisk constantly for 1 minute until the mixture smells lightly nutty and turns a pale tan color — this cooks out the raw flour taste. Gradually pour in the stock in a slow, steady stream, whisking continuously to prevent lumps. Add the Worcestershire sauce. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring

frequently, until the gravy is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 3–4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to the lowest setting and keep warm, stirring occasionally.

3. **Warm the turkey.** If using pre-sliced deli turkey or leftover roasted turkey, arrange the slices in a large skillet in a single layer. Pour the stock over the turkey, cover the pan, and heat over medium-low for 3–4 minutes until warmed through and gently steaming. The goal is hot and juicy — not browned or crisped. Drain any excess liquid before building the hoagies.

4. **Warm the rolls.** Preheat the oven to 300°F (or use the broiler). Split the hoagie rolls lengthwise, leaving them hinged if possible. Place cut-side down on the oven rack or a baking sheet and warm for 3–4 minutes until the inside is just warmed through and slightly crisped. You want structure, not a hard crust — the roll needs to absorb a little gravy without collapsing immediately.

5. **Assemble.** Working quickly while everything is hot: spoon about ⅓ cup warm stuffing along the bottom half of each roll and press it in lightly so it stays put. Lay 3–4 oz of hot turkey slices on top, overlapping slightly. If using provolone, lay a slice over the turkey while it's still hot — the residual heat will soften it without fully melting it. Spoon 2–3 tablespoons of warm gravy directly over the turkey. Spoon 2 tablespoons of whole-berry cranberry sauce over the top. Add crispy fried onions if using. Close the roll firmly and serve immediately.

WHY IT WORKS

The hot hoagie version contains hot sliced turkey, cornbread stuffing, whole-berry cranberry sauce, and turkey gravy, all on a soft hoagie roll.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 29

VIRAL HIT

Crockpot Cranberry Turkey Breast

The viral TikTok crockpot cranberry turkey breast — a bone-in turkey breast slow-cooked in whole-berry cranberry sauce, dry onion soup mix, and orange juice until fall-apart tender.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Crockpot Cranberry Turkey Breast

The viral TikTok crockpot cranberry turkey breast — a bone-in turkey breast slow-cooked in whole-berry cranberry sauce, dry onion soup mix, and orange juice until fall-apart tender.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	6–7 hr	6–8 servings	Easy	295

01 Ingredients

- 1 bone-in turkey breast, 5–7 lb — this is the standard supermarket split or whole bone-in breast; it feeds 6–8 people comfortably, which is why it went viral for Thanksgiving: it's the right scale for a small gathering without committing to a full 20-pound bird. Thaw completely in the refrigerator (1–2 days for a frozen breast) before it goes in the crockpot. Pat it dry with paper towels — excess surface moisture slows the initial heating and can make the skin rubbery. Boneless turkey breast (3–4 lb) works but needs 4–5 hours on Low instead of 6–7; boneless runs drier because the bone conducts heat and helps retain moisture in the slow cooker.
- 1 can (14 oz) whole-berry cranberry sauce — the whole-berry style, not jellied. Whole-berry sauce keeps texture as it cooks down and produces a glossier, more complex sauce; jellied cranberry sauce melts into a uniform sweet paste. Ocean Spray whole-berry is the most common brand, but any equivalent works. If you have homemade cranberry sauce, use 1½ cups of it — it's slightly less sweet than canned, so add a teaspoon of brown sugar to compensate.
- 1 packet (1 oz) dry onion soup mix — Lipton or any equivalent brand. The packet provides onion flavor, salt, pepper, dried herbs, and a small amount of starch that all work together to season the turkey and start thickening the cooking liquid. This is the backbone of the viral recipe's savory note; without it the dish tastes flat and sweet. One packet is calibrated for a 5–7 lb breast; for a larger breast (over 7 lb) use 1½ packets.
- ½ cup orange juice — adds brightness and acid that cuts the sweetness of the cranberry sauce; the flavor is subtle in the finished dish but its absence is noticeable (without it the sauce tastes one-dimensional). Fresh-squeezed or store-bought 100% orange juice works equally well. Some viral versions substitute apple cider (a slightly warmer, less citrusy flavor) or low-sodium chicken broth for a more savory result — both work well.
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch + 2 tablespoons cold water (for the pan sauce) — mixed into a slurry and stirred into the strained cooking liquid after the turkey comes out. The cooking liquid is thin on its own and needs this to become a sauce with coating consistency. Do not skip the slurry step — the cooking liquid is flavorful but watery, and without thickening it runs off sliced turkey instead of coating it.

02 Method

1. **Prep the turkey.** Remove the turkey breast from its packaging, discard any pop-up timer or gravy packet, and pat it completely dry with paper towels — especially the skin side. Season lightly with salt and pepper on both sides if desired (the onion soup mix provides most of the seasoning, but a light base layer helps the skin side). No trussing or oil is needed.
2. **Make the cranberry mixture.** In a medium bowl, stir together the whole-berry cranberry sauce, dry onion soup mix, and orange juice until combined. The mixture will look rough — the cranberry sauce won't fully dissolve and the soup mix powder will clump at first. Stir until no dry powder pockets remain and the

OJ has thinned the cranberry sauce into a loose, pourable consistency. This takes about 60 seconds of stirring.

3. **Load the crockpot.** Place the turkey breast skin-side up in a 6-quart or larger crockpot. Pour the cranberry mixture evenly over the top of the turkey — it will pool in the cavity of the bone side and around the edges. This is correct. The turkey does not need to be submerged; the steam from the cooking liquid keeps the meat moist throughout the long cook. If your crockpot is smaller than 6 quarts, a 5–7 lb bone-in breast may not fit with the lid on — check before you commit, or use a boneless breast instead.

4. **Cook on Low.** Cover the crockpot and cook on Low for 6–7 hours. Do not open the lid during cooking — every lid lift adds 20–30 minutes of cooking time by releasing steam and dropping the internal temperature. At the 6-hour mark, insert an instant-read thermometer into the thickest part of the breast, away from the bone. You are looking for 165°F. If you hit 165°F at 6 hours, it's done; if not, check every 30 minutes. A 5-lb breast typically finishes closer to 6 hours; a 7-lb breast may need the full 7.

5. **Rest the turkey.** Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and tent it loosely with aluminum foil. Rest for 10–15 minutes before slicing — this is not optional. The resting period allows the juices to redistribute through the meat; slicing immediately causes them to run out onto the cutting board instead of staying in the meat. While the turkey rests, make the pan sauce.

6. **Make the cranberry pan sauce.** Pour the cooking liquid from the crockpot through a fine-mesh strainer into a small saucepan (you should have 1–1½ cups of liquid; discard any large solids). In a small bowl, whisk 2 tablespoons of cornstarch into 2 tablespoons of cold water until completely smooth. Bring the cooking liquid to a simmer over medium heat, then whisk in the cornstarch slurry. Stir constantly for 3–4 minutes until the sauce thickens to a consistency that lightly coats a spoon. Taste and adjust salt if needed. The sauce should be sweet, savory, and lightly tart — a small squeeze of additional orange juice brightens it if it tastes flat.

7. **Slice and serve.** Using a sharp carving knife, slice the turkey breast parallel to the bone in ¼–½ inch slices, working from the outer edge toward the bone. Arrange the slices on a platter and spoon the warm cranberry pan sauce over them, with extra sauce in a gravy boat on the side. The turkey is fully cooked and can be held on the crockpot's Warm setting for up to 1 hour before serving if needed.

WHY IT WORKS

Most slow cooker turkey breast recipes use butter, garlic, and herbs — a savory, roasted-flavor profile.



№ 30

VIRAL HIT

Honey-Garlic Ham

The viral TikTok honey-garlic ham: a bone-in half ham scored in a diamond pattern, glazed every 20 minutes with honey, garlic, dijon, and soy sauce, and finished at 400°F for a caramelized crust that photographs better than a turkey.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Honey-Garlic Ham

The viral TikTok honey-garlic ham: a bone-in half ham scored in a diamond pattern, glazed every 20 minutes with honey, garlic, dijon, and soy sauce, and finished at 400°F for a caramelized crust that photographs better than a turkey.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	2 hr 30 min	10–12	Medium	245

01 Ingredients

THE HAM

- 1 bone-in half ham, 7–9 lbs, fully cooked and smoked (not spiral-sliced)
- 1 cup water or low-sodium chicken broth (for the roasting pan)

HONEY-GARLIC GLAZE

- ⅓ cup honey
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 4 cloves garlic, minced (about 2 teaspoons; fresh garlic only — garlic powder flattens)
- 2 tablespoons dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes (optional — adds background heat)

OPTIONAL AROMATICS

- 1 orange, halved (squeeze over scored ham before the foil tent for fragrance)
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary or thyme (tuck into the roasting pan)

02 Method

1. **Rest the ham at room temperature.** Take the ham out of the refrigerator 1 hour before it goes into the oven. Cold ham bakes unevenly — a 7-pound ham pulled straight from the fridge can sit at a safe temperature on the outside while the center is still cold, leading to a dry exterior and underdone center.

2. **Preheat to 325°F.** Place a rack in the lower third of the oven. Add the water or broth to the bottom of the roasting pan — it creates steam and prevents the drippings from burning.

3. **Score the fat cap.** Using a sharp knife, cut a 1-inch diamond pattern into the fat, cutting about ¼ inch deep. You're scoring the fat, not the meat — if you feel resistance after the first half-inch, you've hit the meat and can stop. The score marks are where the glaze will pool and penetrate during basting.

4. **Start the first bake.** Set the ham cut-side down on the rack. If using the orange, squeeze both halves over the top. Tent loosely with foil. Roast at 325°F for half the

total estimated cook time — 50 minutes for a 7-lb ham, about 1 hour 10 minutes for a 9-lb ham.

5. **Make the glaze.** While the ham bakes, combine the honey, brown sugar, garlic, dijon, soy sauce, vinegar, pepper, and red pepper flakes in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir and simmer 3–4 minutes, until the brown sugar dissolves and the glaze coats a spoon. Divide it: set aside ¼ of the glaze in a small bowl for finishing at the end, and use the rest for the basting coats.

6. **Begin glazing.** At the halfway point, remove the foil. Brush a generous coat of glaze all over the top and sides, pressing it into the score marks. Return to the oven uncovered.

7. **Glaze every 20 minutes.** Brush two more layers of glaze at 20-minute intervals. Each coat sets slightly before the next goes on — that's what builds the layered, lacquered crust. After three glaze applications your ham will have a deep amber color.

8. **Check the internal temperature.** When the ham reaches 135–137°F internally, it's close. At this point, raise the oven temperature to 400°F and brush on the reserved finishing glaze.

9. **Caramelize the crust.** At 400°F, the high heat rapidly caramelizes the final coat. Watch closely — 10–15 minutes is usually enough. Pull the ham when it hits 140°F internally and the crust is deeply browned and sticky. If the glaze starts to smoke or darken too fast, tent it loosely with foil.

10. **Rest before carving.** Transfer to a cutting board and tent loosely with foil for 15 minutes. The juices redistribute and the internal temperature finishes rising. Carve by slicing parallel to the bone, rotating the ham as you work.

WHY IT WORKS

Soy sauce adds umami and salt, which balances the sweetness of the honey and brown sugar and keeps the glaze from reading as candy. It also contains glutamates that enhance the savory depth of the ham's natural smokiness.

KITCHEN NOTES



THANKSGIVING

04

SIDES & BREADS

The dishes that fill out the table — the casseroles, potatoes and warm rolls everyone goes back for.

10 RECIPES



№ 31

BEN'S ORIGINAL

Long Grain & Wild Rice

Make the copycat recipe for Uncle Ben's (now Ben's Original) Long Grain & Wild Rice at home — fluffy separate grains, earthy wild rice, and the signature savory-buttery depth from the seasoning packet, achieved without any packets.

BEN'S ORIGINAL · COPYCAT

Long Grain & Wild Rice

Make the copycat recipe for Uncle Ben's (now Ben's Original) Long Grain & Wild Rice at home — fluffy separate grains, earthy wild rice, and the signature savory-buttery depth from the seasoning packet, achieved without any packets.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	45 min	4	Easy	235

01 Ingredients

- ¼ cup true wild rice (not a blend — single-ingredient wild rice, rinsed)
- 1 cup long grain white rice
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1¾ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon dried parsley
- ¼ teaspoon dried celery flakes (or ⅛ teaspoon celery seed)
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried sage
- ¼ teaspoon dried marjoram
- ⅛ teaspoon dried rosemary, crumbled
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt (start here; adjust after tasting)
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of ground turmeric (for color, optional)
- Boiling salted water for pre-cooking the wild rice

02 Method

1. **Pre-cook the wild rice (20 minutes).** Bring a small saucepan of water to a full boil and add ½ teaspoon salt. Add the ¼ cup wild rice and boil uncovered over medium-high heat for exactly 20 minutes — the wild rice should be starting to soften but still quite chewy and not yet split open. Drain completely and set aside. This partial pre-cook is the structural key to making both rices finish at the same time.

2. **Toast the long grain rice.** Melt the butter in a medium, heavy-bottomed saucepan (2–3 quart) over medium heat. Add the long grain white rice and stir to coat every grain in the butter. Toast, stirring frequently, for 2–3 minutes until the rice smells nutty and a few grains turn very lightly golden. This toasting step creates a slight moisture barrier on each grain that keeps them firm and separate as they cook — the parboiling in commercial converted rice achieves the same thing.

3. **Add the wild rice and seasonings.** Add the drained partially-cooked wild rice to the saucepan with the toasted long grain rice. Add the onion powder, dried parsley, celery flakes, thyme, sage, marjoram, rosemary, salt, pepper, and turmeric (if using). Stir to distribute the herbs and spices evenly through both rices, letting

them toast in the residual butter for 30 seconds. This herb combination — thyme, sage, marjoram, rosemary — is the specific quartet in the Ben's Original packet that most copycat recipes leave out, and it's what gives the box its characteristic savory-earthy depth.

4. **Add the broth and soy sauce.** Pour in the 1¾ cups chicken broth and the 1 teaspoon soy sauce. The mixture will sizzle — stir once to make sure nothing is stuck to the bottom. The soy sauce adds the savory-umami depth that the commercial packet's yeast extract provides; it will not make the rice taste soy-flavored at this small quantity.

5. **Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer low.** Increase heat to high and bring to a full rolling boil. Immediately reduce heat to the lowest setting, cover tightly with a lid, and cook undisturbed for 18 minutes. Do not lift the lid during cooking — every lift releases steam and extends the time needed.

6. **Rest off the heat.** After 18 minutes, remove from heat WITHOUT lifting the lid. Let the saucepan rest, still covered, for 5 minutes. The residual steam finishes cooking the long grain rice to the center and the wild rice to a pleasantly chewy but not hard consistency.

7. **Fluff and taste.** Remove the lid, fluff the rice with a fork (use a fork, not a spoon — a spoon compresses the grains). Taste for seasoning: if flat, add a pinch more salt; if the wild rice still feels too chewy, cover and rest 3 more minutes. Serve immediately or keep covered and warm for up to 20 minutes.

WHY IT WORKS

In June 2020, parent company Mars announced a review of the Uncle Ben's brand following widespread criticism that the name and imagery — a smiling Black man in a bow tie labeled 'Uncle Ben' — were rooted in racial stereotyping.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 32

CHEF-INSPIRED

Mashed Potatoes with Green Chile Queso Sauce

Bobby Flay's famous Thanksgiving side: Yukon Gold mashed potatoes with a deep well in the center filled with creamy green chile queso sauce — Monterey Jack, Parmesan, and roasted poblano.

CHEF-INSPIRED · COPYCAT

Mashed Potatoes with Green Chile Queso Sauce

Bobby Flay's famous Thanksgiving side: Yukon Gold mashed potatoes with a deep well in the center filled with creamy green chile queso sauce — Monterey Jack, Parmesan, and roasted poblano.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	35 min	8	Medium	490

01 Ingredients

FOR THE MASHED POTATOES

- 4 lbs Yukon Gold potatoes (about 8 medium), peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 tsp kosher salt for the cooking water, plus more for seasoning
- 8 tbsp (1 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon pats
- 1 cup heavy cream (or half-and-half), warmed
- ½ tsp white pepper

FOR THE GREEN CHILE QUESO SAUCE

- 2 large poblano chiles
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole milk, warmed (not boiling)
- 1½ cups (about 6 oz) shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- ½ cup (about 2 oz) freshly grated Parmesan
- Kosher salt and white pepper to taste

TO FINISH

- 3 tbsp fresh cilantro, roughly chopped

02 Method

1. **Roast the poblanos.** Set an oven rack 4–5 inches under the broiler and heat to high (or use a gas flame directly). Broil the poblanos, turning with tongs every 3–4 minutes, until the skin is blackened and blistered all over — about 12 minutes total. Transfer to a bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let steam for 10 minutes. The trapped steam loosens the skin. Working under running water or at the sink, peel off all the charred skin, open each pepper, and remove the stem, seeds, and white membrane. Finely dice the peeled flesh (you should have about ½ cup). Set aside. (Can be done 1–2 days ahead and refrigerated.)

2. **Boil the potatoes.** Place the potato pieces in a large heavy pot and cover with cold water by at least an inch. Add 2 teaspoons kosher salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a steady simmer. Cook until the potatoes are completely tender all the way through — a paring knife should slide in and out with zero resistance, about 18–22 minutes. Don't undercook; a slightly undercooked center will show up as lumps no ricer can fix.

3. **Drain and dry the potatoes — the key step.** Drain the potatoes thoroughly in a colander, shaking off standing water, then tip them back into the empty hot pot. Set the pot over low heat and stir gently for 1–2 minutes, until the surface moisture steams away and the

potatoes look dry and starchy rather than wet. Potatoes that go into the ricer still wet will dilute the butter and cream as they absorb it and the mash can turn dense, so don't skip this. (If you prefer, you can spread the drained potatoes on a rimmed sheet pan in a 250°F oven for about 5 minutes for the same drying effect.)

4. **Make the mash.** Pass the hot, dried potatoes through a ricer or food mill back into the warm pot. (Or mash them right in the pot with a potato masher — the texture will be slightly rougher but still excellent.) Set over low heat. Working in batches, add the cold butter one or two pats at a time, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon or silicone spatula until each addition is fully absorbed before adding the next. The potatoes will look glossy and creamy as the butter emulsifies in. Stream in the warmed cream in a slow, steady pour, stirring continuously. Season with kosher salt and white pepper. Taste — the mash should be well-seasoned, very smooth, and rich. Keep warm over the lowest heat, covered, while you make the queso.

5. **Build the queso sauce.** In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat until it foams. Add the flour all at once and whisk constantly for 2 full minutes — the mixture will form a smooth pale paste and it's important to cook it long enough that the raw flour taste disappears. Begin adding the warm milk in a slow, thin stream while whisking continuously. Add it gradually at first (about ¼ cup at a time) until the mixture is loose, then pour in the rest. Keep whisking over medium heat until the sauce thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 3–4 minutes. Don't rush with high heat — a slow thicken gives you a smoother sauce.

6. **Melt in the cheeses.** Remove the pan from the heat. Add the Monterey Jack in two additions, stirring until each is fully melted and the sauce is smooth before adding the next. Stir in the Parmesan until it disappears into the sauce. Fold in the diced roasted poblano and its accumulated juices. Season with kosher salt and a pinch of white pepper. Return to the lowest heat setting to keep warm, stirring every minute or two; if the sauce thickens too much before serving, whisk in 1–2 tablespoons of warm milk.

7. **Assemble and serve.** Transfer the mashed potatoes to a large warmed serving bowl — wide is better than deep so there's room for the well. Use the back of a large spoon to press down and create a generous well in the center, working from the middle outward and building up the rim. Pour the warm green chile queso sauce into the well, filling it fully so the sauce pools and just reaches the rim. Scatter the chopped cilantro over the queso. Bring to the table immediately — the visual contrast of the creamy white potatoes and the queso pool is the presentation. Serve with a large spoon that dips through the rim of potatoes and scoops queso with every portion.

WHY IT WORKS

Cold butter added in small increments to hot potato flesh creates a more stable emulsion than melted butter poured all at once.



№ 33

BOSTON MARKET

Sweet Potato Casserole

Boston Market sweet potato casserole copycat recipe: smooth cinnamon-spiced sweet potato filling with a toasted marshmallow top. The trick is adding the marshmallows at the end so they toast instead of dissolve.

Sweet Potato Casserole

Boston Market sweet potato casserole copycat recipe: smooth cinnamon-spiced sweet potato filling with a toasted marshmallow top. The trick is adding the marshmallows at the end so they toast instead of dissolve.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	55 min	10	Easy	360

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SWEET POTATO FILLING

- 3 lbs whole sweet potatoes (about 5 medium), baked and scooped
- ½ cup (1 stick / 113g) unsalted butter, melted
- ⅔ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup heavy cream (or whole milk)
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon dark molasses
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt

FOR THE MARSHMALLOW TOPPING

- 1 bag (10 oz) mini marshmallows

WHY IT WORKS

Because marshmallows added at the start of baking melt before the filling is set. The filling needs 25 to 30 minutes at 350°F to firm up — if the marshmallows go in at the start, they are dissolved and pale by the time the filling is done.

02 Method

1. **Bake the sweet potatoes.** Preheat oven to 400°F. Pierce each sweet potato several times with a fork and set directly on the oven rack (no foil, no pan — you want dry heat on all sides). Bake 45 to 55 minutes, until a knife slides in without any resistance at all. Remove and let cool enough to handle safely.

2. **Make the filling.** Reduce oven to 350°F. Scoop the sweet potato flesh into a large mixing bowl — discard the skins. You need approximately 3 cups of mashed sweet potato. Add the melted butter, brown sugar, heavy cream, beaten eggs, vanilla extract, molasses, cinnamon, and salt. Beat with an electric hand mixer, or mash and stir vigorously, until the filling is completely smooth with no lumps or fibrous strands. Taste: it should be sweet and warmly spiced. Adjust salt if needed.

3. **Fill the baking dish.** Generously butter a 9×13 baking dish (or a comparable 2½-quart casserole dish). Pour in the sweet potato filling and smooth into an even layer with a spatula.

4. **Bake the filling.** Bake at 350°F for 25 to 30 minutes, until the filling is set around the edges. The center should barely jiggle when you gently shake the pan — a slight wobble at the very center is fine, but the edges should be firm. Do not add the marshmallows yet.

5. **Toast the marshmallows.** Remove the casserole from the oven and raise the temperature to 375°F (or switch to the broiler if you prefer). Scatter the mini marshmallows evenly over the entire surface of the filling in a single thick layer — they should cover it completely. Return the dish to the oven for 5 to 7 minutes at 375°F, or 2 to 3 minutes under the broiler. Watch it constantly: the marshmallows go from golden to burned quickly. Pull the dish when the tops are golden-brown with lightly charred peaks on some of the marshmallows — that caramelized color is what you want.

6. **Rest before serving.** Let the casserole rest for 5 minutes before scooping. The marshmallows will be very hot directly from the oven; they firm slightly as they cool and hold their shape better once rested. Serve with a large spoon, scooping through the marshmallow layer and the filling together.



№ 34

CAMPBELL'S

Classic Green Bean Casserole

The original Campbell's Green Bean Casserole recipe — Dorcas Reilly's 1955 creation with cream of mushroom soup, ½ cup milk, soy sauce, and French's crispy fried onions.

CAMPBELL'S · COPYCAT

Classic Green Bean Casserole

The original Campbell's Green Bean Casserole recipe — Dorcas Reilly's 1955 creation with cream of mushroom soup, ½ cup milk, soy sauce, and French's crispy fried onions.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	30 min	6	Easy	130

01 Ingredients

- 1 can (10½ oz) Campbell's Condensed Cream of Mushroom Soup (do not add water or dilute)
- ½ cup milk (whole or 2% — whole milk produces a creamier sauce)
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper (a dash — the original is lightly seasoned)
- 4 cups cooked and drained green beans (two 14½ oz cans of cut green beans, well-drained; or 1½ lbs fresh, blanched 3–4 minutes; or 16 oz frozen, fully thawed and dried)
- 1⅓ cups French's Crispy Fried Onions, divided (⅔ cup for the casserole, ⅔ cup for the topping)

WHY IT WORKS

The soy sauce is an umami amplifier — it makes the cream of mushroom soup taste like there's significantly more going on than condensed soup from a can.

02 Method

1. **Preheat and prep.** Heat the oven to 350°F. If using canned beans, open and drain thoroughly in a colander — shake to remove as much liquid as possible. If using fresh beans, blanch in generously salted boiling water for 3–4 minutes, transfer to an ice bath, drain, and pat dry. If using frozen, thaw completely and press dry with paper towels.
2. **Mix the sauce.** In a 1½-quart (or similar 9x13-inch or 8x8-inch) baking dish, stir together the condensed cream of mushroom soup, milk, soy sauce, and pepper until the soup is fully smooth — no lumps. The mixture will look thin and pale; it thickens significantly in the oven.
3. **Add the beans and first round of onions.** Stir the drained green beans into the soup mixture until evenly coated. Fold in ⅔ cup of the French's Crispy Fried Onions throughout the casserole. Spread into an even layer.
4. **First bake.** Place uncovered in the oven. Bake for 25 minutes until the sauce is hot, bubbling at the edges, and thickened slightly. The casserole should be visibly bubbling — not just warm.
5. **Add the onion topping and finish.** Pull the dish from the oven. Scatter the remaining ⅔ cup of fried onions evenly over the top. Return to the oven and bake 5 more minutes until the onions are deep golden and crunchy.
6. **Rest before serving.** Let the casserole stand at room temperature for 5 minutes before serving. The sauce sets slightly as it cools and the fried onion topping stays crunchy longer.



№ 35

CRACKER BARREL

Cornbread Dressing

Cracker Barrel's famous sage-forward cornbread dressing made at home: unsweetened Southern cornbread crumbled with white bread, baked until custardy inside with crispy golden edges.

CRACKER BARREL · COPYCAT

Cornbread Dressing

Cracker Barrel's famous sage-forward cornbread dressing made at home: unsweetened Southern cornbread crumbled with white bread, baked until custardy inside with crispy golden edges.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	55 min	12	Medium	240

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CORNBREAD BASE (MAKE THE DAY BEFORE OR AT LEAST 1 HOUR AHEAD)

- 1½ cups stone-ground yellow cornmeal
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

FOR THE DRESSING

- 1 full batch of cornbread (above), crumbled — about 6 cups loose crumbles
- 3 slices sturdy white sandwich bread, torn into rough 1-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1½ cups celery, finely diced (about 4 stalks)
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced (about 1½ cups)
- 2 tsp rubbed sage (NOT ground sage — rubbed is coarser, more aromatic)
- 1 tsp poultry seasoning
- 1 tsp fine salt, plus more to taste
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2½–3 cups chicken broth (regular, not low-sodium)

02 Method

1. **Make the cornbread.** Preheat oven to 425°F. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan or 10-inch cast iron skillet generously with butter or nonstick spray. In a large bowl, whisk together cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a separate bowl or measuring cup, whisk buttermilk, eggs, and melted butter. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and stir until just combined — a few lumps are fine; overmixing makes it tough. Pour into the prepared pan. Bake 18–22 minutes until the top is golden and the center springs back when pressed lightly. Cool completely.

2. **Dry the cornbread.** This step makes or breaks the dressing's texture. Once the cornbread is fully cool, crumble it coarsely into a large bowl — aim for pieces from pea-size to marble-size, not a fine powder. Leave the crumbles uncovered at room temperature for at least 1 hour, or overnight if making the day before. The surface moisture needs to escape before you add broth; wet cornbread crumbles produce a gummy, dense dressing. The crumbles should feel slightly dry and a bit rough when you rub them between your fingers.

3. **Sauté the aromatics.** Melt 6 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the celery and onion. Cook, stirring every 2–3 minutes, for 10–12 minutes until softened, slightly translucent, and just beginning to turn golden at the edges. Do not rush this step on high heat — you want the vegetables completely soft, not crunchy. Add the rubbed sage, poultry seasoning, salt, and pepper. Stir and cook 1 more minute to bloom the spices in the butter. Remove from heat.

4. **Combine.** Add the sautéed celery-onion mixture (including all the butter from the pan) to the bowl of dried cornbread crumbles. Add the torn white bread pieces. Toss gently to distribute everything evenly.

5. **Add eggs and broth — the key step.** Add the beaten eggs and stir to distribute throughout the mixture. Now add the chicken broth, starting with 2½ cups, pouring it in slowly while stirring gently. Stop and assess: the mixture should look unmistakably too wet — not dry-and-crumbly, and not a pourable batter, but a thick, soggy mass that slumps rather than holds its shape. If it still looks like dry stuffing, add another ½ cup of broth. Most home cooks stop too early here. Taste the mixture and adjust salt — you're seasoning the whole casserole now.

6. **Bake.** Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9×13-inch baking dish generously (sides and bottom). Pour the dressing mixture in and spread it evenly with a spatula. Bake 45–55 minutes, until the top is deep golden brown and the edges have pulled noticeably away from the sides of the dish. The center should feel set — not jiggly — when you press it gently with a spoon. An underdone center will still look pale and slightly wet; give it another 5–10 minutes if needed.

7. **Rest before serving.** Remove from the oven and let rest at least 10 minutes before scooping. The dressing continues to firm as it cools. It should be custardy and moist throughout, not dense or brick-like, with crispy edges that contrast with the soft interior.

WHY IT WORKS

Stuffing is cooked inside the bird; dressing is baked separately in a casserole dish. Cracker Barrel makes dressing — always baked outside the turkey, which is why their version has evenly cooked, crispy edges all around.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 36

FLEMING'S PRIME STEAKHOUSE & WINE BAR

Fleming's Potatoes au Gratin

Make Fleming's jalapeño-and-leek potatoes au gratin at home — the famous steakhouse side with ultra-thin russet slices, a cheddar-Monterey Jack crust, and just enough heat to cut through the cream.

FLEMING'S PRIME STEAKHOUSE & WINE BAR · COPYCAT

Fleming's Potatoes au Gratin

Make Fleming's jalapeño-and-leek potatoes au gratin at home — the famous steakhouse side with ultra-thin russet slices, a cheddar-Monterey Jack crust, and just enough heat to cut through the cream.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	55 min	6 servings	Easy	420

01 Ingredients

FOR THE GRATIN

- 4 lbs (1.8 kg) russet potatoes, peeled
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 small leek (white and light-green part only), halved lengthwise and thinly sliced (about ¾ cup)
- 1 medium jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed, finely diced (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1½ cups (360 ml) heavy cream
- 1 cup (240 ml) half-and-half
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1½ cups (170g) sharp cheddar cheese, freshly grated
- 1 cup (115g) Monterey Jack cheese, freshly grated

02 Method

1. **Slice the potatoes.** Peel the potatoes and cut them into 1/16-inch-thick rounds — a mandoline set to its thinnest setting is the right tool here. Uniform, paper-thin slices are what allow the layers to compact and become tender at the same time. If you're cutting by hand, aim for coins no thicker than a credit card. As you slice, drop the rounds into a bowl of cold water to keep them from oxidizing while you prep everything else; drain and pat dry just before assembling.

2. **Sauté the leeks and jalapeño.** In a small skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the sliced leeks, diced jalapeño, ½ teaspoon of the salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 4–5 minutes until the leeks are softened and translucent but not browned. Remove from heat.

3. **Make the cream mixture.** In a medium bowl (or a 4-cup measuring cup), whisk together the heavy cream, half-and-half, remaining 1 teaspoon salt, remaining pepper, and garlic powder. Stir in the sautéed leeks and jalapeño.

4. **Prep the pan and preheat.** Heat the oven to 400°F. Butter a 9×13-inch baking dish generously, or use six individual 8-oz oven-safe crocks for the restaurant-style presentation. (Fleming's serves the gratin in individual crocks — if you have them, this is worth doing.)

5. **Layer the potatoes.** Drain and thoroughly dry the potato slices. Layer them in the baking dish in overlapping shingles, like roof tiles, filling the dish to about 1½ inches deep. Pour the cream-leek mixture evenly over the potatoes; it should come about three-quarters up the sides. Press the potato layers down gently so they begin to absorb the cream. Scatter the cheddar and Monterey Jack evenly over the top.

6. **Bake covered.** Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil. Bake at 400°F for 45 minutes. At this point, a knife inserted in the center should slide through the potatoes with almost no resistance — the cream should have been mostly absorbed or thickened. If the potatoes still feel firm, recover and bake for 10 more minutes.

7. **Brown the top.** Remove the foil and bake uncovered for 10–15 minutes more, until the cheese is deeply golden and the edges are bubbling. Let the gratin rest for 10 minutes before serving — this allows the layers to firm up enough to hold together when you scoop them.

8. **Make-ahead option.** Assemble the gratin through Step 5 (layers poured, cheese on top) and refrigerate, covered, for up to 24 hours before baking. Add 10–15 minutes to the covered bake time when going from cold.

WHY IT WORKS

A mandoline is strongly recommended. The key to a gratin that cooks evenly — tender from center to edge, with layers that compact into a single sliceable mass — is uniform thickness.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 37

JIFFY

Corn Muffin Mix

The exact copycat recipe for Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix — a homemade dry mix you store in a bag or jar and use just like the box.

JIFFY · COPYCAT

Corn Muffin Mix

The exact copycat recipe for Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix — a homemade dry mix you store in a bag or jar and use just like the box.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	18 min	6 muffins	Easy	175

01 Ingredients

SINGLE-BATCH DRY MIX (6 MUFFINS / ONE BOX EQUIVALENT)

- ¾ cup (96g) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (70g) fine-ground yellow cornmeal (not coarse-grind; Bob's Red Mill medium-grind also works)
- 3 tablespoons (36g) granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 2 tablespoons (24g) cold vegetable shortening (Crisco), or cold lard — cut in (see instructions)

TO MAKE MUFFINS FROM THE DRY MIX (ADD AT BAKING TIME)

- 1 large egg
- ⅓ cup (80ml) whole milk or 2% milk

FOR A BULK JAR (18 MUFFINS = 3 BATCHES WORTH)

- 2¼ cups (288g) all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups (210g) fine-ground yellow cornmeal
- 9 tablespoons (108g) granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons baking powder
- 1½ teaspoons fine salt
- 6 tablespoons (72g) cold vegetable shortening — cut in before storing

FOR CORN CASSEROLE (OPTIONAL USE OF THE MIX)

- 1 batch dry mix (above)
- 1 can (14¾ oz) cream-style corn
- 1 can (15 oz) whole-kernel corn, drained
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup (1 stick) melted butter

02 Method

1. **Make the dry mix.** Whisk together the flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl until fully combined with no visible streaks. Add the cold vegetable shortening in small pieces — cut it into roughly 6–8 pea-sized chunks. Work it in using a pastry blender, two knives, or your fingertips (the warmth of your hands softens it quickly — work fast). The goal is a mixture that looks like coarse damp sand: no large visible fat pieces, but not a fine powder either. Some clumping is fine. The fat is fully incorporated when you can pinch a small amount and it holds a shape for a second before crumbling. Do not over-work it past this stage — you want the shortening distributed but not melted into the flour.

2. **Store the dry mix.** Transfer to a zip-lock bag, mason jar, or airtight container. Label with the date. The mix keeps at room temperature for up to 3 months; the shortening is stable and does not need refrigeration. If you made the bulk (3x) batch, the most reliable way to portion it is to divide the jar into 3 equal parts — one part is a single batch (the equivalent of

one 8½-oz box). By weight, a single batch is about 240g; by volume it scoops out to roughly 1½ cups, but weigh it or split the jar in thirds for consistent results, since the cut-in shortening makes the loose volume vary.

3. **When ready to make muffins: preheat the oven to 400°F.** Lightly grease a standard 6-cup muffin tin with cooking spray or a paper towel dipped in shortening. Do not use butter for greasing — it browns too quickly against the direct heat of the tin and causes the outside of the muffins to over-brown before the center sets. Muffin liners also work; if using paper liners, spray the liners lightly as well — the batter is fairly lean and sticks.

4. **Mix the batter.** Pour the dry mix into a medium bowl. Crack in the egg and add the milk. Stir with a fork or spatula just until no dry flour is visible — this takes about 15–20 strokes. Stop mixing. Lumps in the batter are completely fine and expected; they will disappear in the oven. Overmixing activates gluten and produces tough, dense muffins with peaked tops — the Jiffy texture depends on a minimally worked batter. The finished batter will be thick and scoopable, not pourable.

5. **Fill the muffin tin.** Divide the batter evenly across the 6 cups, filling each about ⅔ full. The batter is thick enough to mound slightly above the rim without spreading over the edges — that slight dome is correct and will bake down to a flat, slightly rounded top. Do not fill more than ⅔ or the tops will overflow and bond to the pan.

6. **Bake at 400°F for 15–18 minutes.** The muffins are done when the tops are golden yellow-brown and a toothpick inserted in the center of one muffin comes out with a few moist crumbs (not wet batter). At 15 minutes the edges will be set; the tops may still look pale gold rather than deep golden — give them the full 18 minutes for the color and texture that matches the Jiffy box result. Every oven runs slightly different: if your oven runs hot, check at 14 minutes.

7. **Cool briefly and serve.** Let the muffins cool in the tin for 3 minutes, then run a thin spatula or butter knife around the edge of each muffin and lift out. They will release cleanly once slightly set — do not try to pull them out straight from the oven or they may stick. Serve warm. These muffins taste best the day they're made; they dry out somewhat by day two. Store leftovers loosely wrapped at room temperature (not in an airtight container, which makes them gummy) for up to 2 days, or freeze individually wrapped for up to 2 months.

8. **For corn casserole (the famous Jiffy side dish).** Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, combine the dry mix, cream-style corn, drained whole-kernel corn, sour cream, eggs, and melted butter. Stir until fully combined — a few lumps are fine. Pour into a buttered 9x9-inch (or 8x11-inch) baking dish. Bake for 45–55 minutes until the center is set and the top is golden. The casserole is done when a toothpick in the very center comes out clean and the edges have pulled away from the sides of the dish. It should look more like a custardy corn pudding than cornbread — that's correct. See the full recipe at the related page below.

WHY IT WORKS

Vegetable shortening and lard are 100% fat with no water content. Butter is roughly 80% fat and 20% water. When the water in butter heats up during baking, it creates steam that develops gluten — making the crumb slightly chewier and less tender.



№ 38

PEPPERIDGE FARM

Herb Seasoned Stuffing

The homemade copycat for Pepperidge Farm Herb Seasoned Stuffing — large, oven-dried bread cubes seasoned with rubbed sage, thyme, rosemary, celery salt, and parsley, then finished into a classic baked stuffing with butter, celery, onion.

PEPPERIDGE FARM · COPYCAT

Herb Seasoned Stuffing

The homemade copycat for Pepperidge Farm Herb Seasoned Stuffing — large, oven-dried bread cubes seasoned with rubbed sage, thyme, rosemary, celery salt, and parsley, then finished into a classic baked stuffing with butter, celery, onion.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	45 min	8 servings	Easy	195

01 Ingredients

DRY HERB-SEASONED BREAD CUBE MIX (ONE 14-OZ BAG EQUIVALENT)

- 14 oz (about 12–14 slices, or roughly 10 cups cubed) white sandwich bread, whole wheat sandwich bread, or a mix of both
- 1 teaspoon rubbed sage (not ground — rubbed sage has a coarser texture and slightly milder, more aromatic flavor)
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary, crumbled between your fingers to release the oils
- ½ teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- ½ teaspoon celery salt
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon fine salt

FOR THE PREPARED STUFFING (USE WITH THE DRY MIX ABOVE)

- 14 oz dry herb bread cube mix (above)
- ¼ cup (4 tablespoons / 57g) unsalted butter
- 1 cup diced celery (about 2–3 stalks, medium dice)
- 1 cup diced yellow onion (about 1 medium onion, medium dice)
- 1¾ cups (420ml) chicken broth or vegetable broth, low-sodium preferred

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS

- ½ lb (225g) bulk pork sausage, browned and crumbled, for sausage stuffing
- 8 oz (225g) oysters, roughly chopped, for oyster stuffing (fold in with the broth)
- ½ cup dried cranberries + ½ cup toasted walnuts or pecans, for a Thanksgiving variation

02 Method

1. **Cut and dry the bread cubes.** Stack the bread slices and cut them into ½-inch cubes — irregular edges are fine and actually preferable, since they catch more seasoning. Spread the cubes in a single layer across two large rimmed sheet pans. Dry in a 225°F oven for 45–60 minutes, stirring once at the halfway point. The cubes are ready when they are completely brittle and snap cleanly with no soft or flexible center — any residual moisture will prevent the seasoning from adhering properly and will shorten the shelf life of the stored mix. An 8-hour air-dry overnight (spread on sheet pans at room temperature) also works if you want to skip the oven step; it produces the same result but takes longer.

2. **Season the dry cubes.** Let the dried cubes cool completely to room temperature — at least 20 minutes after coming out of the oven. In a small bowl, whisk together the rubbed sage, thyme, rosemary, parsley, celery salt, onion powder, black pepper, and salt. Transfer the cooled bread cubes to a large mixing bowl.

Sprinkle the herb blend evenly over the cubes, then toss gently with a rubber spatula until every cube is lightly dusted. The herbs won't stick as aggressively as they would to fresh bread — this is correct. Once hydrated with butter and broth during the stuffing step, the seasoning fully distributes through the dish.

3. **Store the mix.** Transfer to an airtight container, zip-lock bag, or the bread bag itself tied shut. At room temperature, the dry mix keeps for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 month or freeze up to 3 months. The mix does not need refrigeration for the first 2 weeks because the bread is completely dry — any moisture reintroduction shortens this window significantly, so make sure the cubes are fully dried before storing.

4. **Preheat and prep for stuffing.** When ready to make stuffing, preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x13-inch (or 3-quart) baking dish generously — the stuffing will stick to the sides if the dish is not greased. Melt the butter in a large skillet or sauté pan over medium heat.

5. **Sauté the vegetables.** Add the diced celery and onion to the melted butter. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 8–10 minutes until the onion is translucent and the celery has softened — you want them fully cooked, not just wilted, so they don't add raw crunch to the finished stuffing. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Add the chicken broth to the skillet and bring to a simmer, scraping up any bits from the bottom of the pan.

6. **Combine and transfer.** Pour the dry bread cube mix into a large mixing bowl. Pour the hot butter-vegetable-broth mixture evenly over the bread cubes. Toss gently but thoroughly, turning the cubes from the bottom of the bowl up so every cube gets coated. The cubes should be evenly moistened — slightly wet-looking on the outside but not soaking, with enough broth that the bottom of the bowl has a thin layer of liquid. If the mixture looks very dry (which can happen with extra-dry bread or low humidity), add a splash more broth, 2 tablespoons at a time, until the consistency is even. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and spread into an even layer. Do not pack it tightly — a loose, irregular surface creates more surface area for crisping.

7. **Bake.** Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil. Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes covered, then remove the foil and bake for an additional 15–20 minutes uncovered until the top is golden brown and some of the exposed cubes on top have crisped. The total bake time is 40–45 minutes. The stuffing is done when a thermometer inserted in the center reads 165°F and the top has visible browning. For a crispier top, broil for 2–3 minutes at the end — watch it closely, the cubes brown fast under a broiler.

8. **Rest and serve.** Remove from the oven and let the stuffing rest for 5 minutes before serving. This allows the broth to redistribute from the very center of the pan outward. Serve directly from the baking dish. The stuffing holds well in a 200°F oven, loosely covered with foil, for up to 45 minutes before serving.

9. **Make-ahead method.** Prepare through the toss-and-transfer step (through step 6) up to 24 hours ahead. Cover the unbaked dish tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate. On the day of serving, remove from the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking to take the chill off, then bake covered at 350°F for 30 minutes and uncovered for 15–20 minutes — adding 5 extra covered minutes compared to the standard method to account for the cold starting temperature.

WHY IT WORKS

A sturdy, slightly dry white sandwich bread (like Pepperidge Farm's own farmhouse white, Arnold, or Wonder Bread) holds up best to the drying process and produces cubes that absorb broth evenly without disintegrating.



№ 39

STOVE TOP

Stove Top Stuffing

Copycat Stove Top stuffing made from scratch in 25 minutes: the same small-cubed, sage-forward, buttery stovetop stuffing — no box needed. Includes the make-ahead dry mix method so you can cook it instantly on demand.

STOVE TOP · COPYCAT

Stove Top Stuffing

Copycat Stove Top stuffing made from scratch in 25 minutes: the same small-cubed, sage-forward, buttery stovetop stuffing — no box needed. Includes the make-ahead dry mix method so you can cook it instantly on demand.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	10 min	6	Easy	195

01 Ingredients

FOR THE STUFFING

- 4 cups white sandwich bread, cut into ½-inch cubes (about 8 slices — a half loaf)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ¼ cup yellow onion, finely diced
- ¼ cup celery, finely diced (about 1 stalk)
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken broth

SEASONING BLEND

- 1 teaspoon dried sage (rubbed, not ground)
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon dried minced onion (in addition to the fresh)
- 1 teaspoon dried celery flakes (or ¼ teaspoon celery seed)
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of sugar (optional — rounds the seasoning)

WHY IT WORKS

The from-scratch copycat uses dried white bread cubes (about 4 cups), chicken broth (1½ cups), butter (3 tablespoons), and a seasoning blend of dried sage, dried thyme, dried parsley, dried minced onion, celery flakes, salt, and pepper.

02 Method

1. **Dry the bread.** Preheat the oven to 300°F. Spread the bread cubes in a single layer on a sheet pan. Bake for 10–15 minutes until the cubes feel hard and snap cleanly — no soft centers. (Alternatively, leave cubed bread uncovered on a rack overnight.) The cubes must be completely dry or the stuffing will turn mushy. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. **Mix the seasoning.** Combine the dried sage, thyme, parsley, dried minced onion, celery flakes, salt, pepper, and sugar (if using) in a small bowl. Toss with the dried bread cubes until evenly coated. The dry cubes should smell like a classic stuffing at this point.
3. **Sauté the aromatics.** In a medium saucepan or wide skillet with a lid, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the diced fresh onion and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 2–3 minutes until the onion is just translucent and the celery has softened slightly. Don't brown them — they should be tender and sweet, not caramelized.
4. **Add broth and bring to a boil.** Pour in the chicken broth and raise the heat to medium-high. Bring to a boil.
5. **Fold in the bread cubes.** Remove the pan from heat. Add all the seasoned bread cubes at once and stir gently to combine, making sure every cube touches the broth. Immediately place the lid on the pan.
6. **Steam 5 minutes.** Let stand, covered and off heat, for exactly 5 minutes. Do not lift the lid. The trapped steam reconstitutes the bread evenly.
7. **Fluff and serve.** After 5 minutes, remove the lid and fluff gently with a fork — same motion as fluffing rice. The stuffing should be moist but not wet, with distinct cubes that hold their shape. If it seems too dry, stir in 1–2 tablespoons warm broth. Taste and adjust salt. Serve immediately.



№ 40

VIRAL HIT

Gochujang Brussels Sprouts

Viral TikTok gochujang Brussels sprouts — crispy oven-roasted sprouts tossed in a sticky honey-gochujang glaze, ready in 30 minutes.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Gochujang Brussels Sprouts

Viral TikTok gochujang Brussels sprouts — crispy oven-roasted sprouts tossed in a sticky honey-gochujang glaze, ready in 30 minutes.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	25 min	4 servings	Easy	160

01 Ingredients

FOR THE BRUSSELS SPROUTS

- 1 lb (450g) Brussels sprouts
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil (avocado, vegetable, or light olive oil)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

FOR THE GOCHUJANG GLAZE

- 2 tablespoons gochujang (Korean fermented chili paste)
- 2 tablespoons honey — or maple syrup for a vegan version
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce — or tamari for gluten-free
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced — or ½ teaspoon garlic powder

TO FINISH

- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced on a bias
- Optional: 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan, or 2 tablespoons crushed roasted peanuts

02 Method

1. **Preheat the oven and the sheet pan.** Set oven to 425°F (220°C) with a rack in the upper-middle position. Place a large rimmed sheet pan in the oven as it preheats — the pan needs to be fully hot before the sprouts go on it. This is the step that makes the difference between crispy and steamed; don't skip it.

2. **Prep the Brussels sprouts.** Trim ⅛ inch off the stem end of each sprout and halve them lengthwise through the stem. Peel off any loose, yellowed outer leaves and discard them; tight green leaves can stay on. Spread the halved sprouts on a clean kitchen towel or layer of paper towels and pat completely dry. Surface moisture is the enemy of browning — the drier the sprouts, the more crispy they'll get.

3. **Season the sprouts.** Transfer the dried, halved sprouts to a large bowl. Add the oil, salt, and pepper, and toss until every sprout is well coated. Spread them out in the bowl to make sure the oil is distributed evenly — clumps of dry sprouts won't brown.

4. **Roast cut-side down on the hot pan.** Using oven mitts, carefully pull the hot sheet pan out of the oven and place it on a heatproof surface. Working quickly, place the sprouts cut-side down on the pan in a single layer, leaving space between them. You should

hear a sizzle as they hit the pan — that's the browning starting. Don't stir or move them. Return the pan to the oven.

5. **Roast 18 to 22 minutes without stirring.** Roast until the cut surfaces are deeply golden to dark brown and the outer leaves are crispy. Check at 18 minutes: a properly roasted sprout should be charred at the cut edges and slightly caramelized all over. The inside should be tender but not mushy. If the cut surfaces are pale at 18 minutes, give them 3 more minutes. Some smoking is normal and means the high heat is working.

6. **Make the gochujang glaze.** While the sprouts roast, whisk together the gochujang, honey, soy sauce, sesame oil, rice vinegar, and minced garlic in a medium bowl until smooth. Taste the glaze — it should be intensely flavored, spicy, sweet, and salty. Adjust if needed: more honey to dial back the heat, more soy sauce to add savory depth, more rice vinegar for brightness.

7. **Toss the hot sprouts with the glaze.** When the sprouts come out of the oven, immediately transfer them to the bowl with the gochujang glaze. Toss quickly until every sprout is coated — the residual heat from the sprouts will slightly loosen the glaze and help it cling. Work fast so the sprouts don't lose their heat.

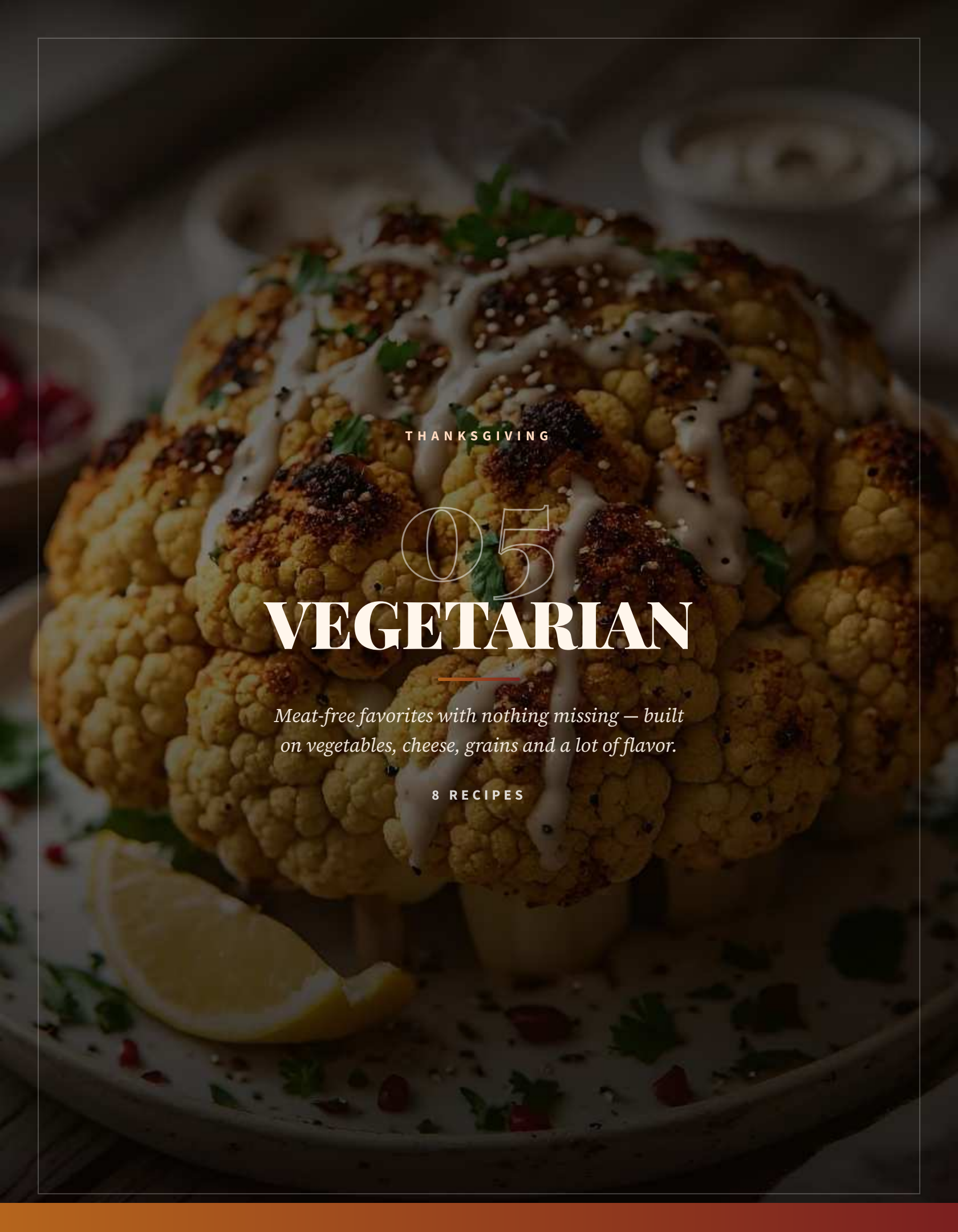
8. **Return to the oven for 3 to 4 minutes to set the glaze.** Spread the glazed sprouts back on the sheet pan (no need to reheat it) and return to the oven. This short return caramelizes the glaze into a sticky, restaurant-style coating. Watch closely — the honey in the glaze can burn quickly. 3 minutes is usually enough; 4 minutes will give you a slightly more set, almost lacquered surface.

9. **Finish and serve.** Transfer to a serving plate or bowl. Scatter sesame seeds and sliced scallions over the top. Add Parmesan or crushed peanuts if using. Serve immediately — these are best within 10 minutes of finishing, while the crust is still crispy and the glaze is still warm.

WHY IT WORKS

Gochujang is a Korean fermented chili paste made from red chili peppers, glutinous rice, fermented soybeans, and salt.

KITCHEN NOTES



THANKSGIVING

05 VEGETARIAN

Meat-free favorites with nothing missing — built on vegetables, cheese, grains and a lot of flavor.

8 RECIPES



№ 41

CHEF-INSPIRED

Spiced Chickpea Stew

Alison Roman's legendary #TheStew — a spiced chickpea stew with coconut milk, turmeric, and wilted greens. The one technique that matters: crush half the chickpeas against the pot to naturally thicken the broth without flour or cream.

CHEF-INSPIRED · COPYCAT

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Alison Roman's legendary #TheStew — a spiced chickpea stew with coconut milk, turmeric, and wilted greens. The one technique that matters: crush half the chickpeas against the pot to naturally thicken the broth without flour or cream.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	45 min	6	Easy	500

01 Ingredients

- ¼ cup (60ml) olive oil, plus more for drizzling to serve
- 1 large yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated (about a 2-inch piece)
- 1½ teaspoons ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, plus more to taste
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cans (15 oz each) chickpeas, drained and rinsed well
- 2 cans (15 oz each) full-fat coconut milk — do not use light coconut milk
- 2 cups (475ml) vegetable stock or low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 large bunch Swiss chard, kale, or collard greens (about 1 lb / 450g), thick stems removed, leaves torn into 2-inch pieces
- ½ lemon, for squeezing at the end

TO SERVE

- 1 cup fresh mint leaves, tender stems OK
- Plain whole-milk yogurt (optional)
- Flatbread or crusty bread (optional)

02 Method

1. **Build the aromatics.** Heat ¼ cup olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot — a Dutch oven works best — over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is fully soft and just beginning to turn golden at the edges, about 8 minutes. Don't rush this step: properly softened onion forms the flavor base for everything that follows.

2. **Bloom the spices.** Add the garlic, ginger, turmeric, and red pepper flakes. Stir constantly for about 2 minutes — the mixture will turn a brilliant, deep gold and the spices will smell fragrant. If anything starts to stick to the bottom, add a small splash of water and scrape up the browned bits; those bits are flavor.

3. **Crisp the chickpeas.** Add both cans of drained, rinsed chickpeas. Stir to coat everything in the spiced oil. Cook, stirring every minute or so, until the chickpeas are heated through and some are starting to blister or lightly crisp at the edges, about 4–5 minutes. Season generously with salt and black pepper.

4. **Crush half the chickpeas — this is the key move.** Using a wooden spoon or the back of a ladle, crush roughly half the chickpeas directly against the bottom and sides of the pot until they form a rough, lumpy paste. Leave the other half whole. The crushed chickpeas will look like you've ruined the texture — you haven't. That starchy paste is what thickens the entire stew naturally.

5. **Add the coconut milk and stock.** Pour in both cans of coconut milk and the vegetable stock. Stir well to combine, scraping up anything from the bottom. Bring to a gentle simmer — not a hard rolling boil, which can cause the coconut milk to separate and look grainy.

6. **Simmer until thick.** Cook the stew uncovered at a steady simmer for 30–35 minutes, stirring every 5–6 minutes. It should visibly thicken and deepen in color as the chickpea starch fully dissolves. The stew is ready when it coats the back of a spoon and has reduced by roughly a quarter. Taste and adjust salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes.

7. **Add the greens.** Add the torn greens in batches — they'll look like far too much but wilt down fast. Stir and cook until completely wilted and tender: Swiss chard takes about 3 minutes, kale 4–5 minutes, collard greens 6–7 minutes. Squeeze in the lemon juice and stir.

8. **Serve immediately.** Ladle into bowls. Drizzle each bowl with a little olive oil, scatter on a generous handful of fresh mint, and set out yogurt and flatbread alongside if using. The mint is not optional garnish — it's a functional component that cuts through the richness.

WHY IT WORKS

The thickening technique is the reason this recipe stands apart: after the chickpeas cook in the spiced oil for a few minutes, you use a wooden spoon or potato masher to crush roughly half of them against the bottom of the pot.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 42

CHEF-INSPIRED

Mushroom Bourguignon

The Smitten Kitchen mushroom bourguignon that convinced a generation of home cooks that vegetarian could hold the table at Christmas: deeply wine-braised portobellos and creminis with pearl onions, carrots, and fresh thyme.

CHEF-INSPIRED · COPYCAT

Mushroom Bourguignon

The Smitten Kitchen mushroom bourguignon that convinced a generation of home cooks that vegetarian could hold the table at Christmas: deeply wine-braised portobellos and creminis with pearl onions, carrots, and fresh thyme.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	45 min	4	Easy	280

01 Ingredients

FOR THE STEW

- 1 lb portobello mushrooms, stems removed, caps sliced ½ inch thick
- 1 lb cremini (baby bella) mushrooms, halved or quartered depending on size
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 cup (about 6 oz) pearl onions, fresh or frozen (thawed if frozen)
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced ¼ inch thick on the bias
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 cup full-bodied red wine (Côtes du Rhône, Merlot, or Pinot Noir)
- 1 cup vegetable broth (low-sodium)
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme (or ½ tsp dried)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour (optional, for a slightly thicker sauce)
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce or vegan Worcestershire sauce (standard Worcestershire contains anchovies — use one of these to keep the dish vegetarian or vegan)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

TO SERVE

- 8 oz wide egg noodles, cooked per package directions (or creamy polenta)
- 2 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- Flaky sea salt for finishing
- Sour cream for serving (optional)

02 Method

1. **Prep the mushrooms.** Remove the stems from the portobellos and wipe the caps with a damp paper towel. Slice into roughly ½-inch thick strips. Halve or quarter the cremini mushrooms depending on size — aim for pieces roughly uniform so they cook evenly. Pat everything dry with paper towels; dry mushrooms brown, wet ones steam.

2. **First mushroom batch.** Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of butter and 1 tablespoon of olive oil and let the foam subside. Add half the mushrooms in a single layer — do not crowd the pan. Cook undisturbed for 3 minutes until the bottom is dark. Toss and cook another 2 to 3 minutes. The mushrooms should be dark golden-brown at the edges and smell caramelized, not steamy. Transfer to a bowl with a slotted spoon.

3. **Second mushroom batch.** Add the remaining butter and olive oil to the pot. Add the second half of the mushrooms in a single layer. Brown the same way, 4 to 5 minutes total. Transfer to

the bowl with the first batch. (The bottom of the pot will have some dark fond — this is the flavor base. Don't clean it.)

4. **Cook the aromatics.** Reduce heat to medium. Add the pearl onions and carrots to the pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 6 minutes until the onions are lightly golden and the carrots begin to soften. Add the garlic and cook 1 more minute until fragrant. Stir in the tomato paste and cook, pressing it against the bottom of the pot, for about 2 minutes until it darkens slightly and smells toasty.

5. **Deglaze with wine.** Pour in the red wine. Use a wooden spoon to scrape up all the browned bits from the bottom of the pot — that fond is the backbone of the sauce. Increase heat to medium-high and let the wine reduce by roughly half, about 4 minutes.

6. **Build the braise.** Return the browned mushrooms and any accumulated juices to the pot. Add the vegetable broth, thyme sprigs, bay leaf, and Worcestershire sauce. If you want a slightly thicker sauce, stir the flour into 2 tablespoons of cold water until smooth and add it now. Stir to combine everything.

7. **Simmer.** Bring to a gentle simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low. Cook uncovered for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has reduced and thickened enough to coat a spoon. Taste and season with kosher salt and pepper. Remove and discard the thyme sprigs and bay leaf.

8. **Serve.** Spoon generously over cooked egg noodles or creamy polenta. Scatter chopped parsley over the top. Finish with a pinch of flaky salt. Serve with sour cream on the side if you like — a small dollop stirred in at the table adds a tangy richness that works beautifully with the wine sauce.

WHY IT WORKS

Mushrooms are about 90% water. When you put too many in a pan at once, they release steam faster than it can evaporate, and they braise in their own liquid instead of browning.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 43

RAO'S

Eggplant Parmigiana

Rao's eggplant parmigiana, made at home: salted eggplant slices, lightly breaded and fried in olive oil until golden, then layered with the restaurant's famous marinara, fresh mozzarella.

RAO'S · COPYCAT

Eggplant Parmigiana

Rao's eggplant parmigiana, made at home: salted eggplant slices, lightly breaded and fried in olive oil until golden, then layered with the restaurant's famous marinara, fresh mozzarella.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	35 min	6	Medium	395

01 Ingredients

FOR THE EGGPLANT

- 2 large Italian eggplants (about 2¼ lbs total), cut into ¼-inch rounds
- Kosher salt (for salting — use about 2 teaspoons total)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (for dredging)
- 3 large eggs, beaten with 1 tablespoon of water
- 1½ cups fine Italian-style breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated (mixed into the breadcrumbs)
- Good extra-virgin olive oil, for shallow frying (about 1½ cups total across all batches)

FOR THE LAYERS

- 3 cups marinara sauce (Rao's jarred, or homemade from San Marzano canned tomatoes)
- 12 oz fresh mozzarella, torn into rough pieces
- ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated (plus more for the top)
- 8 to 10 fresh basil leaves, for the layers (optional but traditional)

02 Method

1. **Salt and drain the eggplant.** Arrange the eggplant rounds on a wire rack set over a sheet pan, or directly in a large colander. Sprinkle generously with kosher salt on both sides — aim for an even but not excessive coat. Let the slices rest for 1 hour; they will release a surprising amount of darkened, bitter liquid. Rinse each slice under cold running water to remove the salt and drawn-out liquid, then press firmly between several layers of paper towels until each slice feels nearly dry to the touch. Do not skip the pressing step — damp eggplant means soggy parmigiana.

2. **Set up the breading station.** Arrange three shallow dishes in a line: flour in the first, beaten egg in the second, and the breadcrumbs mixed with the ¼ cup of Parmigiano in the third. Season the flour lightly with salt and pepper. Working one slice at a time, dredge the eggplant in flour and shake off any excess — you want a thin, even dusting, not a clump. Dip in the beaten egg, letting any drips fall back into the dish. Press both sides into the Parmigiano breadcrumbs firmly, coating completely. Set the breaded slices on a clean rack as you go.

3. **Fry the eggplant.** Pour olive oil into a large heavy skillet (cast iron or stainless) to a depth of about ¼ inch — roughly ½ cup to start, replenished as needed. Heat over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers and a pinch of breadcrumbs dropped in sizzles immediately. Working in batches without crowding the pan, fry the breaded eggplant slices for 2 to 3 minutes per side until the crust is deep golden — nearly chestnut-colored — and the eggplant has softened completely. A properly fried slice should feel yielding when pressed, not firm. Drain on a paper-towel-lined rack. Repeat with the remaining slices,

adding oil between batches to maintain the depth. Let the oil return to temperature between each batch.

4. **Preheat the oven.** Set the oven to 375°F. Bring a 9×13-inch baking dish to the counter.

5. **Assemble the layers.** Spread a thin, even layer of marinara sauce across the bottom of the baking dish — just enough to cover it, about ½ cup. Lay down a single layer of fried eggplant slices, slightly overlapping if needed to fit. Spoon another ½ cup of marinara over the eggplant and spread it to cover. Scatter roughly a third of the torn mozzarella pieces over the marinara, then sprinkle with some of the Parmigiano. Tuck in a few basil leaves if using. Repeat the layers — eggplant, marinara, mozzarella, Parmigiano, basil — until the eggplant is used. The final layer should be eggplant topped with the remaining marinara and a generous grating of Parmigiano, but no mozzarella on the very top (mozzarella on the surface tends to form a rubbery skin rather than melting cleanly — the Parmigiano crust looks better and crisps nicely).

6. **Bake.** Transfer the baking dish to the oven. Bake at 375°F for 25 to 30 minutes, until the sauce is visibly bubbling around all four edges and the Parmigiano topping has turned golden. The dish is done when it smells deeply of roasted tomato and cheese.

7. **Rest before serving.** Remove from the oven and let the dish rest, uncovered, for at least 10 minutes. This rest is not optional: the layers are loose and wet right out of the oven and will collapse when cut. After 10 minutes the dish firms up enough to cut clean squares and serve with a spatula. Finish with torn fresh basil leaves scattered over the top.

WHY IT WORKS

Eggplant has a high water content — enough that if you skip the salting step, the moisture releases into the hot oil during frying and the slices steam rather than fry.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 44

VIRAL HIT

Butternut Squash Orecchiette with Brown Butter and Sage

Viral TikTok butternut squash orecchiette — roasted squash blended with pasta water becomes a naturally creamy sauce, no heavy cream needed. The brown butter and crispy sage take 2 minutes and turn this into a restaurant-quality fall pasta.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

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Viral TikTok butternut squash orecchiette — roasted squash blended with pasta water becomes a naturally creamy sauce, no heavy cream needed. The brown butter and crispy sage take 2 minutes and turn this into a restaurant-quality fall pasta.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	35 min	4	Easy	610

01 Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2 lbs / 900g), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes (about 4 cups)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 12 oz (340g) dried orecchiette
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 12 fresh sage leaves
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- ½ cup (45g) freshly grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)
- Reserved pasta water (you'll need up to 1½ cups)

02 Method

1. **Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C).** Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread the butternut squash cubes on the baking sheet in a single layer — if they overlap, they'll steam instead of roast. Toss with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and a generous grind of black pepper.

2. **Roast the squash for 25 to 30 minutes,** flipping once at the 15-minute mark, until deeply golden with caramelized (not just brown) edges and completely tender when pierced with a fork. The caramelization is not decorative — it concentrates the squash's natural sugars and is what gives the sauce its depth. Remove from the oven and set aside.

3. **Bring a large pot of water to a boil** while the squash roasts. Add 2 tablespoons of kosher salt (the water should taste like mild seawater). Add the orecchiette and cook according to package directions until al dente — usually 10 to 12 minutes for dried. Before draining, scoop out at least 1½ cups of starchy pasta water and reserve it. Drain the pasta and set aside.

4. **Brown the butter and crisp the sage.** In a wide, deep skillet or straight-sided sauté pan over medium heat, melt the butter. Once melted, add the sage leaves in a single layer. Swirl the pan gently every 15 to 20 seconds. The butter will foam first, then the foam will subside slightly and you'll see the milk solids at the bottom turning golden tan. Watch carefully — this takes 2 to 3 minutes and goes from golden to burnt quickly. When the butter smells nutty and the sage leaves are crisp and deep green (they'll turn slightly translucent at the edges), use a slotted spoon or tongs to transfer the sage leaves to a paper towel. Leave the browned butter in the pan.

5. **Toast the garlic briefly.** Add the smashed garlic cloves to the hot browned butter. Cook for 60 seconds, stirring, until fragrant. Do not let the garlic brown — you're infusing the butter, not cooking the garlic fully. Remove and discard the garlic cloves (or mince them and leave in if you want stronger garlic flavor).

6. **Make the squash purée.** Transfer half of the roasted butternut squash (about 2 cups) to a blender. Add ½ cup of the reserved pasta water. Blend on high until completely smooth — at least 60 seconds. The purée should be silky with no stringy bits. If it looks thick (it will be), that's correct; it loosens when added to the pan.

7. **Build the sauce in the pan.** Pour the squash purée into the skillet with the browned butter. Add the remaining whole roasted squash cubes. Stir to combine over medium heat. Add ¼ cup of pasta water and stir — the sauce will loosen into something that coats the back of a spoon. Add the nutmeg, red pepper flakes if using, and a generous pinch of salt. Taste here: the sauce should be sweet from the squash, nutty from the butter, and lightly seasoned. Adjust salt.

8. **Toss the pasta into the sauce.** Add the drained orecchiette directly to the pan. Use tongs or a wooden spoon to toss, adding pasta water a splash at a time until every piece of pasta is coated and the sauce looks glossy rather than dry or pasty. Add the grated Parmesan and toss again — the cheese will thicken the sauce slightly. The finished pasta should look saucy and cohesive, not clumped or soupy. Add more pasta water if it tightens up.

9. **Taste and finish.** Taste for salt, pepper, and nutmeg — butternut squash is naturally sweet and can handle more salt than you think. Plate the pasta in warmed bowls. Crumble two to three crispy sage leaves over each portion (they'll shatter like chips if crumbled from above) and add an extra grating of Parmesan. Serve immediately — orecchiette absorbs sauce quickly and benefits from being eaten right away.

WHY IT WORKS

Orecchiette (Italian for 'little ears') is a small, cup-shaped pasta from Puglia in southern Italy, roughly 2 centimeters across with a thick center and thinner ruffled edges.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 45

VIRAL HIT

Hasselback Butternut Squash

The TikTok vegetarian showstopper: butternut squash fanned accordion-style with dozens of thin cuts, basted in a nutty maple-sage brown butter until every slit is caramelized and glazed.

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The TikTok vegetarian showstopper: butternut squash fanned accordion-style with dozens of thin cuts, basted in a nutty maple-sage brown butter until every slit is caramelized and glazed.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	55 min	4	Easy	300

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SQUASH

- 2 medium butternut squashes (about 2–2½ lbs each), halved lengthwise and seeds scooped out
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE MAPLE-SAGE BROWN BUTTER GLAZE

- 4 tablespoons (½ stick / 57g) unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (Grade A dark, for stronger maple flavor)
- 8 fresh sage leaves, plus extra for garnish
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or ½ tsp dried)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for sweet heat)
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS

- ¼ cup (30g) toasted pecan halves, roughly chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh pomegranate seeds (or dried cranberries)
- Flaky sea salt for finishing

02 Method

1. **Preheat and prep.** Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 400°F (200°C). Line a rimmed half-sheet pan with parchment paper. Halve each squash lengthwise from top to bottom. Use a large spoon to scoop the seeds and fibrous strings from the round bulb end of each half — scrape clean. Brush the cut surfaces and the flesh of the round cavity with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

2. **First roast (softening stage).** Place the squash halves cut-side DOWN on the prepared baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes until the flesh has softened slightly but the squash is still firm — a paring knife inserted should meet some resistance. Remove from the oven and let the halves cool on the pan for 5 to 10 minutes, until they're cool enough to handle safely. Flip them cut-side UP.

3. **Make the hasselback cuts.** Place one chopstick flat along each long side of a squash half, running parallel to the length of the squash. These are your depth guides. Using a sharp chef's knife, make crosswise cuts straight down through the squash at ¼-inch (6mm) intervals along the entire length, stopping when the blade contacts the chopsticks — the squash must stay connected at the bottom. Space the cuts as evenly as you can; they don't need to be perfect. The squash will begin to fan open slightly. Repeat for all four halves.

4. **Make the brown butter glaze.** In a small light-colored saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Continue cooking, stirring every 30 seconds, as the butter foams, subsides, and then begins to turn golden. Watch closely — once it turns golden, it reaches amber quickly. After 4 to 5 minutes total (from when the butter was solid), the foam will have subsided, the milk solids on the bottom will be amber, and the butter will smell nutty and toasted. Remove from heat immediately. Add the sage leaves directly into the hot butter — they'll sizzle and crisp within 30 seconds. Stir in the maple syrup, thyme, cinnamon, nutmeg, red pepper flakes (if using), and salt. The glaze is ready.

5. **Glaze and second roast.** Brush the glaze liberally over all four squash halves, pressing the brush into the cuts to work the glaze deep into each slit. Use most of the glaze; reserve a few tablespoons for basting. Return the squash to the oven, cut-side UP, at 400°F.

6. **Baste and finish.** Roast for 30 to 35 minutes total in this second stage. Every 10 minutes, open the oven and brush the reserved glaze into the cuts — each basting builds another layer of caramelized sweetness. At the 30-minute mark, test for doneness: a fork or paring knife should slide into the thickest part of the squash with no resistance. The cut edges should be deeply amber, slightly crisped, and caramelized. If they're browning faster than the squash is cooking through, lay a sheet of foil loosely over the top for the final 10 minutes.

7. **Finish and serve.** Remove from the oven. Scatter toasted pecans and pomegranate seeds over the squash while it's still hot. Finish with a pinch of flaky sea salt. Serve directly from the pan, or transfer to a platter. This is best served immediately — the cut edges lose their caramelized texture as the squash cools. For the TikTok feta variation: spread 3–4 oz of whipped baked feta on each serving plate and place a squash half on top, then drizzle with honey.

WHY IT WORKS

Raw butternut squash is very dense and firm, which makes the hasselback cuts difficult and dangerous to execute — the knife can slip on the hard surface.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 46

VIRAL HIT

Mushroom Wellington

Portobello mushrooms nestled in a savory duxelles, wrapped in golden puff pastry — the vegetarian Christmas main that's exploded on TikTok.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Mushroom Wellington

Portobello mushrooms nestled in a savory duxelles, wrapped in golden puff pastry — the vegetarian Christmas main that's exploded on TikTok.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
35 min	30 min	6	Medium	390

01 Ingredients

- 1 lb (454g) cremini or chestnut mushrooms
- 4 large portobello mushroom caps (about 4 inches diameter)
- 2 medium shallots, finely minced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely minced or grated
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves (or ½ tsp dried thyme)
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 cups (60g) baby spinach
- 1 sheet (about 14 oz / 400g) all-butter puff pastry, thawed
- 1 large egg, beaten with 1 tbsp water (for egg wash)
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- Flour for dusting

02 Method

1. **Prep the portobello caps.** Use a spoon to scrape out the dark gills on the underside of each portobello cap — the gills release black liquid when cooked that will bleed into everything and turn your pastry gray. Discard the stems. Pat the caps completely dry with paper towels. Season lightly with salt and pepper on both sides.

2. **Sear the portobellos.** Heat a wide skillet over high heat with 1 tbsp olive oil until shimmering. Sear the portobello caps flat-side down for 2 minutes, flip, and sear another 2 minutes. You're building color and driving out initial moisture — the caps should be slightly shrunk and browned, not soft. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain and cool completely. Once cooled (10 minutes), brush the rounded top of each cap generously with Dijon mustard.

3. **Make the duxelles.** Pulse the cremini mushrooms in a food processor until very finely chopped (small pea-sized pieces) — or mince by hand. In the same skillet over medium heat, melt 2 tbsp butter. Add the shallots and cook 3 minutes until softened. Add the garlic and thyme, cook 1 minute. Add all the chopped mushrooms and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring every 2–3 minutes, for 18–22 FULL minutes until the mushrooms have released all their liquid and the mixture is a dark, dry paste that pulls away from the pan. This is the most important step. Wet duxelles = soggy pastry. Season with black pepper and more salt if needed. Spread on a plate and refrigerate until fully cool, at least 15 minutes.

4. **Wilt the spinach.** In the same skillet over medium-high heat, add the baby spinach and toss 30 seconds until just wilted. Transfer to a clean towel or paper towels and squeeze

firmly to remove every drop of liquid. The squeezed spinach should be a compact dry clump. Chop roughly and let cool.

5. **Roll the pastry.** On a lightly floured surface, roll the thawed puff pastry sheet into a roughly 12x14-inch rectangle (slightly larger than package dimensions). Lay it on a sheet of parchment paper on a baking sheet so you can transfer it easily.

6. **Assemble.** Spread the duxelles across the center of the pastry in a strip roughly 4 inches wide and the length of your portobello caps laid end to end. Scatter the squeezed spinach over the duxelles. Lay the Dijon-coated portobello caps end-to-end, Dijon side down, on top of the filling — the portobellos are the 'fillet.' Fold the long sides of the pastry up and over the mushrooms, overlapping the seam tightly on the underside. Press gently to seal. Fold the short ends under like wrapping a gift. Transfer the Wellington seam-side down on the parchment-lined baking sheet.

7. **Chill.** Brush the top and sides generously with egg wash. Use a sharp knife to score a shallow diagonal pattern or parallel lines across the top (decorative only — don't cut through to the filling). Refrigerate, uncovered, for at least 20 minutes. This firms up the butter in the pastry so it puffs dramatically rather than spreading. Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C) while it chills.

8. **Bake.** Bake at 425°F for 25–30 minutes until the pastry is deeply golden all over — you want an amber, almost-brown crust, not pale gold. A deeply colored crust means fully cooked, flaky layers and no soggy bottom. If it's browning unevenly, rotate the pan once at the 15-minute mark.

9. **Rest before slicing.** Let the Wellington rest on the pan for 10 minutes before cutting. The filling needs time to set so the slices hold their shape. Use a sharp serrated knife and cut with a gentle back-and-forth sawing motion rather than pressing straight down. Each slice should reveal a cross-section of flaky pastry, dark duxelles, green spinach, and meaty portobello.

WHY IT WORKS

A simple red wine reduction or a mushroom gravy made from the portobello stems and scraps.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 47

VIRAL HIT

Wild Rice & Cranberry Stuffed Butternut Squash

The viral TikTok stuffed butternut squash Thanksgiving main — roasted squash halves filled with a savory wild rice stuffing, dried cranberries, toasted pecans, fresh sage, and crumbled goat cheese.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

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The viral TikTok stuffed butternut squash Thanksgiving main — roasted squash halves filled with a savory wild rice stuffing, dried cranberries, toasted pecans, fresh sage, and crumbled goat cheese.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	55 min	4	Medium	480

01 Ingredients

- 2 medium butternut squash (about 2–2½ lbs each), halved lengthwise and seeds scooped out
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 cup wild rice blend (not pure wild rice)
- 2 cups vegetable broth, plus a splash for sautéing
- 1 medium yellow onion, small dice
- 3 stalks celery, small dice
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup pecans, roughly chopped and toasted
- 3 tablespoons fresh sage leaves, thinly sliced (or 1 teaspoon dried, crumbled)
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or ¼ teaspoon dried)
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 3 oz goat cheese, crumbled
- 2 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped, for serving

02 Method

1. **Heat the oven to 400°F.** Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Brush the cut sides of each butternut squash half with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Place cut-side DOWN on the baking sheet — this is important. The cut side resting on the hot pan caramelizes the flesh and concentrates the squash's natural sugars in a way that roasting cut-side up never achieves.

2. **Roast the squash.** Slide the pan into the oven and roast for 40–50 minutes, until a fork slides into the thickest part of the neck with zero resistance and the underside is deep golden-brown. Start checking at 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside. Leave the oven on.

3. **Cook the wild rice blend.** While the squash roasts, combine the wild rice blend and 2 cups of vegetable broth in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, stir once, then reduce to a low simmer, cover, and cook for 30–35 minutes until the liquid is absorbed and the grains are

tender but still have a slight chew. Remove from heat and let steam, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.

4. **Build the stuffing base.** Heat the remaining tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the diced onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, for 6–8 minutes until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute more until fragrant. If the pan looks dry, add a splash of vegetable broth rather than more oil — the skillet will pick up flavor from the fond.

5. **Combine the stuffing.** Add the cooked wild rice blend to the skillet. Stir in the dried cranberries, toasted pecans, sliced sage, and thyme. Pour in the maple syrup and apple cider vinegar. Toss everything together over medium heat for 2 minutes so the maple syrup and vinegar glaze the rice lightly. Taste and season with salt and pepper — the filling should be savory-sweet, with a clear cranberry tartness.

6. **Fill the squash.** Use a large spoon to press the filling into each squash cavity, mounding it slightly above the rim. Don't be shy — pack it in. Scatter the crumbled goat cheese evenly over the tops of all four halves.

7. **Final bake.** Return the stuffed squash to the oven (still at 400°F) and bake for 10–12 minutes until the goat cheese is warm and slightly softened, and the tops of the filling start to show a little color.

8. **Serve.** Transfer each squash half to a plate or a platter. Scatter fresh parsley over the top. Serve immediately — the squash holds heat well and can sit for 5–10 minutes without cooling off significantly.

WHY IT WORKS

A wild rice blend (usually wild rice + long-grain brown or white rice) is the better choice over pure wild rice for this recipe. Pure wild rice takes 50–60 minutes to cook and ends up with a very chewy, earthy texture that can overwhelm the squash.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 48

VIRAL HIT

Whole Roasted Cauliflower

The TikTok vegetarian showstopper: a whole head of cauliflower poached, coated in a Moroccan spice rub, and roasted until deeply caramelized gold, then drizzled with lemon tahini and served tableside like a roast.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

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The TikTok vegetarian showstopper: a whole head of cauliflower poached, coated in a Moroccan spice rub, and roasted until deeply caramelized gold, then drizzled with lemon tahini and served tableside like a roast.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	45 min	4	Easy	240

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CAULIFLOWER

- 1 large head cauliflower (about 2 lbs / 900g), outer leaves removed, stem trimmed flat
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt (for the poaching water — use more than you think)

FOR THE MOROCCAN SPICE PASTE

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced or grated
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional, for gentle heat)

FOR THE LEMON TAHINI DRIZZLE

- ¼ cup (60g) tahini (stir well before measuring)
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (about 1 large lemon)
- 2 tablespoons cold water, plus more if needed
- 1 small clove garlic, grated
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

TO FINISH

- 3 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- 3 tablespoons pomegranate seeds (or substitute chopped toasted almonds)
- Flaky sea salt

02 Method

1. **Prep the cauliflower.** Remove the outer leaves from the cauliflower. Trim the stem with a flat cut so the head sits level on a flat surface without rocking — this matters for roasting. Keep the stem itself intact; it helps hold the head together and adds to the centerpiece look. Pat the head dry if it's been stored in a bag.

2. **Poach the cauliflower.** Fill a large pot (at least 6 quarts) with water, add 1 tablespoon of kosher salt, and bring to a rolling boil. Lower the cauliflower stem-side down into the water — it should be fully submerged; weigh it down with a heat-proof plate or lid if it bobs. Cook at a steady boil for 12 minutes. Test at the 12-minute mark: insert a thin skewer or paring knife into the center of the head through the stem. It should meet moderate resistance — tender but not soft. Add 2 to 3 more minutes if needed.

3. **Rest and dry.** Lift the cauliflower out of the water using two large spoons or a spider strainer, holding it stem-side up briefly so water drains from the cavity. Place it right-side-up on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Let it rest for at least 10 minutes

— the surface needs to be fully dry before you apply the spice paste, or the paste won't adhere and will slide off. You'll see steam escaping as it rests; that's exactly what you want.

4. **Make the spice paste.** While the cauliflower rests, preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Stir together the olive oil, smoked paprika, cumin, coriander, turmeric, minced garlic, salt, pepper, and cayenne (if using) in a small bowl until uniform. It should be a thick, fragrant paste.

5. **Coat the cauliflower.** Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the dried cauliflower on it stem-side down. Using a pastry brush or your hands (hands work better — they let you push paste into crevices), coat the entire surface of the cauliflower with the spice paste. Work it between the florets, into the crevices at the top, and over the stem. Don't be shy — you want a complete, even coating with no pale patches.

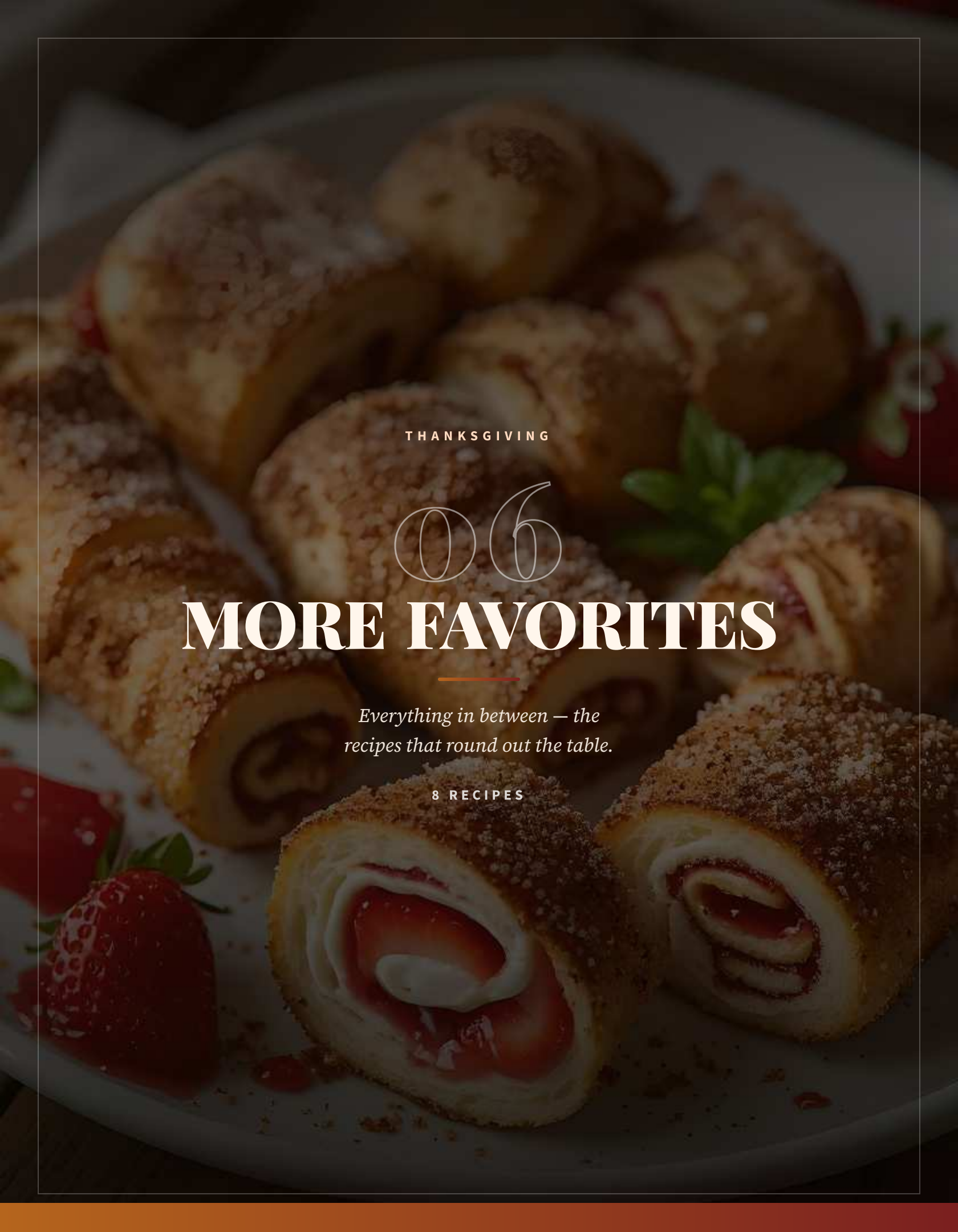
6. **Roast.** Transfer the baking sheet to the oven. Roast for 30 to 35 minutes, checking at the 25-minute mark. The cauliflower is done when the floret tips and the upper surface are deeply golden to dark amber — the highest parts should be approaching char without being burnt, and the interior, probed with a skewer, should offer no resistance at all. The caramelization is the point: don't pull it too early.

7. **Make the tahini drizzle.** While the cauliflower roasts, whisk together the tahini, lemon juice, water, grated garlic, and salt in a bowl. It will seize initially — keep whisking and it will smooth out to a pourable, creamy consistency. Adjust with additional water (one teaspoon at a time) until it drizzles easily. Taste and adjust salt and lemon.

8. **Serve.** Transfer the whole roasted cauliflower to a serving plate or wooden board — use two large spatulas or spoons and handle it gently, as the stem connection point is the weakest part. Drizzle the tahini sauce generously over the top so it runs down the sides. Scatter fresh parsley and pomegranate seeds over everything. Finish with a pinch of flaky sea salt. Bring it to the table whole, then slice it from the top like a cake, cutting through into wedges or slabs. Serve each wedge on a plate with extra tahini alongside.

WHY IT WORKS

Cauliflower is dense. In a 425°F oven, the outside would blister and char before the core ever reached the internal temperature needed to become tender — you'd get a burnt shell around a raw center.



THANKSGIVING

06

MORE FAVORITES

Everything in between — the recipes that round out the table.

8 RECIPES



№ 49

CHEF-INSPIRED

Lobster Mac and Cheese

Emeril Lagasse's signature lobster mac and cheese from his Table 10 restaurant at The Palazzo in Las Vegas — a silky white cheddar béchamel kicked up with Creole seasoning, loaded with chunks of lobster.

CHEF-INSPIRED · COPYCAT

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Emeril Lagasse's signature lobster mac and cheese from his Table 10 restaurant at The Palazzo in Las Vegas — a silky white cheddar béchamel kicked up with Creole seasoning, loaded with chunks of lobster.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	35 min	6	Intermediate	850

01 Ingredients

CHEESE SAUCE

- 4 tablespoons (57g) unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons (30g) all-purpose flour
- 2 cups (480ml) whole milk
- 1½ cups (360ml) heavy cream
- 12 oz (340g) sharp white cheddar, freshly grated on the large holes — divided: 8 oz for the sauce, 4 oz for mixing in
- 1 teaspoon Emeril's Creole Essence (see our recipe), or ½ tsp smoked paprika + ¼ tsp cayenne + ¼ tsp garlic powder
- Kosher salt and white pepper, to taste

FOR THE MAC

- 12 oz (340g) elbow macaroni
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter (for the pasta)
- 1 lb (450g) cooked cold-water lobster meat, roughly chopped into ¾-inch pieces (from about 4 five-oz tails, or 2 live 1½-lb lobsters)

BREADCRUMB TOPPING

- ½ cup (40g) panko breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup (25g) freshly grated Parmesan
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

02 Method

1. **Prep the oven and baking dish.** Preheat your oven to 400°F (205°C). Lightly butter the inside of a 9×13-inch baking dish and set it on the counter. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a rolling boil.

2. **Undercook the pasta.** Cook the elbow macaroni 2 minutes short of the package's al dente time — the pasta should still have a chalky, firm center; it finishes cooking in the sauce in the oven. Drain well and immediately toss with 1 tablespoon of butter to prevent clumping. Set aside.

3. **Build the roux.** Melt 4 tablespoons of butter in a heavy 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour all at once and whisk constantly for 2 full minutes. The roux should smell faintly nutty and turn just barely golden at the edges — this cooks out the raw flour flavor.

4. **Make the béchamel.** Stream in the whole milk in a slow, thin pour while whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Once the milk is fully incorporated, add the heavy cream the same way. Continue whisking over medium heat for 5–7 minutes until

the sauce thickens and coats the back of a spoon — a line drawn across the spoon's back should hold its shape.

5. **Add the cheese and seasoning.** Remove the saucepan from heat. Stir in 8 oz of the grated white cheddar in three separate additions, waiting until each addition is fully melted before adding the next. Add the Creole Essence (or the paprika-cayenne-garlic substitute), kosher salt, and white pepper. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning — it should be well seasoned, since the pasta and lobster dilute it once combined.

6. **Combine and transfer.** Add the drained pasta and chopped lobster to the saucepan (or pour the sauce over them in a large bowl). Fold gently until every piece of pasta is coated. Stir in the remaining 4 oz of white cheddar. The mixture should look loose and saucy — it stiffens in the oven. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and spread into an even layer.

7. **Make and add the topping.** In a small bowl, toss the panko with the melted butter until every crumb is coated. Stir in the Parmesan. Scatter the topping evenly over the casserole, covering the surface completely.

8. **Bake and rest.** Bake at 400°F for 20–25 minutes, until the sauce is visibly bubbling around the edges and the breadcrumb topping is deep golden brown. Remove from the oven and rest for 5 minutes before serving — the sauce continues to set slightly as it cools, and the lobster retains heat for several minutes.

WHY IT WORKS

A béchamel built on a roux tolerates temperature swings better than a straight cream reduction.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 50

PANERA BREAD

Panera Three-Cheese Lasagna Soup

Make Panera's new fall 2026 Three-Cheese Lasagna Soup at home — Italian sausage and lasagna ribbons in a ricotta-tomato broth, finished with parmesan and topped with shaved asiago. Ready in 45 minutes and better than the original.

PANERA BREAD · COPYCAT

Panera Three-Cheese Lasagna Soup

Make Panera's new fall 2026 Three-Cheese Lasagna Soup at home — Italian sausage and lasagna ribbons in a ricotta-tomato broth, finished with parmesan and topped with shaved asiago. Ready in 45 minutes and better than the original.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	30 min	6	Medium	460

01 Ingredients

- 1 lb Italian sausage, casings removed (sweet or hot)
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes
- 1 can (14½ oz) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 8 oz lasagna noodles, broken into rough 2-inch pieces
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
- 1 tsp dried Italian seasoning
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- ½ cup shaved or shredded Asiago cheese, for serving
- Fresh basil leaves, for serving (optional)

WHY IT WORKS

The ricotta wasn't tempered, or the soup boiled after the ricotta went in. Cold ricotta hitting a rolling boil seizes into small chalky curds.

02 Method

1. **Brown the sausage in large chunks.** Heat a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and break it into 4 or 5 large pieces rather than crumbling it fine. Brown undisturbed for 3-4 minutes per side until deeply caramelized on the outside, then break into bite-sized chunks. Remove sausage with a slotted spoon and set aside. Leave the rendered fat in the pot.

2. **Soften the aromatics.** Reduce heat to medium. Add the diced onion to the sausage fat and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until softened and beginning to turn golden. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook 1 minute more until fragrant.

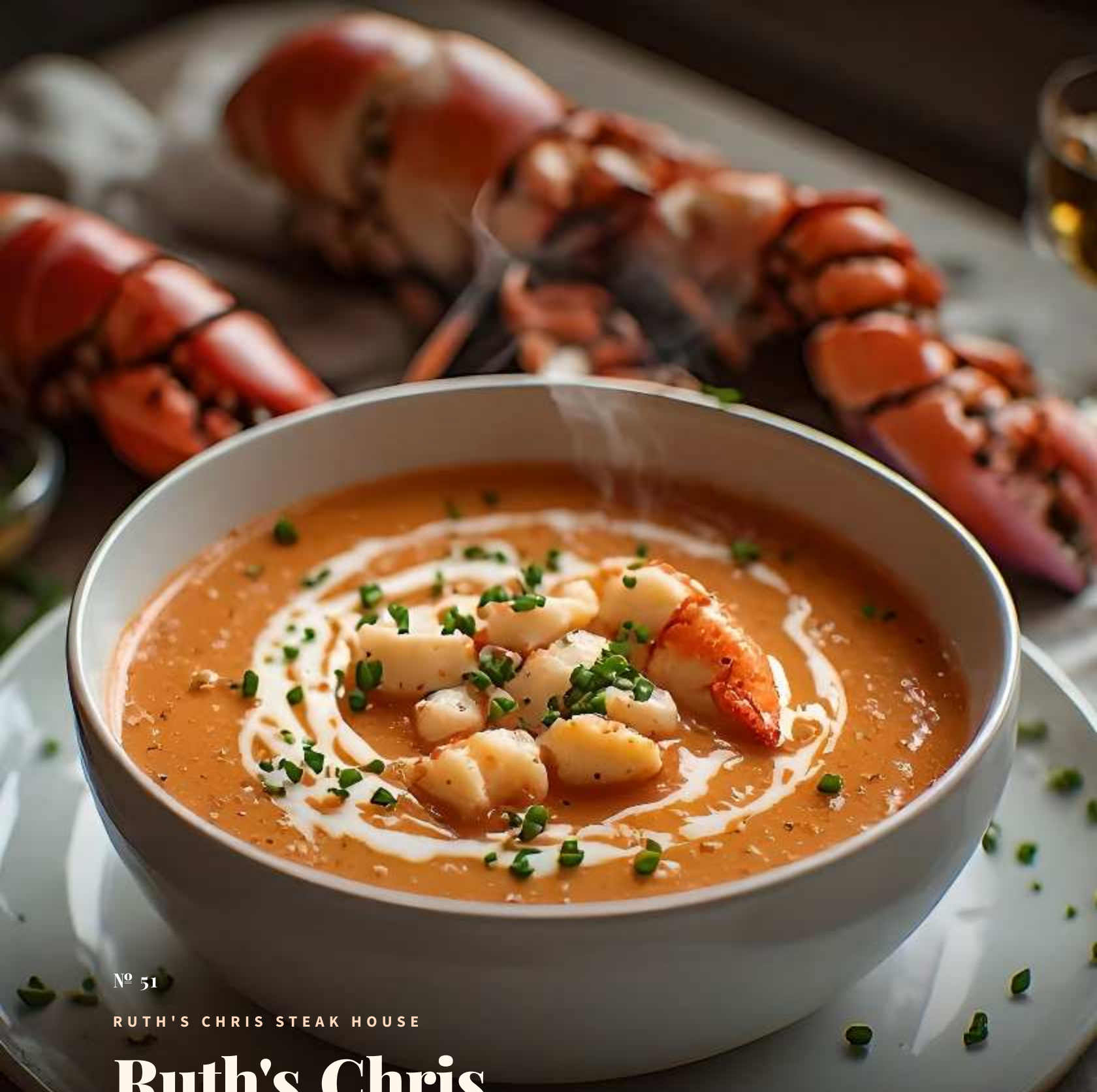
3. **Build the tomato broth.** Add the crushed tomatoes, diced tomatoes, chicken broth, and Italian seasoning. Stir to combine. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot.

4. **Whisk in the ricotta.** Reduce heat to a steady simmer. Add the ricotta to a small bowl and ladle in about ½ cup of the hot broth. Whisk until smooth, then pour the ricotta mixture back into the pot and stir to incorporate. This tempers the ricotta so it blends into the broth rather than curdling. The soup will turn from red-orange to a softer, rose-cream color.

5. **Add the sausage back and cook the pasta.** Return the browned sausage chunks to the pot. Add the broken lasagna noodles and stir to submerge. Simmer over medium heat, stirring every few minutes to prevent the pasta from sticking to the bottom, for 12-15 minutes until the noodles are just al dente.

6. **Finish with Parmesan.** Reduce heat to low. Stir in the grated Parmesan and taste for salt and pepper. The sausage and Parmesan bring significant salt — you may not need much.

7. **Serve immediately.** Ladle into bowls and top each with a generous mound of shaved Asiago and a few fresh basil leaves. Serve with crusty bread for dipping.



№ 51

RUTH'S CHRIS STEAK HOUSE

Ruth's Chris Lobster Bisque

Make Ruth's Chris Lobster Bisque at home — the steakhouse's velvety cream soup built on a homemade lobster shell stock, finished with sherry and brandy. Costs about $6 per bowl versus $22–26 at the restaurant.

RUTH'S CHRIS STEAK HOUSE · COPYCAT

Ruth's Chris Lobster Bisque

Make Ruth's Chris Lobster Bisque at home — the steakhouse's velvety cream soup built on a homemade lobster shell stock, finished with sherry and brandy. Costs about $6 per bowl versus $22–26 at the restaurant.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	50 min	6	Intermediate	345

01 Ingredients

FOR THE LOBSTER STOCK

- 2 lobster tails (about 10 oz each, ~1¼ lb total), shell on — or 12 oz cooked lobster meat + 1 bottle clam juice
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, rough chopped
- 2 celery stalks, rough chopped
- 1 carrot, rough chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 4 cups water
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 fresh thyme sprigs
- ½ tsp black peppercorns

FOR THE BISQUE

- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- 1 medium carrot, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 3 tbsp brandy
- 3 tbsp dry sherry (not cooking sherry)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ tsp Old Bay seasoning
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp kosher salt, plus more to taste
- ¼ tsp white pepper

TO FINISH

- Reserved lobster meat, cut into bite-sized chunks
- 2 tbsp fresh chives, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- Extra sherry (optional, for the bowl)

02 Method

1. **Cook and shell the lobster.** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the lobster tails and cook for 7–8 minutes until the shells are bright red and the meat is just cooked through. Transfer to a bowl of ice water for 2 minutes to stop cooking. Remove the meat from the shells, cut into 1-inch chunks, and refrigerate covered. Reserve the shells.

2. **Make the shell stock.** Preheat your oven to 400°F. Spread the lobster shells on a rimmed baking sheet and roast for 10–12 minutes until fragrant and lightly darkened at the edges. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the rough-chopped onion, celery, and carrot; cook for 4 minutes. Add the smashed garlic and cook 1 minute

more. Stir in 1 tbsp tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes. Add the roasted shells, water, bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer and cook for 25 minutes. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer, pressing firmly on the solids. You should have about 3 cups of stock. Discard the solids.

3. **Build the bisque base.** In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, melt 4 tbsp butter over medium heat. Add the finely diced onion, celery, and carrot. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 minutes until softened and translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in 2 tbsp tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes until it darkens slightly to a brick-red color.

4. **Add the flour.** Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir to coat. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly, to remove the raw flour taste. The mixture will look dry and thick.

5. **Flambé the brandy.** Add the brandy to the pot. Stand back and tilt the pot to catch a flame (or use a long lighter), letting it burn off for 10–15 seconds. If you prefer not to flambé, just simmer the brandy for 3 minutes to cook off the alcohol.

6. **Add the stock.** Gradually whisk the lobster shell stock into the pot, one cup at a time, whisking after each addition to prevent lumps. Bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the bisque thickens enough to coat a spoon.

7. **Blend smooth.** Remove from heat. Use an immersion blender to blend the bisque directly in the pot until completely smooth — about 1 minute. Alternatively, transfer in batches to a standing blender (fill no more than half full; cover the lid with a folded towel to prevent steam burns).

8. **Finish with cream and sherry.** Return the pot to low heat. Stir in the heavy cream, Old Bay, cayenne, paprika, salt, and white pepper. Add the sherry. Simmer very gently for 5 minutes — do not boil after the cream is in. Taste and adjust seasoning. The bisque should be silky and rich; if it is too thick, thin with a splash of cream or warm water.

9. **Add the lobster and serve.** Stir 1 tbsp butter into the bisque for a final gloss. Add the reserved lobster chunks and heat for 2–3 minutes until warmed through. Ladle into warmed bowls. Garnish with sliced chives and a small drizzle of sherry if desired.

WHY IT WORKS

A dry or medium-dry sherry works best — Manzanilla or Fino for dry, Amontillado for a slightly richer version.



№ 52

STARBUCKS

Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins

Make Starbucks Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins at home — the giant bakery-style domed muffin with a spiced pumpkin base, hidden cream cheese center, and crunchy pepita topping. A dozen for under $8 instead of $4+ each.

STARBUCKS · COPYCAT

Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins

Make Starbucks Pumpkin Cream Cheese Muffins at home — the giant bakery-style domed muffin with a spiced pumpkin base, hidden cream cheese center, and crunchy pepita topping. A dozen for under $8 instead of $4+ each.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	25 min	12 muffins	Easy	335

01 Ingredients

FOR THE MUFFIN BATTER

- 2 cups (250g) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1¼ cups (250g) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (120ml) neutral oil (vegetable, canola, or avocado)
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (240g) pure pumpkin puree (NOT pumpkin pie filling)
- ⅓ cup (80g) full-fat sour cream or plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE FILLING

- 8 oz (225g) full-fat cream cheese, room temperature
- ⅓ cup (40g) powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

FOR THE TOPPING

- 3 tablespoons raw pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- ¼ teaspoon flaky sea salt or fine kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon neutral oil

02 Method

1. **Make the cream cheese filling first.** Beat the room-temperature cream cheese on medium speed until completely smooth and lump-free, 2–3 minutes. Add the sifted powdered sugar, vanilla, and flour. Mix on low until incorporated, then beat on medium until the mixture is thick and smooth. Transfer to a small bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (or freeze for 15 minutes). The filling must be cold and firm before it goes into the batter.

2. **Preheat and prep the pan.** Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a standard 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners, or grease the cups generously with butter or cooking spray. If you want maximum dome height, skip the liners and grease the pan directly — the heat transfers faster without a paper barrier.

3. **Mix the dry ingredients.** In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, pumpkin pie spice, and cinnamon until fully combined. Set aside.

4. **Mix the wet ingredients.** In a large bowl, whisk the sugar and oil together until uniform. Add the eggs one at a time, whisking well after each. Add the pumpkin puree, sour cream, and vanilla. Whisk until the mixture is smooth and a deep orange-brown color.

5. **Combine batter — do not overmix.** Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients all at once. Fold with a rubber spatula, using broad strokes from the bottom of the bowl upward, just until no dry streaks remain. The batter should look thick and slightly lumpy — this is correct. Do not beat or stir vigorously. Overmixing is the single most common muffin mistake.

6. **Fill and add the cream cheese layer.** Fill each muffin cup about one-third full of batter (roughly 2 tablespoons). Remove the chilled cream cheese filling from the refrigerator. Scoop approximately 1 heaped tablespoon of filling and place it directly in the center of the batter in each cup — it should sit in the middle without touching the sides. Spoon the remaining batter over the top of each muffin, covering the cream cheese completely and filling each cup to about ¾ full.

7. **Top with pepitas.** In a small bowl, toss the pepitas with the oil and salt. Scatter 6–8 pepitas across the top of each muffin and press them very lightly into the surface so they don't roll off.

8. **Bake to a golden dome.** Bake at 375°F for 22–26 minutes, until the tops are golden-brown and set, and a toothpick inserted into the muffin's crumb (not the cream cheese center) comes out with only a few dry crumbs. The tops should be firm to a light touch. If the pepitas start to get very dark before the muffins are done, tent loosely with foil for the final few minutes.

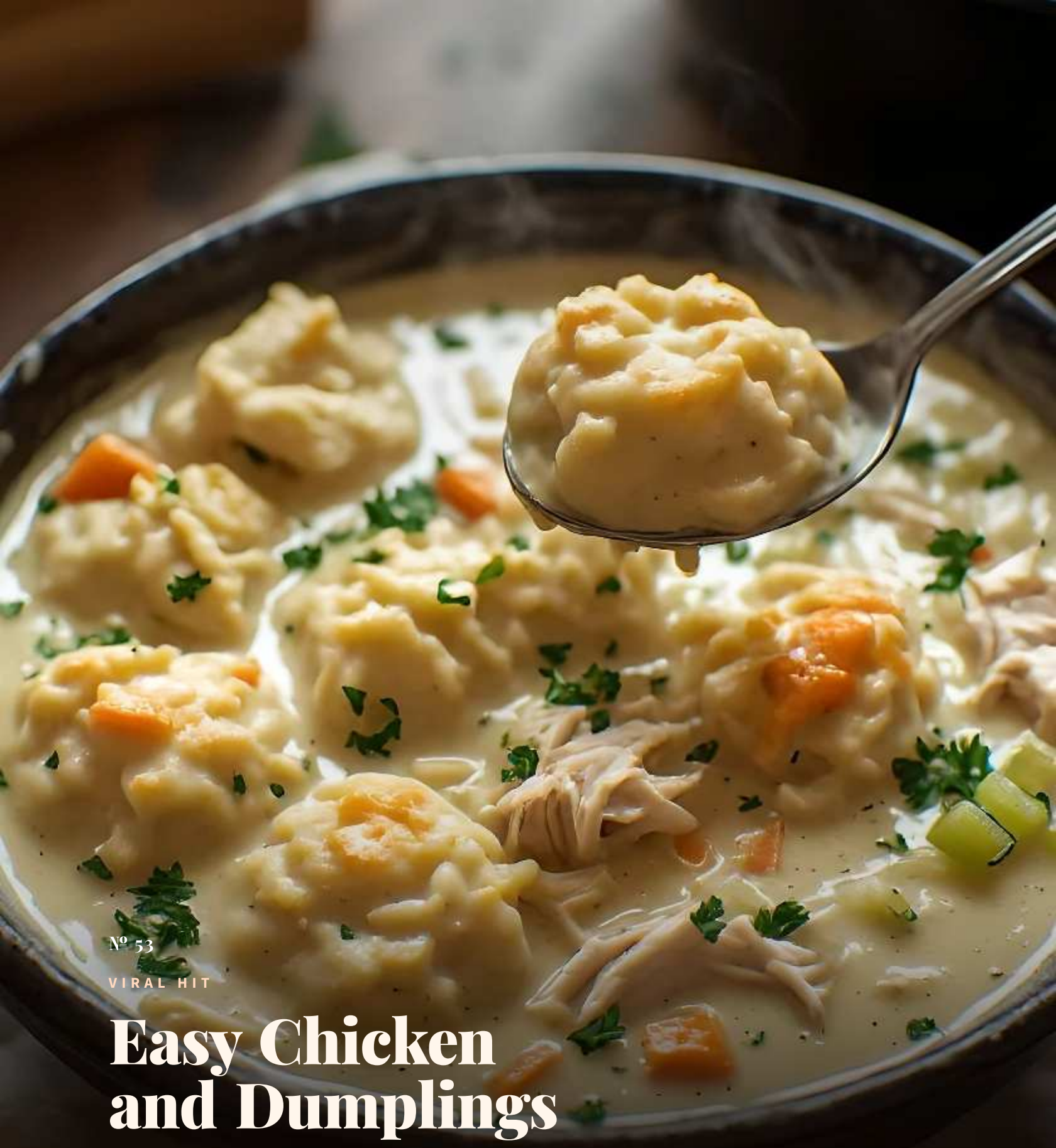
9. **Cool before eating.** Let the muffins rest in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack. The cream cheese center will be very hot immediately out of the oven — let them cool for at least 15 minutes before eating. The filling firms to a smooth, creamy center as it cools. Eating too soon is fine but the filling will be thin and pourable rather than creamy-set.

10. **Serve and store.** Serve warm or at room temperature. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days, or refrigerate for up to 5 days. The muffins taste slightly better on day 2 as the spices deepen.

WHY IT WORKS

Pumpkin puree (Libby's 100% Pure Pumpkin or any similar product) is just cooked, pureed pumpkin — no added sugar, no spices, just squash.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 53

VIRAL HIT

Easy Chicken and Dumplings

The viral TikTok chicken and dumplings shortcut: rotisserie chicken and quartered Grands biscuits as dumplings, ready in 35 minutes. Fluffier than the flat homemade kind.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Easy Chicken and Dumplings

The viral TikTok chicken and dumplings shortcut: rotisserie chicken and quartered Grands biscuits as dumplings, ready in 35 minutes. Fluffier than the flat homemade kind.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	25 min	6	Easy	490

01 Ingredients

- 1 rotisserie chicken (about 3 cups shredded meat)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced small
- 3 stalks celery, sliced ¼-inch thick
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced ¼-inch thick
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cans (10½ oz each) cream of chicken soup
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- Black pepper to taste
- Kosher salt to taste
- 1 can (16.3 oz) Pillsbury Grands Original biscuits (8 biscuits)
- ¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped (for finishing)

02 Method

1. **Pull the rotisserie chicken.** Remove all the meat from the chicken and shred it into large, irregular pieces with your fingers. Larger chunks hold up better in the soup than fine shreds — they stay tender instead of stringy. You should have about 3 cups of meat. Discard the skin or save for another use.

2. **Sauté the aromatics.** Melt butter in a large Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium heat. Add onion, celery, and carrot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent and the celery softens slightly, about 5 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook 1 minute more, stirring constantly so it doesn't brown.

3. **Build the broth.** Pour in both cans of cream of chicken soup and all 4 cups of chicken broth. Stir until the cream soup fully dissolves into the broth — use the back of a spoon to press out any lumps against the side of the pot. Add the shredded chicken, thyme, onion powder, garlic powder, and a few grinds of black pepper. Taste the broth and add kosher salt as needed — the cream soup and broth vary in sodium content, so taste before adding salt. Bring to a steady simmer over medium-high heat.

4. **Cut and drop the biscuits.** Open the biscuit can and separate all 8 biscuits on a cutting board. Cut each biscuit into 4 roughly equal pieces by slicing in half

one way and then the other — you don't need clean cuts, rustic is fine. Working quickly, drop the pieces one at a time into the simmering soup, distributing them across the surface of the pot so they don't stack up in one spot. They will sink slightly and the soup will pool over them — that is correct.

5 **Cover and cook undisturbed.** Immediately place the lid on the pot and reduce the heat to low. Set a timer for 12 minutes. Do not lift the lid during this time. The steam trapped inside is what cooks the dumplings through and creates that puffy, fluffy interior. Lifting the lid drops the steam and produces dense, gummy dumplings. After 12 minutes, insert a toothpick into the center of the thickest dumpling. It should come out clean. If it looks wet or sticky, replace the lid and cook 2 more minutes.

6 **Finish and serve.** Once the dumplings are cooked through, remove the lid and gently stir the pot just once or twice to redistribute. The broth will have thickened from the biscuit starch releasing during cooking. If it's thicker than you want, stir in a splash of additional chicken broth. Taste and adjust seasoning. Ladle into wide shallow bowls — each serving should get 4 to 5 dumpling pieces plus plenty of the chicken and vegetables. Finish with fresh parsley.

WHY IT WORKS

Cracker Barrel's chicken and dumplings use flat, hand-rolled dumplings — essentially thin pasta strips made from flour, fat, and broth, rolled and cut by hand, cooked directly in the broth.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 54

VIRAL HIT

Charred Corn Chowder

The viral TikTok charred corn chowder that proves frozen corn beats fresh: char it dry in a cast-iron to unlock deep smoky-sweet flavor, then blend a third of the soup for natural creaminess — no flour, no glue.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Charred Corn Chowder

The viral TikTok charred corn chowder that proves frozen corn beats fresh: char it dry in a cast-iron to unlock deep smoky-sweet flavor, then blend a third of the soup for natural creaminess — no flour, no glue.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	30 min	4	Easy	385

01 Ingredients

CHARRED CORN

- 3 cups frozen corn kernels — or fresh off the cob (frozen works better for charring; more on this below)

SOUP BASE

- 4 strips thick-cut bacon, cut into ½-inch lardons (bite-size pieces)
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced (about 1½ cups)
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced (adds sweetness and color; sub 1 more celery stalk if needed)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper — or to taste

BROTH AND BODY

- 2 medium Yukon Gold potatoes (about 1 lb), cut into ½-inch dice
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ¾ cup heavy cream — or full-fat canned coconut milk for dairy-free

GARNISH

- Reserved crispy bacon lardons
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- ½ cup shredded sharp cheddar (or smoked cheddar)
- Hot sauce — Tabasco or Crystal
- Flaky salt

02 Method

1. **Char the corn — don't skip this step.** Heat a dry cast-iron skillet (or heavy stainless pan) over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes until it just begins to smoke. Add the corn in a single layer — no oil, no butter, nothing. Walk away for 3 to 4 minutes. The corn should develop deep char marks and a slightly smoky, sweet aroma. Toss once, let it sit another 60 seconds, then transfer to a bowl. It will steam and shrink slightly; this is normal. The dry charring in a screaming-hot pan triggers the Maillard reaction, transforming frozen corn's flat sweetness into a deeply caramelized, almost smoky flavor. This is the step that makes TikTok corn chowder different from every other version.

2. **Render the bacon.** Add the bacon lardons to a Dutch oven or large heavy pot over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 7 minutes until the fat has rendered and the pieces are crispy and dark golden — not just lightly pink. The rendered fat carries more flavor than butter or oil; do not drain it. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and set aside on a paper towel. Leave 2 tablespoons of

bacon fat in the pot. If your bacon is very lean, add a tablespoon of butter to make up the difference.

3. **Soften the aromatics.** Reduce heat to medium. Add the onion, celery, and red bell pepper. Season with a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until the vegetables are soft and the onion is translucent. The salt draws moisture out of the vegetables, speeding up softening and preventing sticking.

4. **Add garlic and bloom the spices.** Add the minced garlic, smoked paprika, dried thyme, and cayenne directly to the pot. Stir constantly for 60 seconds. The spices should smell warm and toasted — this blooms their fat-soluble compounds into the bacon fat, distributing flavor evenly through the finished soup. Spices added to liquid taste flat by comparison.

5. **Add the potatoes, corn, and broth.** Add the diced potatoes, the charred corn (reserve ¼ cup for garnish if you like), and the chicken broth. Stir to combine. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to a steady simmer. Cook uncovered for 12 to 15 minutes until the potatoes are completely tender and a fork meets no resistance.

6. **Blend a third of the soup — the natural thickener.** Use a ladle to transfer 2 cups of the soup (potatoes, corn, and broth) to a blender. Remove the center plug from the lid and cover the opening with a folded kitchen towel to let steam escape — do not seal a hot blender. Blend smooth, then stir the purée back into the pot. Alternatively, use an immersion blender directly in the pot and pulse 8 to 10 times — you want mostly whole pieces with a thick, creamy-looking broth. Do not over-blend; you are thickening, not pureeing. This technique gives the chowder a creamy, substantial body without flour (which makes chowder gluey) or an enormous amount of cream.

7. **Add the cream and season aggressively.** Stir in the heavy cream or coconut milk. Simmer gently for 3 more minutes — do not boil after adding cream. Taste. Add salt until the soup tastes deeply savory, not bland. Corn chowder needs more seasoning than you expect because corn's natural sweetness mutes saltiness. Adjust cayenne if you want more heat. Add a squeeze of hot sauce directly into the pot if it tastes flat.

8. **Serve with the full garnish.** Ladle into bowls. Top each bowl with the reserved crispy bacon, a scattering of sliced scallions, a pinch of shredded cheddar, and a few dashes of hot sauce. A reserved handful of charred corn on top is a nice visual signal of the technique. Finish with flaky salt. Serve immediately — the chowder is at its best right out of the pot.

WHY IT WORKS

Frozen corn has lower moisture content than fresh because the cell walls partially break down during freezing. When you add frozen corn to a hot dry pan, the surface moisture evaporates almost instantly and charring begins within a minute or two.



№ 55

VIRAL HIT

Crème Brûlée French Toast Casserole

The viral TikTok crème brûlée french toast casserole — brown sugar caramel goes on the bottom of the dish, thick brioche soaks overnight in vanilla custard, and when you bake and flip it, the caramel cascades over every slice.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

Crème Brûlée French Toast Casserole

The viral TikTok crème brûlée french toast casserole — brown sugar caramel goes on the bottom of the dish, thick brioche soaks overnight in vanilla custard, and when you bake and flip it, the caramel cascades over every slice.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	45 min	8	Easy	390

01 Ingredients

CARAMEL BASE

- 6 tablespoons (85g) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 cup (220g) packed dark brown sugar — dark gives deeper caramel flavor than light; either works
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup — keeps the caramel smooth and prevents crystallization

BREAD

- 1 loaf (about 450g / 1 lb) brioche, sliced 1 inch thick — day-old brioche is ideal; challah is a great substitute

CUSTARD

- 6 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1½ cups whole milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (or 2 tbsp granulated sugar)
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

TO SERVE

- Powdered sugar, for dusting
- Fresh berries or sliced bananas (optional)

02 Method

1. **Make the caramel base.** Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Place the butter pieces in a 9×13-inch baking dish and set it in the oven for 3–4 minutes until the butter is fully melted. Remove the dish from the oven (carefully — it's hot). Add the brown sugar and corn syrup directly to the melted butter and stir with a spatula until combined into a thick, grainy paste. It won't look smooth — that's correct. Spread the mixture evenly across the bottom of the dish in a single layer.

2. **Lay in the bread.** Arrange the brioche slices in a single layer directly on top of the caramel base, overlapping slightly if needed to fit them all in. Press each slice down firmly so the bottom surface makes full contact with the caramel. If your slices are very thick, you can do a second layer — just make sure the bottom layer is fully in contact with the caramel.

3. **Make the custard.** In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, whole milk, heavy cream, maple syrup, vanilla extract, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt until fully combined and slightly frothy — about 60 seconds of active whisking. The custard should be uniformly yellow with no streaks of white egg.

4. **Pour and press.** Pour the custard slowly and evenly over the bread, working in a back-and-forth pattern to distribute it. After pouring, press each slice of bread down firmly with a spatula or your hands (clean hands work well

here) so it's submerged in the custard and in contact with the caramel below. Some caramel will ooze up the sides — that's normal and correct.

5. **Refrigerate overnight.** Cover the dish tightly with plastic wrap (or foil) and refrigerate for at least 8 hours, up to 12. The bread will absorb nearly all the custard by morning and the dish will look compact and custardy. Do not skip the overnight soak — 1 or 2 hours is not enough for the custard to fully penetrate thick brioche.

6. **Bring to room temperature.** Remove the dish from the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. This prevents the cold glass from cracking in the hot oven and helps the casserole cook more evenly in the center.

7. **Bake uncovered.** Bake at 350°F for 40–45 minutes. The bread will puff up significantly and turn deep golden on top. The edges should be visibly bubbling with caramel. The center is done when it feels set — a gentle jiggle should show only a slight wobble, not a liquid slosh. If the top is browning too fast after 30 minutes, tent loosely with foil for the last 10–15 minutes.

8. **Rest for 5 minutes.** This is essential: if you flip the casserole immediately out of the oven, the caramel (which is molten hot) splashes and the bread falls apart. Five minutes of rest lets the caramel thicken slightly and the bread structure firm up.

9. **Flip onto a serving platter.** Run a thin spatula or butter knife around all four edges of the casserole to loosen it. Place a large rimmed serving platter — the rims matter, because caramel will run — face-down on top of the baking dish. Grip both the dish and platter firmly together (use oven mitts), and flip in one confident motion. Lift off the baking dish. The caramelized bottom is now on top, glistening amber, with the bread arranged below it. Dust generously with powdered sugar and add fresh fruit if using. Serve immediately while the caramel is warm and flowing.

WHY IT WORKS

Corn syrup prevents the caramel from crystallizing. During the overnight rest in the refrigerator, the brown sugar caramel base chills and solidifies — without corn syrup it can crystallize into a grainy, dry layer that never re-melts smoothly during baking.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 56

VIRAL HIT

French Toast Roll-Ups

The viral TikTok French toast roll-ups — sandwich bread flattened thin, filled with cream cheese and strawberry jam, rolled up, dipped in egg custard, pan-fried in butter, and coated in cinnamon sugar. Ready in 20 minutes.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

French Toast Roll-Ups

The viral TikTok French toast roll-ups — sandwich bread flattened thin, filled with cream cheese and strawberry jam, rolled up, dipped in egg custard, pan-fried in butter, and coated in cinnamon sugar. Ready in 20 minutes.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	10 min	12 roll-ups	Easy	420

01 Ingredients

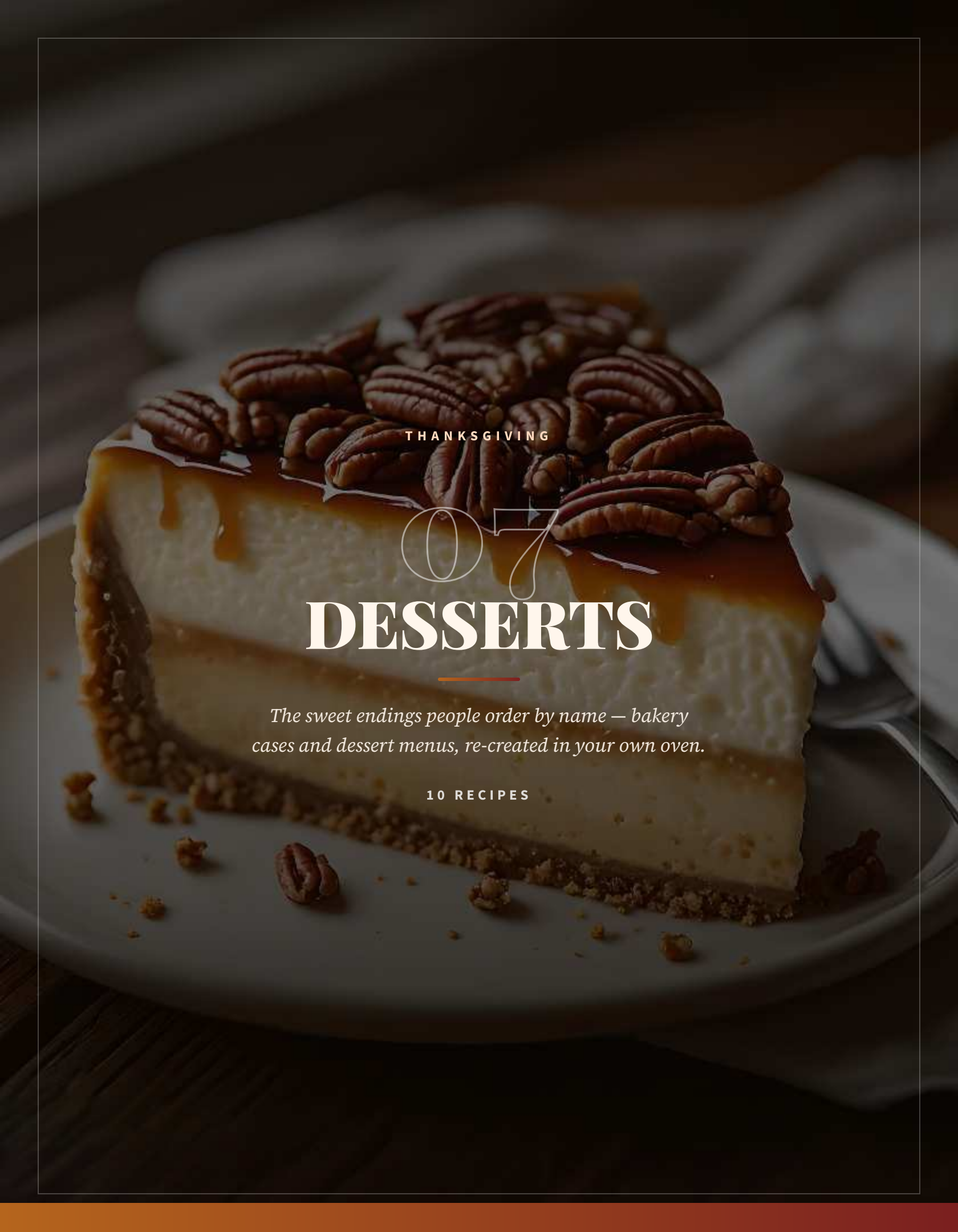
- 12 slices white sandwich bread (thin-sliced), crusts removed
- 4 oz (½ block) cream cheese, softened
- ⅓ cup strawberry jam (or strawberry preserves)
- 3 large eggs
- 3 tbsp whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon (in custard)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, divided (more as needed)
- **Cinnamon sugar coating:** ½ cup granulated sugar + 1½ tsp ground cinnamon, mixed on a wide plate

WHY IT WORKS

French toast roll-ups are sandwich bread slices that have been flattened thin, filled with cream cheese and jam (or other sweet fillings), rolled up tightly, dipped in egg-milk custard, pan-fried in butter, and coated in cinnamon sugar.

02 Method

1. Remove crusts from all 12 bread slices. Place one slice on a clean cutting board and roll firmly with a rolling pin, pressing down with full weight, until the slice is about ⅛ inch thick — it should look slightly translucent and feel pliable. Repeat for all slices.
2. Spread a thin layer of softened cream cheese over each flattened slice, reaching almost to all edges. Spoon about 1 teaspoon of strawberry jam in a thin line along one short edge of each slice.
3. Starting from the jam edge, roll the bread tightly around the filling. Press the seam gently to seal. Set rolls seam-side down on a plate while you prepare the custard.
4. Whisk together the eggs, milk, vanilla, and 1 tsp cinnamon in a wide, shallow bowl until fully combined.
5. Have the cinnamon-sugar plate ready on the counter next to the stove before you start cooking.
6. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, dip each roll in the egg custard, turning to coat all sides, letting the excess drip off for a few seconds.
7. Place rolls seam-side down in the skillet. Cook, turning every 1½–2 minutes to brown all 4 sides evenly, 6–8 minutes total. The rolls are done when all sides are deep golden brown and the custard is fully set (no wet wobble when you press gently).
8. Transfer rolls directly from the pan to the cinnamon-sugar plate while still hot. Roll to coat all sides. Serve immediately.



THANKSGIVING

07

DESSERTS

The sweet endings people order by name — bakery cases and dessert menus, re-created in your own oven.

10 RECIPES



№ 57

LA PÂTISSERIE BOURDALOUE

Pear Frangipane Tart

The tarte bourdaloue made at home: vanilla-poached Bosc pears pressed into almond cream inside a crisp butter shell, baked until golden, finished with an apricot glaze.

LA PÂTISSERIE BOURDALOUE · COPYCAT

Pear Frangipane Tart

The tarte bourdaloue made at home: vanilla-poached Bosc pears pressed into almond cream inside a crisp butter shell, baked until golden, finished with an apricot glaze.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
45 min	40 min	8	Intermediate	510

01 Ingredients

PÂTE SUCRÉE (SWEET TART SHELL)

- 115g (1 stick / 8 tbsp) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 65g (½ cup) powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 large egg yolk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 165g (1⅓ cups) all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp fine salt

VANILLA-POACHED PEARS

- 4 firm Bosc pears
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped (or 1 tsp vanilla extract)
- Juice of ½ lemon

ALMOND CREAM

- 115g (1 stick / 8 tbsp) unsalted butter, softened
- 115g (½ cup + 2 tbsp) granulated sugar
- 115g (about 1 cup + 2 tbsp) almond flour (blanched, finely ground)
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 15g (2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp pear brandy (poire williams) or dark rum (optional)

APRICOT GLAZE

- 3 tbsp smooth apricot jam
- 1 tsp water

02 Method

1. **Make the pâte sucrée.** In a stand mixer or with a hand mixer, beat the softened butter and sifted powdered sugar on medium speed until pale and smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the egg yolk and vanilla and mix until fully incorporated. Add the flour and salt and mix on low speed just until the dough comes together — it should be smooth and not sticky. Do not overwork it. Turn out onto plastic wrap, press into a flat disk, wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 2 days.

2. **Blind bake the shell.** Preheat the oven to 325°F. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough to a circle about ⅛ inch thick and large enough to drape over a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom (about 11 to 12 inches in diameter). Carefully drape the dough over the pan and press it gently into the corners without stretching. Run a rolling pin across the top edge to trim the excess flush. Prick the base all over with a fork. Freeze the lined pan for 20 minutes. Remove from the freezer, line the base with parchment, and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove the parchment and weights and bake for 5

more minutes until the shell looks dry and is very faintly colored but not golden. Remove from the oven and let cool completely before filling.

3. **Poach the pears.** In a saucepan large enough to hold the pear halves in a single layer, combine the water, sugar, vanilla bean and seeds (or vanilla extract), and lemon juice. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar fully dissolves. Peel the pears, halve them lengthwise, and use a melon baller or small spoon to core each half, removing the tough fibrous strings that run from core to stem. Lower the pear halves into the simmering syrup — they should be submerged; add more water if needed. Simmer gently for 15 to 20 minutes, turning once, until a paring knife pierces the thickest part with light resistance — the pears should be tender but not soft. Remove the pan from heat and let the pears cool in the syrup. (The pears can be refrigerated in their syrup for up to 3 days at this point.)

4. **Make the almond cream.** Using a stand mixer or hand mixer, beat the softened butter and granulated sugar on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the almond flour, AP flour, vanilla, and brandy or rum (if using). Mix on low until smooth and fully combined. The cream should be thick and spreadable. (Can be made ahead and refrigerated; bring to room temperature before using.)

5. **Assemble the tart.** Preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove the pear halves from the syrup and pat them thoroughly dry with paper towels — moisture is the enemy here. Spread the almond cream evenly into the cooled tart shell in a layer about 1 inch thick. For fanned pears: make vertical cuts two-thirds of the way through each pear half at ¼-inch intervals, then press the pear gently to fan the slices apart. Arrange 7 or 8 pear halves cut-side down across the almond cream, pressing them gently so they sink slightly into the surface.

6. **Bake.** Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until the almond cream is uniformly golden across the entire surface — including between the pears — and springs back when you press it lightly with a fingertip. The center should not jiggle when you gently shake the pan. A toothpick inserted between pear halves should come out clean.

7. **Glaze and cool.** Remove the tart from the oven. Immediately warm the apricot jam and water in a small bowl in the microwave for 20 to 30 seconds until pourable. Brush the glaze evenly over the entire tart surface while it is still hot — it will melt into the surface and set as the tart cools. Transfer to a wire rack and cool to room temperature before removing from the tart pan and slicing. Do not slice while hot — the almond cream needs to set fully as it cools.

WHY IT WORKS

Almond cream and frangipane are often used interchangeably, but there is a technical distinction in classical French pastry.



№ 58

COSTCO

Apple Pie

Make the Costco Kirkland Signature Apple Pie at home — a tall, deeply filled double-crust pie packed with 8 apples. The key: a 50/50 Granny Smith and Honeycrisp blend and a 15-minute pre-drain that keeps the filling jammy instead of watery.

COSTCO · COPYCAT

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PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
45 min	1 hr 15 min	8 slices	Medium	450

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CRUST

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks / 225g) unsalted butter, very cold, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 6–8 tablespoons ice water

FOR THE FILLING

- 4 medium Granny Smith apples (about 1½ lbs), peeled, cored, and sliced ¼-inch thick
- 4 medium Honeycrisp apples (about 1½ lbs), peeled, cored, and sliced ¼-inch thick (Fuji or Braeburn work equally well)
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

FOR ASSEMBLY

- 1 large egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water (egg wash)
- 1 tablespoon coarse sugar (turbinado or Demerara)

02 Method

1. **Make the crust.** Whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Add the cold butter cubes. Use your fingertips or a pastry cutter to work the butter into the flour until the mixture looks like coarse sand with pea-sized butter pieces still visible — these intact butter pieces are what create flaky layers. Drizzle in 6 tablespoons of ice water and stir with a fork until the dough just starts to hold together. Add the remaining tablespoon or two of water only if needed; the dough should hold when squeezed but not look wet.

2. **Chill the dough.** Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and divide into two equal pieces. Press each into a flat disc, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 2 days. Cold dough rolls more evenly and produces a flakier crust. Do not skip the chill.

3. **Toss and drain the apples.** Peel, core, and slice all 8 apples to an even ¼-inch thickness. Add to a large bowl along with the brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Toss thoroughly

to coat every slice, then set the bowl aside at room temperature for 15 minutes. Liquid will pool visibly at the bottom of the bowl.

4. **Reduce the syrup.** Drain the accumulated liquid into a small saucepan — you should have about ⅓ to ½ cup. Set the apple slices aside in the bowl. Bring the liquid to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to a rapid simmer. Cook, stirring frequently, until it thickens and reduces to about 2 tablespoons of glossy syrup, 5–7 minutes. Remove from heat, cool for 2 minutes, then pour the syrup back over the drained apple slices.

5. **Finish the filling.** Sprinkle the cornstarch over the apple mixture and toss thoroughly until every slice is coated and the mixture looks lightly glazed. The filling is ready when it no longer appears wet or saucy.

6. **Preheat the oven.** Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 425°F. Set a large rimmed baking sheet on the rack below to catch drips.

7. **Roll the bottom crust.** On a lightly floured surface, roll one dough disc into a 13-inch circle about ⅛-inch thick. Roll the dough loosely onto your rolling pin and transfer it to a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate. Press the dough gently into the bottom and up the sides — do not stretch it. Trim the overhang to ½ inch beyond the rim. Refrigerate while you work on the filling.

8. **Fill the pie.** Remove the crust from the refrigerator. Pour in the apple filling, mounding the apples high in the center — they cook down significantly. Scatter the 2 tablespoons of cold butter pieces over the apples.

9. **Add the top crust.** Roll the second dough disc into a 12-inch circle. Roll it onto your rolling pin, then unroll it over the filling. Trim to ½ inch past the rim. Press the top and bottom crust edges together, fold them under, and crimp firmly all the way around — the seal keeps the filling from bubbling out. Cut 5 or 6 vents (each about 2 inches long) in the top crust.

10. **Finish and bake at 425°F.** Brush the entire top crust and crimped edge evenly with egg wash. Sprinkle the coarse sugar over the top. Carefully set the pie on the preheated baking sheet and bake at 425°F for 20 minutes — this high initial heat sets the bottom crust and begins caramelizing the top.

11. **Reduce heat and finish baking.** Lower the oven to 375°F. Bake for 45–55 more minutes until the top crust is deep golden brown and filling juices are actively bubbling through the vents. If the edge over-browns before the filling bubbles, tent just the crust rim loosely with foil or fit a pie shield.

12. **Cool before slicing.** Transfer the pie to a wire rack and cool for at least 2 hours. The cornstarch-bound filling needs time to set after coming out of the oven — cutting too early produces a loose, runny slice. For the cleanest cuts and best texture, cool to room temperature, then refrigerate 1 hour before slicing.

WHY IT WORKS

The water comes from the apples themselves. Once you slice and sugar them, osmosis pulls juice out of the fruit.



№ 59

COSTCO

Pumpkin Pie

The Costco Kirkland Signature pumpkin pie copycat — a 12-inch, 3.5-pound custard pie with four eggs, a full 29-oz can of pumpkin, and heavy cream for that signature dense, silky texture. At home it costs about $18; at Costco it's $5.99.

COSTCO · COPYCAT

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PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	1 hr 15 min	8 slices	Medium	410

01 Ingredients

FOR THE FILLING

- 1 can (29 oz) pure pumpkin puree (e.g., Libby's large can — NOT pumpkin pie filling)
- 4 large eggs
- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 1 can (12 fl oz) evaporated milk (NOT sweetened condensed milk)
- ½ cup heavy cream

FOR THE CRUST

- 1 unbaked 12-inch deep-dish pie shell (or use 2 standard 9-inch deep-dish shells)

02 Method

1. **Set up for baking.** Preheat the oven to 425°F. Place the unbaked pie shell on a large rimmed baking sheet — this catches any overflow and makes the pie safe to move. Do not prick the crust. Keep the crust cold in the refrigerator until ready to fill.

2. **Combine the filling.** In a large bowl, whisk the eggs until broken up. Add the pumpkin puree, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, and salt. Stir with a large spatula until fully combined and no orange-and-white streaks remain.

3. **Add the dairy.** Pour in the evaporated milk and heavy cream while stirring continuously. Mix until smooth and uniform — the batter should look like a pourable liquid, not a thick paste.

4. **Strain the filling (the key step).** Set a fine-mesh sieve over a large measuring pitcher or bowl. Pour the filling through the sieve in batches, pressing the mixture through with a spatula. Discard the small amount of fibrous strands left in the sieve. The strained filling will look noticeably smoother and more uniform — this is what gives the Costco pie its signature dense, glass-smooth texture.

5. **Fill the crust.** Remove the cold pie shell from the refrigerator. Slowly pour the strained filling into the crust, filling to within ¼ inch of the crust edge. If you have any remaining filling, set it aside — some shells are shallower than others.

6. **First bake at 425°F.** Carefully slide the baking sheet into the oven. Bake at 425°F for 15 minutes. The high initial heat quickly sets the outer edge of the filling, anchoring the custard and preventing it from soaking into the crust.

7. **Reduce to 350°F and continue baking.** Lower the oven to 350°F (do not open the door more than needed). Bake for an additional 55–65 minutes. If the crust edge is browning too fast at the 30-minute mark, loosely tent the edge with foil or place a pie shield over the crust rim.

8. **Check for doneness.** The pie is done when the outer 2–3 inches of filling are fully set and firm, and only a 2-inch circle at the very center still wobbles slightly when the pan is nudged. A paring knife inserted 2 inches from the crust edge should come out clean with no wet filling. If the knife comes out wet, bake 5 more minutes and test again.

9. **Cool thoroughly before slicing.** Transfer the pie to a wire rack and cool at room temperature for at least 3 hours — the larger, denser filling needs more time than a standard pie. Refrigerate once cooled to room temperature. For cleanest slices and best texture, refrigerate overnight and slice cold the next day.

WHY IT WORKS

Costco limits the pumpkin pie to the fall season deliberately — scarcity is part of the marketing. The warehouse starts stocking them in late September and sells through mid-November.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 60

CRUMBL COOKIES

Crumbl Pecan Pie Cookie

Copycat Crumbl Pecan Pie Cookie — a thick, Crumbl-style sugar cookie disc topped with a gooey stovetop brown-sugar pecan caramel and a cream cheese border. At Crumbl it's $4–5 a cookie; this batch of 8 costs about $12 in ingredients.

CRUMBL COOKIES · COPYCAT

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PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	12 min	8 cookies	Medium	710

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SUGAR COOKIE BASE

- 1 cup (2 sticks / 227g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups (240g) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt

FOR THE PECAN CARAMEL TOPPING

- ¼ cup (½ stick / 57g) unsalted butter
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (about 150g) roughly chopped pecans, toasted

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE BORDER (OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED)

- 4 oz (113g) full-fat cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup (60g) powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 tablespoon heavy cream
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

02 Method

1. **Toast the pecans.** Add the chopped pecans to a dry skillet over medium heat. Toast, shaking the pan every minute or so, for 4–5 minutes until fragrant and lightly golden. Watch carefully — they go from toasted to burned quickly. Spread on a plate to cool completely. Do not add them to the hot caramel while warm.

2. **Make the cookie dough.** Beat the softened butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar together with a hand or stand mixer on medium speed for 2–3 minutes until light and fluffy. Add the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla extract and beat until fully incorporated, scraping the sides once. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture all at once and mix on low until just combined — stop as soon as no dry streaks remain. Do not overmix.

3. **Portion and chill.** Use a kitchen scale to divide the dough into 8 equal portions of about 5 oz (140g) each. Roll each portion into a smooth ball and place on a parchment-lined baking

sheet, spaced at least 3 inches apart (you may need 2 sheets). Refrigerate the portioned dough balls for 30 minutes — this prevents them from spreading too thin during baking.

4. **Bake.** Preheat the oven to 375°F. Bake the chilled dough balls for 10–12 minutes. The edges should look just set and lightly golden; the centers should look underdone and glossy — this is correct. Do not wait for the center to look fully baked. The cookies will firm up completely as they cool on the pan. Let them cool on the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool fully, at least 30 more minutes.

5. **Make the pecan caramel topping.** Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the brown sugar, corn syrup, heavy cream, and salt. Stir to combine and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes — the mixture will bubble and thicken slightly. Remove from heat and immediately stir in the vanilla extract and all of the toasted pecans. Stir until every pecan is coated. Let the topping cool at room temperature until it is thick and spoonable — about 20 minutes. It should look glossy and fudgy, not runny.

6. **Make the cream cheese border (optional).** Beat the softened cream cheese with a hand mixer until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the powdered sugar, heavy cream, and vanilla; beat on medium-high for 1–2 minutes until light and pipeable. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with a small round tip (or a zip-lock bag with one corner snipped).

7. **Assemble.** Once the cookies and pecan topping are both fully at room temperature, pipe or spread a ring of cream cheese frosting around the outer edge of each cookie, leaving the center bare. Spoon a generous mound of pecan caramel into the center of each cookie, filling up to the cream cheese border. The filling should be thick and heaped — don't spread it flat.

8. **Chill and serve.** Refrigerate the assembled cookies for at least 20 minutes to firm the cream cheese border and let the pecan topping set. Remove from the refrigerator 10–15 minutes before serving so the caramel loosens back to its gooey room-temperature texture. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

WHY IT WORKS

The key difference is architecture. A traditional pecan cookie bakes the nuts into the dough. A pecan pie bar bakes a pecan custard (with eggs) on top of a shortbread crust.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 61

CRUMBL COOKIES

Crumbl Pumpkin Pie Cookie

Crumbl's seasonal Pumpkin Pie Cookie copycat — a thick, Crumbl-style sugar cookie disc topped with a creamy pumpkin pie mousse and a dusting of cinnamon. At Crumbl it's $4–5 a cookie; this batch of 8 costs about $10 total.

CRUMBL COOKIES · COPYCAT

Crumbl Pumpkin Pie Cookie

Crumbl's seasonal Pumpkin Pie Cookie copycat — a thick, Crumbl-style sugar cookie disc topped with a creamy pumpkin pie mousse and a dusting of cinnamon. At Crumbl it's $4–5 a cookie; this batch of 8 costs about $10 total.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	11 min	8 cookies	Medium	720

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SUGAR COOKIE BASE

- 1 cup (2 sticks / 227g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (packed) light brown sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk, room temperature
- 1½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

FOR THE PUMPKIN PIE MOUSSE

- 8 oz full-fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- ⅓ cup (packed) light brown sugar
- ¾ cup pure pumpkin puree (canned — NOT pumpkin pie filling)
- 1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup cold heavy whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar

FOR THE FINISH

- Ground cinnamon or additional pumpkin pie spice, for dusting

02 Method

1. **Make the cookie dough.** Beat softened butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar on medium-high for 3–4 minutes until pale and fluffy. Add the whole egg and beat for 1 minute; add the yolk and vanilla and beat until incorporated. In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, cream of tartar, salt, and pumpkin pie spice. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture in two additions, mixing on low until just combined — the dough should be soft and slightly tacky.

2. **Portion the dough.** Divide into 8 equal portions, about 4–5 oz each (a kitchen scale makes this easy and gives even cookies). Roll each into a ball. Line two baking sheets with parchment. Arrange the dough balls 3 inches apart and refrigerate for 15 minutes while the oven preheats — chilling prevents the cookies from spreading too thin.

3. **Bake the cookies.** Preheat oven to 375°F. Using the bottom of a measuring cup or a glass, gently press each chilled dough ball into a disc about ¾ inch thick and 3½ inches across. Bake

10–12 minutes — the edges should be just barely set and the tops should look matte, not glossy, but still soft in the center. Do not wait for browning; there should be almost none. The cookies firm up as they cool. Rest on the pan 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack and cool completely before topping.

4. **Start the mousse base.** While cookies cool, beat softened cream cheese on medium speed for 2 minutes until smooth with no lumps — this step matters; under-beaten cream cheese will leave small white flecks in the finished mousse. Add the brown sugar and beat 1 more minute. Add pumpkin puree, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, and vanilla; beat on medium until fully incorporated and smooth. Set aside.

5. **Whip the cream.** In a clean, cold bowl, beat the heavy whipping cream and powdered sugar together on medium-high until stiff peaks form, 2–3 minutes. Cold equipment and cold cream make this faster — stick your bowl and whisk attachment in the freezer for 5 minutes if you have time.

6. **Fold and combine.** Using a large spatula, fold about one-third of the whipped cream into the cream cheese mixture to lighten it, then fold in the remaining whipped cream in two additions. Work gently — you want to keep as much air as possible in the mousse. The finished topping should be thick, airy, and hold its shape when scooped.

7. **Top and chill.** Transfer mousse to a piping bag fitted with a large round tip (or use a zip-lock bag with a corner snipped). Pipe a generous tall mound of mousse onto each fully cooled cookie, starting from the outside edge and spiraling inward. Alternatively, spoon the mousse on and shape with an offset spatula. Dust with a light pinch of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice over each cookie. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before serving — the cold sets the mousse so the cookie has that firm, sliceable pumpkin pie character.

WHY IT WORKS

Two different cookies. The Pumpkin Pie Cookie has a vanilla sugar cookie base topped with a cold, creamy pumpkin pie mousse — it tastes like eating a slice of pumpkin pie.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 62

KARO

Classic Pecan Pie

The Karo Classic Pecan Pie recipe — the back-of-bottle formula that turned pecan pie into an American Thanksgiving staple. Seven ingredients, no mixer, and one jiggle test separates a perfect slice from a runny one.

KARO · COPYCAT

Classic Pecan Pie

The Karo Classic Pecan Pie recipe — the back-of-bottle formula that turned pecan pie into an American Thanksgiving staple. Seven ingredients, no mixer, and one jiggle test separates a perfect slice from a runny one.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	65 min	8 slices	Easy	540

01 Ingredients

- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup Karo Light or Dark Corn Syrup
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (6 oz) pecan halves
- 1 unbaked 9-inch deep-dish pie shell

WHY IT WORKS

Dark corn syrup has a molasses-like depth and produces a richer, darker filling that closely resembles older Southern recipes made with cane syrup or blackstrap molasses.

02 Method

1. **Preheat the oven to 350°F.** Set the unbaked pie shell on a rimmed baking sheet — the sheet catches any filling drips and makes it easy to move the hot pie without gripping the edge.

2. **Beat the eggs lightly** in a large bowl, about 30 seconds, just until the yolks and whites are combined. Don't whisk vigorously — beating air into the eggs causes the filling to foam up in the oven and the top to crack as it sets.

3. **Add the corn syrup, sugar, melted butter, and vanilla.** Stir with a fork or wooden spoon until fully combined and the sugar begins to dissolve, about 1 minute. The mixture should look glossy and slightly fluid — not grainy from undissolved sugar clinging to the bowl.

4. **Stir in the pecans.** You can pour the filling into the crust first and let the pecans float to the top naturally (they will, within 30 seconds), or stir them in and pour together. Either way, they'll rise and form the pecan-topped surface during baking.

5. **Pour the filling into the unbaked pie shell.** If the crust edge is thinner than ½ inch at the rim, loosely tent the crust edges with foil or set a pie shield on top — this prevents the crust from browning before the filling sets. The center of the pie takes 60+ minutes; unprotected crust edges will over-brown in that time.

6. **Bake for 60 to 70 minutes.** At 60 minutes, nudge the baking sheet gently. The outer 2 inches of the filling should look set and dull; the center should jiggle like soft-set gelatin — one slow, unified wobble that quickly stills. If the center sloshes like water, bake 5 more minutes and test again. Most home ovens run slightly cool, so 65 minutes is typical.

7. **Transfer to a wire rack and cool for at least 2 hours before slicing.** This is the step that makes or breaks the filling. The egg proteins continue setting as the pie cools; cutting into a warm pecan pie produces a runny filling even when the bake itself was correct. Four hours of cooling produces cleaner slices.



№ 63

LIBBY'S

Famous Pumpkin Pie

The Libby's Famous Pumpkin Pie recipe — the back-of-can formula that has been America's Thanksgiving standard since the 1950s. Eight ingredients, a two-stage bake, and one knife test separates a perfect custard from a cracked or runny one.

LIBBY'S · COPYCAT

Famous Pumpkin Pie

The Libby's Famous Pumpkin Pie recipe — the back-of-can formula that has been America's Thanksgiving standard since the 1950s. Eight ingredients, a two-stage bake, and one knife test separates a perfect custard from a cracked or runny one.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	60 min	8 slices	Easy	252

01 Ingredients

- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 large eggs
- 1 can (15 oz) Libby's 100% Pure Pumpkin
- 1 can (12 fl oz) evaporated milk (NOT sweetened condensed milk)
- 1 unbaked 9-inch deep-dish pie shell

02 Method

1. **Preheat the oven to 425°F.** Set the unbaked pie shell on a rimmed baking sheet — it catches any overflow and makes it safe to move the hot pie without gripping the shell edge.
2. **Mix the dry ingredients.** Whisk the sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger, and cloves together in a small bowl. Optional upgrade: add the spice mix to a dry skillet over medium heat and stir 30 seconds until fragrant. Toasting brightens the flavor noticeably and takes almost no extra time.
3. **Beat the eggs** in a large bowl until yolks and whites are fully combined, about 30 seconds. No need to whisk vigorously — you're combining, not aerating.
4. **Stir in the pumpkin and spice-sugar mixture.** Mix until smooth and evenly colored — no orange-and-white streaks. The puree is thick; use a spatula and take an extra few seconds to make sure the sugar is fully incorporated and not clumping at the bottom of the bowl.
5. **Gradually stir in the evaporated milk.** Pour slowly while stirring. The filling should look smooth and pourable, like a thin batter.
6. **Pour into the unbaked deep-dish pie shell.** If the crust rim is thin, loosely tent the edges with foil or set a pie shield in place — the pie bakes for 55–65 minutes total, which is long enough to over-brown an unprotected crust edge.

7. **Bake at 425°F for 15 minutes.** The high initial heat sets the outer edges of the filling quickly, which anchors the custard and helps prevent the filling from seeping into the crust.

8. **Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (do not open the oven door more than necessary) and bake for 40–50 more minutes.** At 40 minutes, insert a clean paring knife about 2 inches from the edge of the crust — not in the very center. It should come out with no wet filling. The true center will still wobble slightly when you nudge the pan; that's correct and expected. If the knife comes out wet, bake in 5-minute increments and test again. Total bake time is typically 55–65 minutes.

9. **Transfer to a wire rack and cool for at least 2 hours before slicing.** The egg-based custard continues to set during this window. Cutting into a warm pumpkin pie — even one that baked correctly — produces soft, loose slices. For the cleanest cuts and best texture, 2 hours is the minimum; 3–4 hours is better. Refrigerate once the pie has fully reached room temperature — pumpkin pie needs refrigeration within 2 hours of cooling, unlike pecan pie.

WHY IT WORKS

Cracking is almost always from overbaking. As the egg proteins set and contract, if the filling has no give left, the surface splits. It's cosmetic — the pie tastes the same — and is easy to cover with a ring of whipped cream.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 64

MORTON'S THE STEAKHOUSE

New York Cheesecake

Make Morton's New York Cheesecake at home — the legendary steakhouse dessert: a dense, ivory cream-cheese filling on a buttered graham cracker crust, baked low-and-slow for a crack-free top, and served with warm strawberry sauce.

MORTON'S THE STEAKHOUSE · COPYCAT

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PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	1 hr 15 min	12 slices	Medium	490

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CRUST

- 1½ cups (150g) graham cracker crumbs (about 12 full sheets, finely crushed)
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 6 tablespoons (85g) unsalted butter, melted

FOR THE FILLING

- 5 packages (8 oz each / 1¼ kg total) full-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1½ cups (300g) granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest (optional, but used in the original)
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 egg yolks, at room temperature
- ½ cup (120g) full-fat sour cream, at room temperature

FOR THE WARM STRAWBERRY SAUCE

- 1 lb (450g) fresh strawberries, hulled and halved (or quartered if large)
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

02 Method

1. **Pull ingredients to room temperature.** At least 2 hours before baking, set the cream cheese, eggs, yolks, and sour cream on the counter. Cold cream cheese is the primary cause of a lumpy cheesecake filling; if any of it goes into the bowl cold, the lumps become permanent.

2. **Make the crust.** Heat the oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl, stir together the graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and salt. Pour in the melted butter and mix until the crumbs look like wet sand and hold together when pressed. Transfer to a 9-inch springform pan. Press the crumbs firmly and evenly across the bottom and about 1 inch up the sides — the back of a flat measuring cup works well. Bake for 10 minutes until the crust is golden at the edges and smells like toasted graham. Cool completely on a wire rack.

3. **Wrap the springform pan.** To prevent water from leaking in during the water bath, wrap the outside of the springform pan tightly with two layers of heavy-duty aluminum foil — starting from the bottom and folding the foil up the sides past the rim. This step is not optional; a single foil layer leaks about 30% of the time.

4. **Make the filling.** Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a hand mixer with a

large bowl), beat the cream cheese on medium speed for about 3 minutes until smooth and slightly lightened — scrape the bowl down once mid-way. Add the sugar, flour, vanilla, and lemon zest. Beat on medium-low for 2 minutes, scraping the bowl, until no lumps remain. Add the whole eggs one at a time, followed by the yolks, beating on low after each addition just until incorporated — about 10 seconds per egg. Overbeating after adding the eggs incorporates air that causes cracking. Finally, add the sour cream and mix on low for 20 seconds until blended. Scrape the bowl one last time to check for any unincorporated cream cheese at the bottom.

5. **Fill the pan and set up the water bath.** Set the foil-wrapped springform pan inside a large roasting pan. Pour the filling over the cooled crust; it should come to about 1 inch below the rim. Place the roasting pan in the oven, then carefully pour boiling water into the roasting pan until it comes 1 inch up the sides of the springform — do not pour water directly into the cheesecake.

6. **Bake at 325°F for 65–75 minutes.** The cheesecake is done when the edges look firm and slightly puffed, the surface looks set and not shiny with liquid batter, but the center 3 inches still wobbles visibly — like gelatin, not like liquid — when you gently shake the pan. It should not slosh. If the entire surface is still liquid, give it 10 more minutes. If the center is completely firm and set, it has overbaked slightly; it will still taste good but may crack.

7. **Cool in the oven.** Turn off the oven. Prop the door open about 2 inches with a wooden spoon. Leave the cheesecake in the oven for 1 hour. This gradual cool-down prevents the dramatic temperature change that causes cracks. After an hour, remove the cheesecake from the water bath and set it on a wire rack. Run a thin knife or offset spatula around the inner edge of the springform ring to release the cheesecake from the sides — do this gently and all the way around — then let it cool at room temperature for another hour.

8. **Chill overnight.** Cover the pan loosely with plastic wrap (don't press it against the surface) and refrigerate for at least 8 hours, preferably overnight. The cheesecake should be completely cold and firm before slicing — this is the step most people skip, and it's why restaurant slices hold their shape while home versions don't.

9. **Make the strawberry sauce.** Combine the strawberries, sugar, and lemon juice in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the strawberries release their juice and the mixture simmers, about 5–7 minutes. The berries should soften but hold some shape — not dissolve into jam. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla. Serve warm alongside the cold cheesecake, or let it cool and refrigerate for up to 5 days (rewarm gently before serving).

10. **Slice and serve.** To release the cheesecake, unlatch and remove the springform ring. Transfer to a serving plate. To cut cleanly, dip a long knife in hot water and wipe it dry between every slice — cold cream cheese sticks to a dry knife and drags the top. Morton's cuts the cheesecake into 12 slices, each served with 2–3 tablespoons of warm strawberry sauce spooned alongside (not on top).

WHY IT WORKS

At most Morton's locations, a slice of New York Cheesecake is listed at $14–17 depending on the city. The full cheesecake is available to order for holiday parties (call the location directly — pricing varies).



№ 65

VIRAL HIT

Pecan Pie Bars

Viral TikTok pecan pie bars — a buttery shortbread crust topped with the same caramelized pecan filling as a full pie, baked in a 9×13 pan and cut into squares. No pie dish, no rolling, no fussing.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

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Viral TikTok pecan pie bars — a buttery shortbread crust topped with the same caramelized pecan filling as a full pie, baked in a 9×13 pan and cut into squares. No pie dish, no rolling, no fussing.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	45 min	24 bars	Easy	320

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SHORTBREAD CRUST

- 2 cups (240g) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (60g) powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup (170g) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes

FOR THE PECAN FILLING

- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1½ cups (300g) packed dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup (255g) light corn syrup
- ¼ cup (57g) unsalted butter, melted and cooled to room temperature
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2½ cups (250g) pecan halves — or roughly chopped pecans

02 Method

1. **Preheat and prep the pan.** Set oven to 350°F (175°C) with a rack in the center position. Spray a 9×13-inch baking pan with nonstick spray, then line it with parchment paper — leave a 2-inch overhang on the two long sides. This overhang is the handle that lets you lift the whole slab out of the pan cleanly before cutting. Spray the parchment lightly as well.

2. **Make the shortbread crust.** Whisk flour, powdered sugar, and salt together in a medium bowl. Add the cold butter cubes and work them into the flour mixture using your fingertips, a pastry cutter, or a fork. Press the butter into the flour by smearing it — you want flat, thin pieces of butter distributed through the flour, not large chunks. The goal is a texture like coarse damp sand with a few pea-sized butter pieces. Squeeze a handful: it should hold together briefly and then crumble. This is the correct texture.

3. **Press the crust into the pan.** Transfer the crust mixture to the prepared pan. Use your hands to press it into an even layer across the bottom, reaching into the corners. The crust should be about ¼ inch thick and perfectly even — thick spots won't bake through, thin spots will overbrown. Finish pressing with the flat bottom of a measuring cup to eliminate fingerprints and uneven ridges.

4. **Pre-bake the crust for 15 to 18 minutes.** This is not optional. Place the pan in the preheated oven and bake until the edges are lightly golden and the center looks set and dry — no wet or shiny spots. The crust will not be fully baked (it goes back in with the filling), but it needs to be partially cooked so it forms a barrier. If the center looks raw and pale at 15 minutes, give it 3 more minutes. When done, remove from the oven and let cool 5 minutes while you make the filling. Do not turn off the oven.

5. **Make the pecan filling.** Whisk the eggs in a large bowl until smooth. Add the brown sugar and whisk vigorously until no lumps remain — about 1 minute. Whisk in the corn syrup, then the melted cooled butter, vanilla, and salt. The filling should be smooth, glossy, and slightly thick. Stir in the pecan halves — do not whisk or the pecans will break. The pecans will float to the top during baking, which is exactly what you want for the caramelized surface.

6. **Pour filling over the hot crust.** Pour the pecan filling over the partially baked crust, spreading the pecans evenly with a spatula so the surface is covered in a single layer. Don't worry if a few pecans overlap or bunch slightly — they will settle and spread as the filling heats.

7. **Bake 25 to 30 minutes.** Return the pan to the oven and bake until the filling is set at the edges and has just a slight jiggle in the very center when you shake the pan — like barely-set Jell-O, not liquid. The surface should be deep brown and glossy, and the visible pecan tops should look toasted. Start checking at 25 minutes. If the edges are set but the center is still liquid, give it 5 more minutes. Overbaking (until the center is fully set with no jiggle) produces a tough, dry filling instead of the chewy caramelized texture that makes this worth eating.

8. **Cool completely before cutting.** This is the hardest part and the step most people skip. Let the pan cool at room temperature on a wire rack for at least 2 hours — the filling continues to set as it cools, and cutting early releases the custard before it firms up. After the room-temperature rest, transfer the pan to the refrigerator for at least 1 hour. Cold bars hold clean, straight edges when cut. Warm bars produce ragged cuts with filling that flows out the sides.

9. **Lift and cut.** Run a thin knife or offset spatula along the two short sides of the pan (the sides without parchment overhang) to free any stuck edges. Use the parchment overhang to lift the entire slab out of the pan and onto a cutting board. Use a sharp chef's knife and wipe it clean between cuts. For 24 bars: cut the slab into 4 strips along the long side, then cut each strip into 6 pieces. For cleaner cuts, press straight down rather than dragging the knife.

WHY IT WORKS

Partially. Pure maple syrup has a lower glucose content than corn syrup, so it doesn't set as firmly — a full substitution will produce a softer, more flowing filling that may not hold clean cuts.

KITCHEN NOTES



№ 66

VIRAL HIT

Pecan Pie Cheesecake

The viral TikTok pecan pie cheesecake recipe: a New York–style cream cheese filling baked in a pecan-graham crust, then finished with a glossy brown-sugar pecan pie topping.

VIRAL HIT · COPYCAT

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The viral TikTok pecan pie cheesecake recipe: a New York–style cream cheese filling baked in a pecan-graham crust, then finished with a glossy brown-sugar pecan pie topping.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
35 min	1 hr 20 min	12 slices	Intermediate	665

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CRUST

- 1½ cups (150g) graham cracker crumbs (about 12 full graham crackers, finely crushed)
- ½ cup (55g) pecans, toasted and finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 5 tablespoons (70g) unsalted butter, melted

FOR THE CHEESECAKE FILLING

- 24 oz (680g / 3 blocks) cream cheese, at room temperature — full fat, not reduced fat
- 1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup (240g) full-fat sour cream, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

FOR THE PECAN PIE TOPPING

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup (160g) light corn syrup
- ½ cup (100g) packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1½ cups (170g) pecan halves, toasted

02 Method

1. **Pull out all dairy to come to room temperature.** Take the cream cheese, eggs, and sour cream out of the refrigerator at least 1 hour before mixing. This is the single most important step: room-temperature cream cheese beats to a smooth, lump-free filling; cold cream cheese leaves lumps that don't mix out and produces a grainy texture. Set up a 9-inch (23cm) springform pan.

2. **Toast the pecans.** Spread the pecans for both the crust and the topping on a dry baking sheet. Toast in a 350°F (175°C) oven for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring once halfway through, until fragrant and lightly deepened in color. Slide immediately onto a cutting board to cool. Finely chop ½ cup for the crust; leave the remaining 1½ cups as halves for the topping. Let cool completely — warm pecans will soften the crust butter and warm the cheesecake filling prematurely.

3. **Make and bake the crust.** Preheat the oven to 325°F (160°C). Stir the graham cracker crumbs, finely chopped toasted pecans, sugar, and melted butter together in a bowl until the crumbs look like wet sand and hold together when pressed. Press firmly into the bottom of the springform pan and about 1 inch up the sides — use the flat bottom of a measuring cup for even pressure. Bake 8 minutes. The crust should smell nutty and feel set when pressed. Cool on a wire rack while you make the filling. Do not reduce the oven temperature.

4. **Wrap the springform pan.** Tear off two large sheets of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Wrap the outside bottom and sides of the springform pan tightly in a double layer, pressing the foil up around the sides so no water can seep in from the water bath. Set the wrapped pan in a large roasting pan.

5. **Make the cheesecake filling.** Beat the room-temperature cream cheese on medium speed with a stand or hand mixer for 2 minutes until completely smooth — scrape the bowl and beaters once midway through. Add the sugar and beat on medium speed 1 minute more, scraping once. Add the eggs one at a time on low speed, beating just until each one disappears before adding the next — about 20 seconds per egg. Do not beat on high speed after adding eggs; excess air causes cracking and sinking. Add the sour cream, flour, and vanilla; beat on low just until combined. The filling should be smooth, dense, and creamy — not fluffy or light. Scrape the bowl once more and stir by hand a few turns with a spatula.

6. **Pour and set up the water bath.** Pour the cheesecake filling over the cooled crust, smoothing the top with a spatula. Bring a full kettle of water to a boil. Place the roasting pan (containing the foil-wrapped springform) in the oven. Pour the boiling water into the roasting pan around the springform pan until it reaches about 1 inch up the outside of the springform. Do not splash water onto the cheesecake. Close the oven door gently.

7. **Bake at 325°F for 60 to 65 minutes.** The cheesecake is done when the outer 2 inches of the filling look set and matte, and the center still has a distinct 2-inch wobble when you gently shake the pan. It will look underdone — that is correct. Do not poke, prod, or open the oven door more than necessary. An overbaked cheesecake cracks and becomes grainy; underbaking finishes setting during the slow cool.

8. **Cool in the oven, then refrigerate.** Turn off the oven and crack the door open 2 to 3 inches. Leave the cheesecake in the oven for 1 hour — this slow cooling prevents the filling from contracting suddenly and cracking. After 1 hour, remove the cheesecake from the water bath, remove the foil, and cool on a wire rack until it reaches room temperature, about 1 more hour. Cover loosely with plastic wrap (not touching the surface) and refrigerate at least 4 hours, preferably overnight. The cheesecake must be completely cold before the topping goes on.

9. **Make the pecan pie topping.** Melt the 3 tablespoons of butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the corn syrup and brown sugar; stir until the sugar dissolves, about 1 minute. The mixture will be bubbling gently. In a small bowl, whisk the 2 eggs until smooth. To temper: add 2 tablespoons of the hot corn syrup mixture to the eggs while whisking constantly, then immediately pour the warmed egg mixture back into the saucepan while whisking. Stir constantly over medium heat for 2 full minutes — the mixture will visibly thicken and coat the back of a spoon. Remove from heat. Stir in the vanilla, salt, and toasted pecan halves. Let the topping cool for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally — it should be warm but not hot when poured.

10. **Top and set.** Remove the cold cheesecake from the refrigerator. Run a thin knife around the inside edge of the springform ring and release the ring. If the pecan topping has thickened too much while cooling (it can set partially if left too long), warm it briefly in the saucepan over low heat, stirring, until pourable. Pour the topping over the cold cheesecake, spreading gently with a spatula to distribute the pecan halves evenly to the edges. Return the cheesecake (on its springform base) to the refrigerator, uncovered, for at least 30 minutes. The topping will set from liquid to glossy and slightly chewy.

11. **Slice and serve.** Run a sharp knife under hot water, dry it, and cut straight down through the topping and cheesecake without sawing. Wipe the knife clean and rewarm between every cut. A hot, clean knife gives you the defined pecan topping layer visible in the cross-section. Serve chilled or at room temperature; the cheesecake flavor is more pronounced at room temperature but the topping holds its shape better straight from the refrigerator. Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

WHY IT WORKS

A sunken center almost always means the filling was overbeaten and incorporated too much air.

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