

COPYCAT SPICES

CUSTOM EDITION

THE COPYCAT THANKSGIVING COLLECTION

THE COPYCAT THANKSGIVING COOKBOOK

Your favorite restaurant dishes, made in your own kitchen — hand-picked, tested, and photographed.

● 46 RECIPES

COPYCAT SPICES

A Copycat Thanksgiving Collection

The Copycat Cookbook

THANKSGIVING EDITION • 46 RECIPES

October 21, 2026

Compiled, tested, and typeset by the Copycat Spices kitchen. Set in Playfair Display,
Source Serif 4, and Source Sans 3.

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re-creations — not affiliated with, authorized by, or endorsed by the originals.

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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 — testing 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 is yours — 46 recipes, hand-picked, and put together to live on the counter, not lost in a browser tab. Each recipe here was photographed, tested, 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.

You chose every page. The sauces your family asks for, the comfort food that tastes like a road trip, the dessert that ends every holiday — they're all here, together, in one book.

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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What's Inside

Cocktails

5 RECIPES

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 01 | Death & Co Oaxacan Old Fashioned | 1 |
| | DEATH AND CO | |
| 02 | Maple Old Fashioned | 2 |
| | THANKSGIVING | |
| 03 | Spiced Cranberry Punch | 3 |
| | THANKSGIVING | |
| 04 | Apple Cider Margarita | 4 |
| | VIRAL | |
| 05 | Apple Cider Sangria | 5 |
| | VIRAL | |

Appetizers

9 RECIPES

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 06 | Spinach Artichoke Dip | 6 |
| | APPLEBEE'S | |
| 07 | Antoine's Oysters Rockefeller | 7 |
| | ANTOINIES | |
| 08 | Bacon-Wrapped Chorizo-Stuffed Dates | 8 |
| | AVEC | |
| 09 | Bobby Flay's Bar Americain Pumpkin Soup Shooters with Cinnamon Cream | 9 |
| | BOBBY FLAY | |
| 10 | Fritos Bean Dip | 10 |
| | TEX MEX | |
| 11 | Wild Mushroom Toast | 11 |
| | GRAMERCY TAVERN | |
| 12 | 3-Cheese Queso | 12 |
| | QDOBA | |

13	TikTok Boursin Phyllo Cups 13	VIRAL
----	--	-------

14	Brown Sugar Kielbasa Bites 14	VIRAL
----	--	-------

Entrées

7 RECIPES

15	Bobby Flay's Ancho Chile-Maple Glazed Thanksgiving Turkey 15	BOBBY FLAY
----	---	------------

16	Gordon Ramsay's Turkey with Lemon, Parsley and Garlic 16	GORDON RAMSAY
----	---	---------------

17	Glaze 17	HONEYBAKED HAM
----	-----------------------	----------------

18	Lawry's The Prime Rib Standing Rib Roast 18	LAWRYS
----	--	--------

19	Spatchcock Turkey 19	VIRAL
----	-----------------------------------	-------

20	Taiwanese Turkey Rice 20	VIRAL
----	---------------------------------------	-------

21	Dry-Brine Thanksgiving Turkey 21	VIRAL
----	---	-------

Vegetarian

6 RECIPES

22	Glazed Carrots 22	BOB EVANS
----	--------------------------------	-----------

23	Bistro Macaroni au Gratin 23	BOUCHON
----	---	---------

24	Grape Salad 24	CHICKEN SALAD CHICK
----	-----------------------------	---------------------

25	Fresh Cranberry Sauce 25	VIRAL
----	---------------------------------------	-------

26	TikTok Creamy Mashed Potatoes 26	VIRAL
----	---	-------

27	TikTok Green Bean Casserole From Scratch	27
	VIRAL	

Food

10 RECIPES

28	Mashed Potatoes	28
	BOB EVANS	
29	Cornbread Dressing	29
	CRACKER BARREL	
30	Joël Robuchon Pommes Purée	30
	JOEL ROBUCHON	
31	Creamed Spinach	31
	PETER LUGER	
32	German Fried Potatoes	32
	PETER LUGER	
33	Ruth's Chris Potatoes au Gratin	33
	RUTHS CHRIS	
34	Ruth's Chris Sweet Potato Casserole	34
	RUTHS CHRIS	
35	Smith & Wollensky Prime Rib	35
	SMITH AND WOLLENSKY	
36	Brown Butter Herb Stuffing	36
	VIRAL	
37	Easy Chicken and Dumplings	37
	VIRAL	

Desserts

9 RECIPES

38	Pear Frangipane Tart	38
	BOURDALOUE	
39	Cinnamon Bread	39
	DOLLYWOOD	
40	Carrot	40
	NOTHING BUNDT CAKES	

41	TikTok Apple Cider Tiramisu (No-Bake Fall Dessert)	41
	VIRAL	
42	TikTok Cream Puff Dessert	42
	VIRAL	
43	Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars	43
	VIRAL	
44	TikTok Pumpkin Dump Cake (Don't Stir It)	44
	VIRAL	
45	TikTok Pumpkin Pie Rice Krispie Treats	45
	VIRAL	
46	Pumpkin Roll	46
	VIRAL	



THANKSGIVING

01 COCKTAILS

*The bar-menu drinks worth mixing at home —
shaken, stirred and poured before anyone sits down.*

5 RECIPES



Nº 01

— DEATH AND CO • COPYCAT

Death & Co Oaxacan Old Fashioned

Death & Co's Oaxacan Old Fashioned (also spelled Oaxaca Old Fashioned) — 1½ oz reposado tequila, ½ oz mezcal, agave nectar, and 2 dashes Angostura bitters — is the drink that launched the US mezcal renaissance.

PREP
5 min

COOK
0 min

SERVES
1 cocktail

LEVEL
Easy

CAL
160

01 Ingredients

- 1½ oz reposado tequila (El Tesoro, Olmeca Altos, or Espolón)
- ½ oz mezcal (Del Maguey Vida or another espadín mezcal)
- 1 tsp agave nectar
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters (the printed cookbook spec — fully authentic)
- 1 dash Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters (optional — the chocolate-chili bitters the bar is reputed to pour)
- 1 wide strip orange peel (from a fresh orange, for the flamed garnish)
- Ice for stirring + 1 large 2-inch cube for serving

WHY IT WORKS

Death & Co opened at 433 East 6th Street in Manhattan's East Village in January 2007, founded by David Kaplan and Alex Day.

02 Method

- 1 **Chill your glass.** Set a rocks glass in the freezer for 5 minutes, or fill it with ice water for 1 minute then discard. A chilled glass slows dilution from the serving cube.
- 2 **Build and stir.** Combine the tequila, mezcal, agave nectar, Angostura bitters, and mole bitters (if using) in a mixing glass or pint glass. Fill two-thirds with ice. Stir continuously with a bar spoon for 25 to 30 seconds — the outside of the glass should feel very cold. Do not shake.
- 3 **Strain over the large cube.** Place one large 2-inch ice cube in the chilled rocks glass. Strain the cocktail over it using a Hawthorne strainer or small fine-mesh strainer.
- 4 **Flame the orange peel.** Cut a 1-by-2-inch strip of orange peel using a wide vegetable peeler. Hold it skin-side toward the drink, about 4 inches above the glass, with a lighter flame between them. Heat the skin side for 2 to 3 seconds. Pinch the peel sharply — the oils spray through the flame and mist across the drink's surface with a brief flare. Run the expressed peel around the rim of the glass and drop it in.
- 5 **Serve immediately.** The drink is at its best in the first 15 minutes when the orange aromatics from the peel are still present on the surface.



Nº 02

— THANKSGIVING · 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
2 min

COOK
0 min

SERVES
1 (batch ratio included for 8)

LEVEL
Easy

CAL
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

Maple Old Fashioned CONTINUED

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.

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.



Nº 03

— THANKSGIVING · 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

10 min

COOK

5 min

SERVES

10–12 (one large punch bowl)

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

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

Spiced Cranberry Punch CONTINUED

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.

WHY IT WORKS

Yes — that's the point of it. Combine the cranberry juice, cider, bourbon, spice syrup, and orange juice up to 24 hours ahead and refrigerate it right in the serving pitcher or a covered bowl.



Nº 04

— VIRAL · 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
5 min

COOK
0 min

SERVES
1 cocktail (batch for 8 included)

LEVEL
Easy

CAL
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

Apple Cider Margarita CONTINUED

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.

WHY IT WORKS

Unfiltered apple cider is pressed whole apples with nothing removed — it's opaque, tartly acidic, and has tannin structure from the apple skin. Apple juice is filtered, pasteurized, and stripped of everything except sweetness.



Nº 05

— VIRAL • 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

15 min (plus 4–24 hr chill)

COOK

0 min

SERVES

10

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

165

01 Ingredients

THE SANGRIA BASE:

- 2 bottles (750ml each) crisp dry white wine — Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, or Riesling (see note)
- 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

Apple Cider Sangria CONTINUED

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.

WHY IT WORKS

Fresh-pressed apple cider — the cloudy, refrigerated kind at the grocery store, not hard cider and not bottled clear apple juice — has more body, natural tannins, and apple depth than filtered juice.



THANKSGIVING

02

APPETIZERS

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

9 RECIPES



Nº 06

— APPLEBEE'S • COPYCAT

Spinach Artichoke Dip

Applebee's spinach artichoke dip recipe: make it at home for about \$8 (serves 8) vs \$11+ for one restaurant appetizer. Triple-cream base, properly drained spinach, broiled bubbly.

PREP
15 min

COOK
25 min

SERVES
8

LEVEL
Easy

CAL
310

01 Ingredients

FOR THE DIP:

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided (¾ cup in the dip, ¼ cup on top)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 can (14 oz) artichoke hearts, drained and roughly chopped

- 10 oz frozen chopped spinach, fully thawed and wrung completely dry
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of salt (taste before adding — Parmesan is salty)

FOR SERVING:

- Tortilla chips (white corn chips closest to Applebee's)
- Optional: ½ cup jarred salsa + ½ tsp chipotle powder + squeeze of lime (for the chipotle lime salsa)

Spinach Artichoke Dip CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Drain and wring the spinach first — do this before anything else.** Thaw the frozen spinach completely. Transfer to a clean kitchen towel (not paper towels), gather into a ball, and wring firmly over the sink. Twist and squeeze until no liquid comes out. Do this twice. You'll extract several tablespoons of water — this step determines whether your dip is creamy or watery.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 375°F.** Lightly grease an 8x8 baking dish or a 9-inch oven-safe skillet.
- 3 Beat the cream cheese until smooth.** In a large bowl, use a hand mixer or sturdy spatula to beat the softened cream cheese until no lumps remain. Cold cream cheese will leave clumps that never fully blend — room temperature is essential.
- 4 Add sour cream and mayo.** Add the sour cream and mayonnaise to the cream cheese and stir until the base is completely uniform.
- 5 Fold in the filling ingredients.** Add the wrung-dry spinach, chopped artichoke hearts, minced garlic, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the mozzarella, and half the Parmesan. Season with black pepper. Stir until evenly distributed — take a moment to break up any spinach clumps.
- 6 Taste before salting.** The Parmesan is salty; the mayo and cream cheese both have salt. Taste the mixture before adding any kosher salt. Often none is needed.
- 7 Transfer to the baking dish.** Spread the mixture evenly into the prepared dish. Top with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mozzarella and the remaining Parmesan.
- 8 Bake for 20–25 minutes.** Bake until the edges are bubbling actively and the mozzarella on top has melted completely. The center should be hot throughout.
- 9 Optional broil for the golden top.** If you want a golden, slightly browned top (closer to the restaurant version), switch the oven to broil for the last 3–4 minutes. Watch it closely — the Parmesan goes from golden to burnt quickly.
- 10 Rest 5 minutes before serving.** The dip is molten immediately out of the oven. Let it settle for 5 minutes so the cheese firms slightly and the dip doesn't run off the chips. Serve with tortilla chips and the chipotle lime salsa if making it.

WHY IT WORKS

Almost always undrained spinach. Frozen spinach contains a significant amount of water that releases into the dip during baking. Even 'squeezed' spinach still holds more moisture than you think.



Nº 07

— ANTOINIES • COPYCAT

Antoine's Oysters Rockefeller

The famous Antoine's Oysters Rockefeller, made at home: no spinach (the original never had it), fresh herbs pureed smooth, Pernod for the anise backbone, and Gulf oysters broiled on a bed of rock salt.

PREP

25 min

COOK

5 min

SERVES

4 (24 oysters)

LEVEL

Medium

CAL

95

01 Ingredients

**24 GULF OYSTERS, LIVE IN THE SHELL
(CRASSOSTREA VIRGINICA — LOUISIANA GULF,
BLUE POINTS, WELFLEET, OR RAPPAHANNOCK)**

- Rock salt, about 2 lbs — to fill a large baking pan and hold the oysters level

HERB SAUCE:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- ½ cup packed flat-leaf parsley leaves (no stems)
- ½ cup packed watercress leaves (stems removed — watercress has the authentic peppery bite the original used)
- 4 scallion greens, coarse-chopped (green parts only, from about 4 scallions)
- 2 tablespoons fennel fronds (feathery green tops from a fennel bulb) OR ¼ teaspoon fennel seed, toasted and finely ground — provides the anise note in the herb base

- 2 celery ribs, coarse-chopped — add body and mild vegetable sweetness
- 1½ tablespoons Pernod, Herbsaint (the New Orleans original), or other anise liqueur — non-negotiable for the dish's character; see FAQ above
- ½ teaspoon Tabasco (Crystal or Louisiana brand also appropriate)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

FOR THE TOP:

- 3 tablespoons fine dry plain breadcrumbs, divided

TO SERVE:

- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- Toasted French bread or baguette slices

Antoine's Oysters Rockefeller

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Set up the rock salt bed.** Pour rock salt into a large, deep baking pan or sheet pan — at least 1 inch deep. The salt holds the oyster shells level so the sauce and liquor do not spill. Set aside.
- 2 Shuck the oysters.** Working with one oyster at a time, wrap a folded dish towel around the oyster cup-side down, hinge facing you, holding firmly with your non-dominant hand. Insert an oyster knife into the hinge and twist firmly until the hinge releases — do not jab or force. Run the knife under the top shell to sever the muscle. Remove the top shell. Run the knife underneath the oyster to free it from the bottom shell; it should sit in its liquor, able to move but not falling out. Nestle each shucked oyster into the rock salt as you go, pressing gently to level it. Work through all 24.
- 3 Make the herb sauce — cold.** Chill the food processor bowl in the freezer for 10 minutes if your kitchen is warm. Combine the softened butter, parsley, watercress, scallion greens, fennel fronds (or ground fennel seed), celery, Pernod or Herbsaint, Tabasco, salt, and 1 tablespoon of the breadcrumbs in the food processor. Process until completely smooth and bright green — scrape down the sides as needed. Stop as soon as the mixture is uniform. Do not over-process; friction heats the mixture and dulls the color. Taste: the sauce should be herby and bright, with a clear anise note, mild heat from the Tabasco, and a buttery finish. Adjust salt if needed. Refrigerate the sauce until ready to use.
- 4 Preheat the broiler.** Set the oven to broil at its highest setting — this is typically 500°F to 550°F. Position the rack 4 to 5 inches below the broiler element. Higher racks risk burning the breadcrumbs before the sauce heats through; lower racks produce insufficient crumb browning.
- 5 Sauce the oysters.** Remove the herb sauce from the refrigerator. Spoon approximately 1½ teaspoons of the green sauce over each oyster, spreading it with the back of the spoon to cover the surface of the oyster completely, edge to edge. Sprinkle the remaining 2 tablespoons of fine breadcrumbs evenly over all the oysters — about a pinch each. The crumbs provide texture and a golden surface under the broiler.
- 6 Broil.** Slide the pan under the broiler. Broil 3 to 4 minutes, watching constantly through the oven window. The dish is done when the breadcrumbs are golden brown and the herb sauce is bubbling at the edges of each shell. The oyster inside should look just barely set at its edges — opaque at the rim but still plump and soft in the center, not shrunken or rubbery. Pull the pan at 3 minutes and check. If the crumbs are golden but the sauce isn't bubbling, give it another 30 to 60 seconds. Do not wait for the oysters to look fully cooked — they finish cooking in the residual heat of the shell.
- 7 Serve immediately.** Carry the pan directly to the table; the rock salt holds heat and keeps the oysters sizzling for a minute or two. Serve with lemon wedges squeezed over just before eating, and toasted French bread to sop up any sauce that pools in the shell. Six oysters per person as a first course, twelve as a light main with salad and bread.

WHY IT WORKS

Jules Alciatore named it for John D. Rockefeller — who was, in 1899, the richest man in the United States and arguably the world. Alciatore's description of the sauce as 'so rich it could only be named for the world's richest man' was the public explanation.



Nº 08

— AVEC • COPYCAT

Bacon-Wrapped Chorizo-Stuffed Dates

Avec in Chicago has served the same bacon-wrapped chorizo-stuffed Medjool dates since 2003 — unchanged for 22 years, with the same person assembling them every day.

PREP

15 min

COOK

35 min

SERVES

6 servings (4 dates each)

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

480

01 Ingredients

- 24 large Medjool dates (pitted)
- 8 oz fresh Spanish-style chorizo (uncooked links, not dry-cured)
- 12 strips thin-cut bacon (not thick-cut)
- 2 jars (7.6 oz each) roasted piquillo peppers, drained
- 1 can (14½ oz) good-quality whole peeled tomatoes
- Kosher salt to taste

Bacon-Wrapped Chorizo-Stuffed Dates

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Preheat and prep.** Set the oven to 350°F with a rack in the center. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Remove the chorizo from its casing by snipping one end and squeezing the meat out.
- 2 Pit the dates.** Use a paring knife to make a small slit down the length of each date — just enough to push out the pit with your finger. Keep the date intact; do not cut it all the way open. The date should look like a small pocket, not two flaps.
- 3 Stuff the dates.** Roll the loose chorizo into small logs approximately the size of the pit you removed. Push one log firmly into each date cavity and press the date closed around it. The chorizo should be completely enclosed.
- 4 Wrap with bacon.** Cut each bacon strip in half crosswise so you have 24 half-strips. Wrap one half-strip around each date, overlapping the ends on the bottom, and place seam-side down on the prepared baking sheet. The bacon wraps should fit snugly — if a half-strip is too short for your dates, use three-quarter strips.
- 5 Bake.** Transfer to the oven and bake for 40 minutes. The dates will soften and their sugars will begin to caramelize; the chorizo fat will render into the date; the bacon will cook through and start to take on color. Do not stir or move them.
- 6 Make the sauce.** While the dates bake, combine the drained piquillo peppers and canned tomatoes (with their juices) in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Simmer uncovered for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is thickened and the tomatoes have broken down. Season generously with salt. Puree with an immersion blender (or transfer to a blender) until almost smooth — the texture should be thick and slightly rustic, not completely glassy. Taste and adjust salt.
- 7 Broil to finish.** After 40 minutes, switch the oven to broil and cook the dates 2 to 3 minutes more, watching closely, until the bacon is visibly crisped and the edges have browned. Remove immediately — the dates can go from perfect to burned quickly under the broiler.
- 8 Plate and serve.** Ladle a generous pool of warm piquillo sauce onto each plate. Arrange four dates, bacon-crisped side up, on top of the sauce. Serve immediately.

WHY IT WORKS

Avec is a Mediterranean small-plates restaurant at 615 W. Randolph St. in Chicago's West Loop, founded in October 2003 by chef Paul Kahan, restaurateur Donnie Madia, and wine director Eduard Seitan.



Nº 09

— BOBBY FLAY • COPYCAT

Bobby Flay's 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

10 min

CAL

90

COOK

20 min (+ up to 48 hr make-ahead)

SERVES

about 16 shooters

LEVEL

Easy

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

— BOBBY FLAY • COPYCAT

Bobby Flay's Bar Americain Pumpkin Soup Shooters with Cinnamon Cream

CONTINUED

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 $\frac{1}{3}$ 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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 $\frac{7}{8}$ 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.



Nº 10

— TEX MEX • COPYCAT

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.

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

Almost always because of missing vinegar. It's the third ingredient on the Fritos label, but the vast majority of copycat recipes call for cumin, garlic, and chili powder — and stop there.

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.



Nº 11

GRAMERCY TAVERN · COPYCAT

Wild Mushroom Toast

Inspired by Gramercy Tavern's famous mushroom tartine: deeply seared chanterelles and hen of the woods in tarragon cream on grilled sourdough, topped with a soft-cooked egg and shaved Parmigiano.

PREP
20 min

COOK
25 min

SERVES
4

LEVEL
Medium

CAL
380

01 Ingredients

FOR THE MUSHROOMS:

- 1½ lbs mixed wild mushrooms (chanterelles, hen of the woods/maitake, shiitake, cremini — any combination)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided (2 tbsp for mushrooms, 1 tbsp for shallots)
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil (grapeseed or avocado)
- 3 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves (stripped from about 12 sprigs)
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry or dry white wine
- ⅓ cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon fresh tarragon leaves, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TOAST:

- 4 slices sourdough bread, cut ¾ to 1 inch thick
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- Flaky sea salt

FOR FINISHING:

- 4 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar (for poaching)
- ½ oz Parmigiano-Reggiano, shaved with a vegetable peeler
- A few drops truffle oil (optional but recommended)
- Fresh thyme or chervil sprigs for garnish

Wild Mushroom Toast CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Prep the mushrooms.** Brush any dirt from the mushrooms with a dry pastry brush or damp paper towel — don't rinse them. Tear hen of the woods into 2-inch rustic pieces. Halve or quarter large chanterelles lengthwise. Leave shiitakes whole or halve if large. Set aside in a wide bowl.
- 2 Sear the first batch.** Set a 12-inch cast-iron or stainless skillet over the highest heat your burner will produce. Let it preheat for 2 full minutes until very hot. Add 1 tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon oil. When the butter foam subsides (about 30 seconds), add half the mushrooms in a single layer. **DO NOT STIR** for 2 full minutes — leave them in contact with the pan. Season lightly with salt. After 2 minutes, toss once. Cook 1 more minute. Transfer to the bowl. Wipe the pan clean.
- 3 Sear the second batch.** Repeat step 2 with remaining 1 tablespoon butter, 1 tablespoon oil, and second half of mushrooms. Transfer to bowl with first batch.
- 4 Build the base.** Reduce heat to medium. Add 1 tablespoon butter to the same pan. Add shallots with a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, 4 to 5 minutes until softened and translucent. Add garlic and thyme; cook 1 minute more.
- 5 Finish the mushrooms.** Return all seared mushrooms to the pan. Pour in the sherry and cook until evaporated, about 1 minute, scraping up any browned bits. Pour in the cream and cook, stirring, until reduced by half and the sauce coats the mushrooms, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in tarragon and parsley. Taste and adjust salt and pepper. Keep warm over the lowest heat or off the heat if your burner runs hot.
- 6 Grill the toast.** Spread softened butter on both sides of each sourdough slice. Heat a grill pan or flat cast-iron over medium-high heat. Add the bread and cook undisturbed for 2 minutes until deeply golden with grill marks or an even golden crust. Flip and cook 2 minutes more. Transfer to plates. Season the top surface with a pinch of flaky salt while still warm.
- 7 Poach the eggs.** Bring 2 inches of water to a gentle simmer in a medium saucepan (small bubbles rising from the bottom; not a rolling boil). Add 1 teaspoon white vinegar. Crack each egg into a small cup first. Stir the water to create a gentle swirl, then slip eggs in one at a time. Cook 3 minutes exactly for a runny yolk with fully set whites. Remove with a slotted spoon to a paper towel to blot.
- 8 Assemble.** Pile the mushroom mixture generously over each toast slice — don't hold back, mound them high. Place one poached egg on top of each. Shave Parmigiano-Reggiano over the plate using a vegetable peeler. Add 3 to 4 drops of truffle oil if using. Finish with a fresh thyme or chervil sprig. Serve immediately.

WHY IT WORKS

Mushrooms are about 90% water by weight. When you add them to a pan they immediately begin releasing that water as steam.



Nº 12

— QDOBA · COPYCAT

3-Cheese Queso

Make Qdoba's famous 3-Cheese Queso at home — creamy, smoky, and loaded with roasted poblano and jalapeño. The secret is Swiss cheese. Under \$8 for 6 servings vs. \$5–7 at the restaurant.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	15 min	6	Easy	245

01 Ingredients

- 8 oz white American cheese, cubed (deli-sliced and cubed, not Velveeta)
- 4 oz Monterey Jack cheese, shredded from a block
- 2 oz Swiss cheese, shredded from a block
- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 poblano pepper
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely minced
- ¼ cup red bell pepper, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- Kosher salt to taste

3-Cheese Queso CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Roast the poblano.** Place the poblano directly over a gas burner set to high, or on a foil-lined baking sheet under the broiler (about 4 inches from the element). Turn every 2 minutes with tongs until the skin is blistered and charred on all sides, 6–8 minutes total. Transfer to a bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap or a plate, and let steam for 10 minutes. Peel off the charred skin — do not rinse under water, or you wash away the smoky flavor. Remove the stem and seeds and dice finely. Set aside.
- 2 **Sauté the peppers.** Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the minced jalapeño, diced red bell pepper, and garlic. Cook, stirring, for 3–4 minutes until softened and fragrant. Don't let the garlic brown.
- 3 **Build the base.** Add the milk to the pan and bring it to a gentle simmer — small bubbles around the edges, not a full boil. Reduce heat to low.
- 4 **Add the white American first.** Add the cubed white American cheese in two additions, stirring constantly with a whisk after each until fully melted and incorporated. The sodium citrate in the white American creates the smooth emulsifying foundation the other cheeses will hold onto.
- 5 **Add the Monterey Jack.** Add the shredded Monterey Jack in two additions, stirring between each until fully melted. Keep the heat low throughout — do not let the mixture simmer again.
- 6 **Add the Swiss.** Add the shredded Swiss in two additions, whisking until smooth. Swiss takes a little longer to melt than Jack; be patient and keep the heat low.
- 7 **Season and finish.** Stir in the diced roasted poblano, cumin, smoked paprika, and lime juice. Taste and adjust salt. The queso should be smooth and pourable. If it's too thick, stir in an additional tablespoon of milk.
- 8 **Serve immediately.** Transfer to a warm serving bowl and serve with tortilla chips, or pour directly over a burrito bowl. The queso will thicken as it cools; rewarm gently over low heat with a splash of milk, stirring constantly.

WHY IT WORKS

The three cheeses are white American, Monterey Jack, and Swiss. White American is the base — it contains sodium citrate (a natural emulsifying salt), which is why the queso stays silky and pourable even without a flour roux.



Nº 13

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Boursin Phyllo Cups

The viral TikTok Boursin phyllo cups recipe: fill store-bought mini phyllo shells with Garlic & Herb Boursin, then top with fig jam and walnuts, cherry tomato and basil, or smoked salmon and everything bagel seasoning.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	0 min	5	Easy	170

01 Ingredients

- 1 box (15 count) Athens mini phyllo shells, thawed
- 1 package (5.2 oz) Boursin Garlic & Fine Herbs, at room temperature

• TOPPING VARIATION 1 — FIG & WALNUT (SWEET-SAVORY):

- 5 teaspoons good-quality fig jam or fig preserves
- 5 walnut halves, roughly broken
- Small fresh thyme leaves
- Drizzle of honey

• TOPPING VARIATION 2 — CHERRY TOMATO & BASIL (MEDITERRANEAN):

- 5 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 5 small fresh basil leaves, torn
- Balsamic glaze (for drizzling)
- Flaky sea salt and cracked black pepper

• TOPPING VARIATION 3 — SMOKED SALMON & EVERYTHING BAGEL (BRUNCH-STYLE):

- 2 oz smoked salmon, torn into small folds
- 10 small capers, drained
- Everything bagel seasoning
- Fresh dill fronds
- Squeeze of lemon juice

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Boursin Phyllo Cups

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Thaw the phyllo shells.** Remove the Athens mini phyllo shells from the freezer and thaw at room temperature for 15 minutes — they'll become slightly flexible and the layers will separate into their characteristic crunch. Prefer warm shells? Arrange them on a small baking sheet and place in a 350°F oven for 5 minutes until heated through and extra-crisp. Let them cool for 2 minutes before filling so the Boursin doesn't melt on contact.
- 2 Soften the Boursin.** This step is non-negotiable: remove the Boursin from the fridge at least 20 minutes before you plan to fill the cups. Room-temperature Boursin is soft, smooth, and will mound easily in a shell without cracking the sides. Cold Boursin is stiff and waxy and will crack the phyllo as you press it in. In a hurry? Remove the foil wrapper and microwave on low (30% power) for 10-second bursts, stirring between each, until softened but not melted.
- 3 Fill the shells.** Using a small spoon (a teaspoon works perfectly), a piping bag, or a zip-lock bag with a small corner snipped, place 1 rounded teaspoon of Boursin in each phyllo shell. It should sit just above the shell rim, mounded in the center. You want enough Boursin that every bite gets a full hit of the creamy herb cheese — don't underfill. Press gently with the back of your spoon to seat the Boursin without crushing the shell walls. Arrange the filled shells on a serving tray as you go.
- 4 Top and serve.** Add your chosen toppings immediately before serving (or at most 30 minutes before — see make-ahead note). For Fig & Walnut: place ¼ teaspoon fig jam on top of the Boursin, press in a broken walnut piece, lay a few thyme leaves, and add a tiny drizzle of honey. For Cherry Tomato & Basil: set a halved cherry tomato cut-side up in the Boursin, tuck a torn basil leaf alongside, drizzle with balsamic glaze, and finish with flaky salt and cracked pepper. For Smoked Salmon & Everything Bagel: fold a small ribbon of smoked salmon and lay it across the Boursin, place 2 capers on either side, add a pinch of everything bagel seasoning, lay a dill frond on top, and add a small squeeze of lemon juice.
- 5 Pass and serve.** Arrange the cups on a flat serving board or plate. If serving multiple variations, group them by type so guests can identify each. These are best at room temperature — the Boursin stays soft and the phyllo stays crisp for up to 90 minutes after filling at room temperature, making them ideal for circulating on a passed tray.

WHY IT WORKS

Athens mini phyllo shells are pre-baked frozen pastry cups made from the same paper-thin phyllo dough used in baklava — 15 shells per box, each about 1.5 inches in diameter.



Nº 14

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Brown Sugar Kielbasa Bites

The viral TikTok brown sugar kielbasa bites recipe from @vics_tricks_to: 4 ingredients, one pan, 30 minutes. Dark brown sugar, Dijon, and black pepper glaze baked onto kielbasa coins — the most-shared easy party appetizer on TikTok.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	30 min	8	Easy	270

01 Ingredients

- 1 lb beef kielbasa (or pork/Polska kielbasa), sliced into ½-inch coins
- ¾ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar (or apple cider vinegar)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard (yellow mustard also works and is the more traditional choice)
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

OPTIONAL — PINEAPPLE VARIATION:

- 1 cup fresh or canned pineapple chunks (add in the last 15 minutes of baking)

OPTIONAL — SPICY VARIATION:

- ¼ cup pickled jalapeño slices, or ¼ teaspoon cayenne whisked into the glaze

Brown Sugar Kielbasa Bites

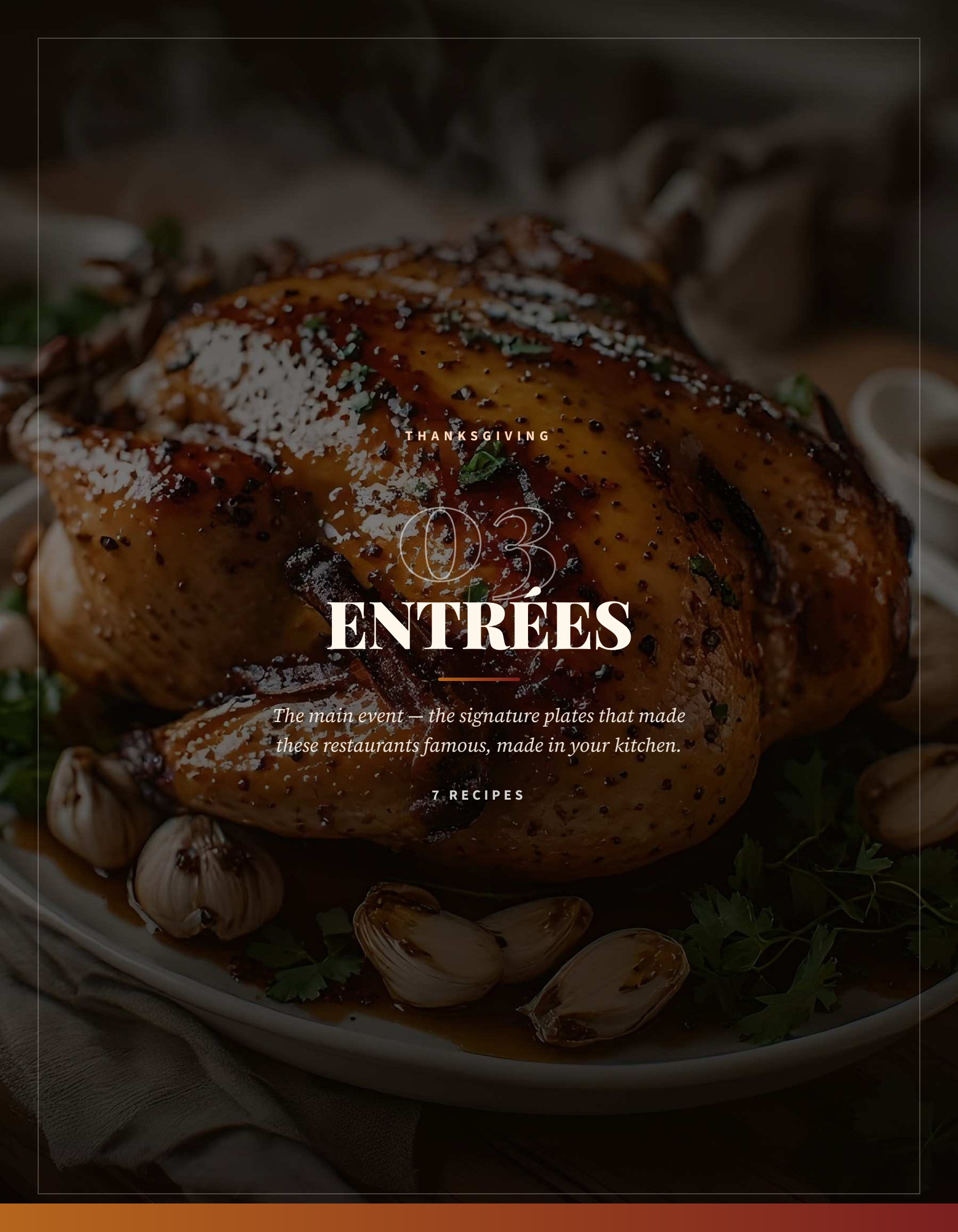
CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Make the glaze in the pan.** In a 9×13 metal baking pan, whisk together the packed dark brown sugar, vinegar, mustard, and black pepper until combined into a thick paste. Doing this directly in the baking pan means no extra bowl to wash and no glaze left behind in a mixing bowl.
- 2 Warm the glaze on the stovetop.** Set the metal pan across one or two burners over medium heat. Stir constantly for 2–4 minutes until the brown sugar melts and the mixture turns pourable and glossy — it should move easily when you tilt the pan. Do not let it boil hard or scorch; you just want it liquid enough to coat. Remove from the heat. (If your pan won't sit on a burner, warm the glaze in a saucepan or 20 seconds in the microwave, then scrape it into the baking pan.)
- 3 Slice the kielbasa.** Cut the kielbasa into ½-inch-thick coins, on a slight diagonal if you want a bit more surface area per piece. A full 1-lb kielbasa gives roughly 30–34 coins. There's no need to pat them dry.
- 4 Coat the coins.** Add all the kielbasa coins to the warm glaze and stir until every piece is fully coated. The coins can be crowded in the pan — this is a glaze-and-bake dish, not a single-layer roast, and stirring partway through keeps everything evenly lacquered.
- 5 Bake 15 minutes.** Slide the pan into a 350°F oven (rack in the center) and bake for 15 minutes. The glaze will loosen and start bubbling as it heats.
- 6 Stir, then bake 15 more minutes.** Pull the pan out and stir the coins thoroughly, scooping the glaze from the bottom up and over the tops so every piece gets re-coated. Return to the oven for another 15 minutes, until the glaze has reduced to a sticky, deep-amber coating that clings to the kielbasa. Total bake time is about 30 minutes.
- 7 Cool 2–3 minutes, then serve.** The glaze is molten straight from the oven. Let the pan rest for 2–3 minutes and the glaze firms from runny to sticky — the right texture for a toothpick appetizer. Serve warm in the pan or transferred to a platter, with toothpicks alongside.
- 8 Pineapple variation:** Stir pineapple chunks into the pan at the halfway mark (when you stir the coins) so they soften and their sugars deepen the caramelization. Adding them at the start releases too much liquid and keeps the glaze from thickening.

WHY IT WORKS

Usually the glaze didn't get enough time to reduce, or there was too much added liquid. Make sure you bake the full 30 minutes (two 15-minute stretches with a stir in between) so the brown sugar cooks down and thickens.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a roasted turkey on a white platter. The turkey is golden brown, glistening with oil, and topped with a generous amount of coarse salt and fresh green herbs. In the foreground, several whole garlic bulbs and several open clams are arranged around the base of the turkey. The background is dark and out of focus, showing hints of other dishes and a rustic setting.

THANKSGIVING

03
ENTRÉES

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

7 RECIPES



Nº 15

— BOBBY FLAY • COPYCAT

Bobby Flay's 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
25 min (+ overnight dry brine)	3 hr 30 min + 40 min rest	12-14
LEVEL	CAL	
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

Bobby Flay's Ancho Chile-Maple Glazed Thanksgiving Turkey

CONTINUED

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.



Nº 16

— GORDON RAMSAY · COPYCAT

Gordon Ramsay's Turkey with Lemon, Parsley and Garlic

Gordon Ramsay's famous Thanksgiving turkey: compound butter of lemon, parsley, and garlic pushed under the breast skin, bacon rashers laid over the top to baste themselves in the oven, a 15-minute high-heat blast, and a thorough rest.

PREP
30 min

COOK
3 hr 30 min + 45 min rest

SERVES
10-12

LEVEL
Intermediate

CAL
365

01 Ingredients

FOR THE COMPOUND BUTTER:

- 13 oz (375g / about 1⅔ cups) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- Zest and juice of 2 lemons
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed or very finely minced
- 1 large bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves only, finely chopped (about ⅓ cup packed)
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TURKEY:

- 1 whole turkey (12–16 lb), giblets and neck removed, excess fat trimmed from cavity
- Kosher salt and black pepper, for the cavity
- 8–10 strips streaky bacon (or pancetta slices)

CAVITY AROMATICS:

- 2 medium onions, halved (no need to peel)
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 whole garlic bulb, halved across the equator
- 2 fresh bay leaves

ROASTING BED:

- 2 medium onions, roughly chopped
- 2 large carrots, roughly chopped
- 3 celery stalks, roughly chopped
- 1 whole garlic bulb, halved

FOR THE GRAVY:

- 1 cup dry white wine (or dry Vermouth)
- 2 cups turkey stock or low-sodium chicken stock
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp cornstarch + 2 tbsp cold water (optional, for thickening)

Gordon Ramsay's Turkey with Lemon, Parsley and Garlic

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Bring the turkey to room temperature.** Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 1 hour before roasting. Cold turkeys take significantly longer to cook and the exterior tends to overcook before the interior catches up. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C) with a rack in the lowest-third position.
- 2 **Make the compound butter.** Beat the softened butter in a medium bowl until smooth and creamy. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, crushed garlic, finely chopped parsley, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and a generous amount of black pepper. Mix until fully combined with no pockets of plain butter. The finished butter will look green-flecked and smell strongly of lemon and parsley.
- 3 **Apply the butter under the skin.** Pat the turkey completely dry with paper towels — this is important for crispy skin. Starting at the neck cavity, work your fingers under the breast skin, easing between the skin and the breast meat to create a pocket on each breast half, being careful not to tear the skin. Push about two-thirds of the compound butter under the skin — dollop it in and press firmly from the outside to spread it across the entire surface of both breast halves. Rub the remaining one-third of butter all over the entire outside of the turkey: breasts, drumsticks, thighs, and back. Season the exterior lightly with additional salt and pepper.
- 4 **Fill the cavity.** Season the inside of the turkey cavity generously with salt and pepper. Place the halved onions inside the cavity (cut-side down), then add the halved lemon, the halved garlic bulb (cut-side down), and the bay leaves. The cavity should be loosely filled, not tightly packed.
- 5 **Build the roasting bed.** Scatter the roughly chopped onions, carrots, celery, and halved garlic bulb across the bottom of a large roasting pan. Set the turkey breast-side up on top of the vegetables — they will caramelize in the drippings throughout the roast and form the flavor base for the gravy.
- 6 **Apply the bacon.** Lay the bacon rashers (or pancetta slices) in overlapping rows directly across the breast and thighs of the turkey, covering as much surface area as possible. The bacon fat will render during roasting and continuously baste the bird from the outside while the compound butter bastes it from the inside.
- 7 **Initial high-heat blast.** Roast the turkey at 425°F for 15 minutes. Do not baste or open the oven during this phase — you are setting the skin color and beginning the browning process undisturbed.
- 8 **Reduce heat and roast.** After 15 minutes, reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (180°C). Continue roasting, basting the turkey with the pan juices every 30 minutes. The first baste will have limited liquid; subsequent basting will have more as the drippings accumulate. Baste over and under the bacon, pushing the juices under the edge of the bacon strips where possible.
- 9 **Remove the bacon.** Approximately 20 minutes before the turkey is expected to be done, remove the bacon rashers and set them aside (they are worth eating). The exposed skin should re-crisp in the oven's heat during the final stretch. If the skin is deeply browned and you are worried about burning, it's fine to leave the bacon on — the turkey's doneness takes priority over a slightly paler skin patch.
- 10 **Check the temperature.** The turkey is done when an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh — without touching the bone — reads 165°F (74°C). For a 14-pound turkey, begin checking 30–40 minutes before you expect it to be done. Total oven time will be approximately 3 hours 15 minutes to 3 hours 30 minutes, not counting the 45-minute to 1-hour rest.
- 11 **Rest the turkey — this is not optional.** Tilt the bird using a kitchen towel held against the cavity so the cavity juices drain into the roasting pan. Transfer to a large cutting board or carving surface. Rest uncovered for at least 45 minutes; 1 hour is better. Do NOT tent with foil — steam will soften the crispy skin. The turkey will stay warm for the full hour due to its thermal mass.

12

Make the gravy while the turkey rests. Tilt the roasting pan and skim most of the surface fat from the drippings. Place the pan over two burners on medium-high heat. Add the white wine and scrape up all the browned bits from the bottom. Reduce the wine by half, about 3 minutes. Add the stock, bring to a boil, and reduce until concentrated and flavorful, 5–8 more minutes. Taste and season. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a warm pitcher, pressing on the vegetables to extract their flavor. Thicken with the cornstarch slurry if desired.

WHY IT WORKS

Ramsay's canonical recipe is 'Roast Turkey with Lemon, Parsley and Garlic' — that title is the actual recipe, not a description of it.



Nº 17

HONEYBAKED HAM • COPYCAT

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

20 min

COOK

2 hrs 30 min

SERVES

14

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

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)

Glaze

CONTINUED

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.



Nº 18

— LAWRY'S • COPYCAT

Lawry's The Prime Rib Standing Rib Roast

The famous Lawry's The Prime Rib standing rib roast, made at home: dry-aged technique with a 48-hour seasoned salt crust, low-and-slow roast, and silky au jus — from the Beverly Hills institution that has been carving tableside since 1938.

PREP

30 min (plus 48 hr dry-brine)

COOK

3–4 hr

SERVES

6–8

LEVEL

Moderate

CAL

680

01 Ingredients

THE ROAST:

- 1 bone-in standing rib roast, 3 ribs (7–8 lb) — USDA Prime or Choice; ask the butcher to remove the chine bone and tie the roast for even cooking
- 2 tbsp Lawry's Seasoned Salt
- 1 tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder

AU JUS:

- Pan drippings from the roast (defatted)
- 1½ cups low-sodium beef stock
- Kosher salt to taste

TO SERVE:

- Prepared horseradish (Silver Spring or Gold's brand — not horseradish sauce, which is mayonnaise-based)
- Yorkshire pudding or creamed corn (traditional Lawry's accompaniments)

Lawry's The Prime Rib Standing Rib Roast

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **48 hours ahead — dry-brine.** Pat the roast completely dry with paper towels (moisture is the enemy of crust). Mix the Lawry's Seasoned Salt, black pepper, and garlic powder in a small bowl. Season the roast on all sides generously, pressing the seasoning firmly into the meat and fat cap — use all of the mixture. Set the roast rib-side down on a wire rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet. **DO NOT** cover it. Refrigerate uncovered for 48 hours. The surface will look tacky and the color will deepen from red to a darker garnet — this is correct.
- 2 **2 hours before cooking — temper the roast.** Pull the roast from the refrigerator and let it sit uncovered at room temperature for at least 2 hours. A cold-center roast takes longer to cook and risks uneven doneness from edge to center. This step is not optional.
- 3 **Preheat and set up.** Set your oven to 250°F (not a typo — low heat is the secret). Position a rack in the lower third of the oven. The low temperature gives the fat time to render slowly and the connective tissue to break down while the center reaches temperature without overcooking.
- 4 **Roast to temperature, not time.** Place the roast rib-side down (the bones act as a natural rack) in a roasting pan. Insert a leave-in probe thermometer into the thickest part of the eye, angled away from the bone. Roast until the internal temperature reads 118°F for medium-rare. For a 7 to 8 pound roast, this typically takes 3 to 3½ hours at 250°F — but go by the thermometer, not the clock. Trust the probe.
- 5 **Rest under foil for 20 minutes.** Remove the roast from the oven and tent it loosely with foil. The internal temperature will rise another 5 to 8°F during resting, bringing the center to 123 to 126°F — textbook medium-rare. Do not skip this step. Cutting too early loses the juices that redistribute as the muscle fibers relax.
- 6 **Make the au jus while the roast rests.** Tilt the roasting pan and skim most of the white fat from the drippings using a ladle or fat separator (save a spoonful to roast Yorkshire pudding if making it). Transfer the defatted drippings to a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the beef stock and bring to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits from the pan bottom. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes until slightly reduced. Taste for salt and strain through a fine-mesh sieve. Keep warm.
- 7 **Carve tableside (the Lawry's way).** Remove the butcher's twine. Stand the roast upright on the bones and slice between the bones for Diamond Jim Brady-style thick cuts. For thinner English or California cuts, lay the roast on its side and slice across the eye of the meat. Serve each plate with a pour of hot au jus in a small cup alongside — not over the meat, as Lawry's serves it separately so the crust stays dry.

WHY IT WORKS

The dry-brine technique works in two stages. In the first few hours, the salt draws moisture out of the meat's surface — you'll see beads of liquid on the exterior.



Nº 19

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Spatchcock Turkey

The viral TikTok spatchcock turkey technique that cuts Thanksgiving cooking time from 3.5 hours to 85 minutes: remove the backbone, flatten the bird, roast at 425°F. Every piece finishes at the same time and every surface gets crispy skin.

PREP

20 min (+ optional 24-hr dry brine)

CAL

340

COOK

85 min

SERVES

10-12

LEVEL

Intermediate

01 Ingredients

TURKEY:

- 1 whole turkey, 12–14 lbs, fully thawed, giblets and neck removed and reserved
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (or 1½ teaspoons Morton's)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika (for even mahogany color — optional but recommended)

COMPOUND BUTTER (GOES UNDER THE SKIN):

- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 4 cloves garlic, grated on a microplane or finely minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried)

- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely minced (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, finely minced (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

PAN AROMATICS (OPTIONAL — GENERATES DRIPPINGS FOR GRAVY):

- 1 large yellow onion, quartered
- 3 celery stalks, cut into 3-inch pieces
- 2 medium carrots, halved lengthwise
- 1 head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken or turkey broth

— VIRAL • COPYCAT

Spatchcock Turkey

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Thaw completely — no shortcuts.** A spatchcocked turkey must be fully thawed. Refrigerator thaw: allow 24 hours per 4–5 lbs, so a 14-lb bird needs 3 days minimum. Do not thaw on the counter and never attempt to spatchcock a partially frozen bird — the backbone resists the shears and the breastbone won't crack flat when there's ice in the joint.
- 2 **Optional: dry-brine the night before.** Mix 1 tablespoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt with 1 teaspoon baking powder. Pat the whole raw turkey dry with paper towels. Rub the salt mixture evenly over every surface — under the skin where possible, over the exterior, inside the cavity. Place the whole, unseasoned bird on a wire rack set in a rimmed sheet pan and refrigerate UNCOVERED for 12 to 24 hours. The baking powder is the key detail: its alkalinity accelerates the Maillard browning reaction, producing darker skin faster at 425°F. If dry-brining, reduce the exterior kosher salt on cook day to ½ tablespoon — the bird is already well-salted.
- 3 **Spatchcock the turkey.** Set the turkey breast-side DOWN on a cutting board, legs pointing toward you. Locate the backbone: it's the bony ridge running down the center of the back. Using heavy-duty kitchen shears, cut firmly along one side of the backbone from the tail opening toward the neck opening, keeping the blade as close to the backbone as possible. Then cut along the other side. The backbone lifts away in one piece. Reserve it: simmer it with the giblets and neck in 4 cups of water for 45 minutes while the turkey roasts — the resulting stock becomes the base for pan-dripping gravy. Flip the turkey breast-side UP. The breast is still arched and the bird won't lie flat yet. Use a short, sharp knife to make a 1-inch shallow cut into the white cartilage at the very top of the breastbone, right where the two breast halves meet. Place both hands palm-down at the center of the breast, fingers spread wide for even pressure, and press firmly and steadily downward until you feel (and may hear) the breastbone crack. Open the bird fully flat — the thighs should splay outward naturally. The bird should now lie in a single flat plane.
- 4 **Make the compound butter.** Mix the softened butter, grated garlic, chopped thyme, rosemary, sage, lemon zest, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together in a small bowl until uniform. The mixture should smell intensely of garlic and fresh herbs.
- 5 **Get the butter under the skin — this is where the flavor lives.** Starting at the neck end of the breast, gently slide your fingers between the skin and the breast meat, separating the skin without tearing it. Work your hand back toward the thigh joint to loosen the thigh skin as well. Push generous portions of the compound butter under the skin directly against the breast meat and thigh meat on both sides of the bird. Press on the skin from the outside to distribute the butter evenly over the surface of the meat. Butter under the skin bastes the meat from the inside as it melts and keeps the skin surface dry and crispy — butter on TOP of the skin would cause it to steam and go soft.
- 6 **Season the exterior.** Pat the skin completely dry with paper towels — any moisture that accumulated from the refrigerator will steam and soften the skin if it goes into the oven wet. Brush the entire top surface with olive oil, getting into the wing joints and between the legs and the body. Season all exposed surfaces with the kosher salt, black pepper, and smoked paprika.
- 7 **Set up the pan and preheat.** Set the oven rack to the lower third of the oven and preheat to 425°F. Scatter the quartered onion, celery, carrots, and halved garlic head across a large rimmed half-sheet pan (18×13 inches). Pour in 1 cup of broth — this prevents the drippings from scorching during the 85-minute roast and generates the fond for gravy. Set a wire rack over the vegetables and place the turkey breast-side UP on the rack, thighs splayed outward and wing tips tucked under the front of the breast. The skin should face up without any vegetables covering it.
- 8 **Roast at 425°F without interruption.** Slide the pan into the oven and set a timer: 75 minutes for a 12-lb bird, 85 minutes for 14 lbs, 95 minutes for 16 lbs. Do not open the oven door for the first 60 minutes. Continuous high heat is what converts the subcutaneous fat in the skin to a lacquered, crispy crust — every door opening drops the oven temperature and extends the crisping time. At the timer, check the internal temperature with an instant-read thermometer: insert into the thickest part of the breast (not touching bone) — target 165°F — and into the thickest part of the thigh — target 175°F. The different targets are intentional: dark meat contains more connective tissue and collagen, which converts to gelatin at 175°F, producing juicier, more tender thigh meat than stopping at 165°F.
- 9 **Rest uncovered for 30 minutes.** Transfer the turkey to a large cutting board with a juice groove. Do NOT cover with foil — foil traps steam and softens the skin you spent 85 minutes crisping. The turkey stays plenty warm through a 30-minute rest, and the resting allows muscle fibers to reabsorb the juices pressed out during roasting. The internal temperature will carry over 3 to 5 degrees during the rest.
- 10 **Make the pan sauce while it rests.** Pour the pan drippings through a fine-mesh strainer into a fat separator. Let settle 5 minutes. The bottom layer is concentrated turkey jus; the top is rendered fat. For a simple pan sauce: bring the strained jus and your turkey bone stock to a simmer in a saucepan and reduce by one-third. For gravy: in a separate pan, whisk 2 tablespoons butter with 2 tablespoons flour over medium heat for 1 minute (roux), then whisk in 2 cups of hot combined jus and stock until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

11

Carve the flat bird. A spatchcocked turkey carves differently from a whole bird. Separate the legs first: cut through the hip joint with a sharp knife, then separate the drumstick from the thigh at the knee joint. Remove the breast halves by cutting alongside the breastbone and following the bone outward, then slice each breast crosswise into ½-inch pieces. Everything is ready simultaneously — no racing to serve the white meat before it dries out while waiting on the dark meat.

WHY IT WORKS

Spatchcocking (also called butterflying) means cutting out the backbone and pressing the bird flat so it lies in a single even plane.



Nº 20

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Taiwanese Turkey Rice

The viral TikTok Taiwanese turkey rice recipe: poach a turkey breast, shred it fine, fry shallots until golden-crispy, and drizzle the rice with shallot oil soy sauce that makes this Chiayi street-food bowl so addictive.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	45 min	4	Easy	430

01 Ingredients

FOR POACHING THE TURKEY:

- 1½ lb (680g) boneless, skinless turkey breast — or 2 large turkey tenderloins; skin-on is fine and adds a little more richness to the poaching liquid; leftover Thanksgiving turkey breast skips this step entirely
- 4 cups water or low-sodium chicken broth — broth produces a more flavorful sauce
- 3 slices fresh ginger (¼ inch thick each)
- 2 green onions, tied in a loose knot — the knot prevents the layers from separating
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

FOR THE CRISPY SHALLOTS AND SHALLOT OIL (THE KEY INGREDIENT):

- 8 large shallots (about 10 oz total), thinly sliced into rings — uniform thickness is critical: thick rings stay raw while thin ones burn; a mandoline at ⅛ inch or careful knife work
- ¾ cup neutral oil — avocado, canola, or sunflower; not olive oil, which has too low a smoke point and will taste bitter

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 1 cup reserved turkey poaching liquid

- 3 tablespoons light soy sauce — NOT dark soy sauce, which would turn the sauce too dark and intensely salty; regular Kikkoman or Pearl River Bridge light soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce — adds a background sweetness and umami depth that soy sauce alone doesn't provide
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar — or brown sugar for a slightly deeper note
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper — white pepper is the traditional choice here; black pepper works but tastes different
- ¼ teaspoon five-spice powder — optional but adds the characteristic warm, slightly star-anise note that distinguishes Taiwanese-style from Chinese-American versions
- 3 tablespoons reserved shallot oil — this is the soul of the dish; do not skip

TO SERVE:

- 4 cups hot cooked jasmine rice — long-grain Thai jasmine rice is traditional and stays fluffy; Japanese short-grain also works for a stickier texture
- Pickled daikon radish — optional but the acidity cuts through the richness perfectly; available at any Asian grocery, or see FAQ for a quick homemade version

Taiwanese Turkey Rice CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Poach the turkey.** Combine water or broth, ginger, green onions, and salt in a medium saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer. Lower the turkey breast in — the liquid should simmer, not boil. A rolling boil toughens turkey the same way it toughens chicken. Adjust heat to maintain 170–175°F (gentle bubbles breaking the surface occasionally). Poach 35–45 minutes for a standard 1½ lb breast until the thickest part reads 160°F on an instant-read thermometer. Remove the turkey to a cutting board and rest uncovered for 15 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the poaching liquid for the sauce.
- 2 **Fry the shallots.** While the turkey poaches, heat ¾ cup neutral oil in a wide skillet or wok over medium heat. Add all the sliced shallots at once — they'll look like too many. Stir frequently with a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula. For the first 5 minutes, the shallots will soften and wilt and release moisture (you'll hear sizzling that gradually quiets as moisture cooks off). Around the 8-minute mark they'll start to color. Once they turn deep golden — the color of old copper coins, not pale blond and not dark brown — remove them immediately to a paper towel-lined plate with a slotted spoon or spider. The shallots continue cooking from residual heat after you pull them, so pull slightly earlier than you think. They'll crisp as they cool. Pour all of the shallot oil into a heatproof bowl or jar immediately.
- 3 **Make the sauce.** In a small saucepan, combine the reserved poaching liquid, light soy sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, white pepper, and five-spice powder. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Add 3 tablespoons of the reserved shallot oil and stir to combine. Simmer 3–4 minutes until the sauce has reduced slightly and smells aromatic. Taste: it should be savory, mildly sweet, and rich from the shallot oil. Adjust with a touch more soy sauce if it needs salt or sugar if it needs balance.
- 4 **Shred the turkey.** Using two forks (or your hands once slightly cooled), shred the turkey breast against the grain. The shreds should be fine and wispy — almost like pulled pork — not chunky. Chiayi-style turkey rice uses shreds fine enough to drape over rice rather than sit in dense clumps. Pull the meat apart with the grain first to separate the lobes, then shred each lobe crosswise against the grain.
- 5 **Assemble the bowls.** Divide hot jasmine rice among 4 bowls. Arrange a generous handful of shredded turkey over the top of each. Ladle 3–4 tablespoons of warm sauce over the turkey — enough to soak into the rice underneath. Crown each bowl with a tablespoon of the crispy fried shallots. Serve immediately with pickled daikon on the side if using.
- 6 **Leftover Thanksgiving turkey shortcut.** Skip steps 1 and 4. Shred pre-cooked turkey breast directly, use chicken or turkey broth in place of poaching liquid, and proceed from step 2. The entire dish assembles in about 20 minutes.

WHY IT WORKS

Poach 1½ lb turkey breast in gently simmering water with ginger and green onion for 35–45 min until internal temp hits 160°F; rest 15 min, then shred into fine strands.



Nº 21

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Dry-Brine Thanksgiving Turkey

The dry-brine Thanksgiving turkey technique that went viral on TikTok: rub salt and baking powder all over the bird, leave it uncovered in the fridge for 1–3 days, roast it.

PREP

15 min (+ 24–72 hr dry-brine rest)

CAL

370

COOK

3 hr 30 min

SERVES

10–12

LEVEL

Intermediate

01 Ingredients

THE TURKEY:

- 1 whole turkey, 12 to 15 lbs — completely thawed if frozen; still-frozen spots in the breast cavity will prevent the salt from penetrating and leave you with unevenly seasoned, unsafe meat. A fresh heritage-breed or air-chilled turkey is ideal; the drier surface of an air-chilled bird responds exceptionally well to dry-brining.

THE DRY BRINE (SCALE BY WEIGHT — SEE FAQ FOR THE EXACT RATIO):

- 2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt — this is for a 14-lb bird at ½ tsp per pound; if using Morton's kosher salt (which is about twice as dense), use 1 tablespoon + ½ teaspoon. Do NOT use fine table salt — it's over twice as salty by volume and you will over-salt the bird.
- 1 teaspoon baking powder — the single most important optional ingredient; it's the reason TikTok dry-brine videos show skin that shatters on contact rather than just browning normally. Use aluminum-free baking powder (Bob's Red Mill, Rumford) to avoid any metallic taste.
- 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper

OPTIONAL FLAVOR ADDITIONS TO THE DRY BRINE (CHOOSE ONE OR MIX):

- 1 teaspoon garlic powder (not garlic salt) — adds savory background without the burn risk of fresh garlic on skin
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme or 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, very finely minced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika — adds a hint of color and subtle smokiness
- ½ teaspoon onion powder

FOR THE ROASTING PAN:

- 1 large yellow onion, quartered
- 1 head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 4 celery stalks, roughly chopped
- 1 cup chicken or turkey stock — poured into the bottom of the pan before roasting to prevent the drippings from scorching and to provide the base for gravy or jus
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil or softened unsalted butter — for rubbing the turkey skin immediately before roasting

Dry-Brine Thanksgiving Turkey

CONTINUED

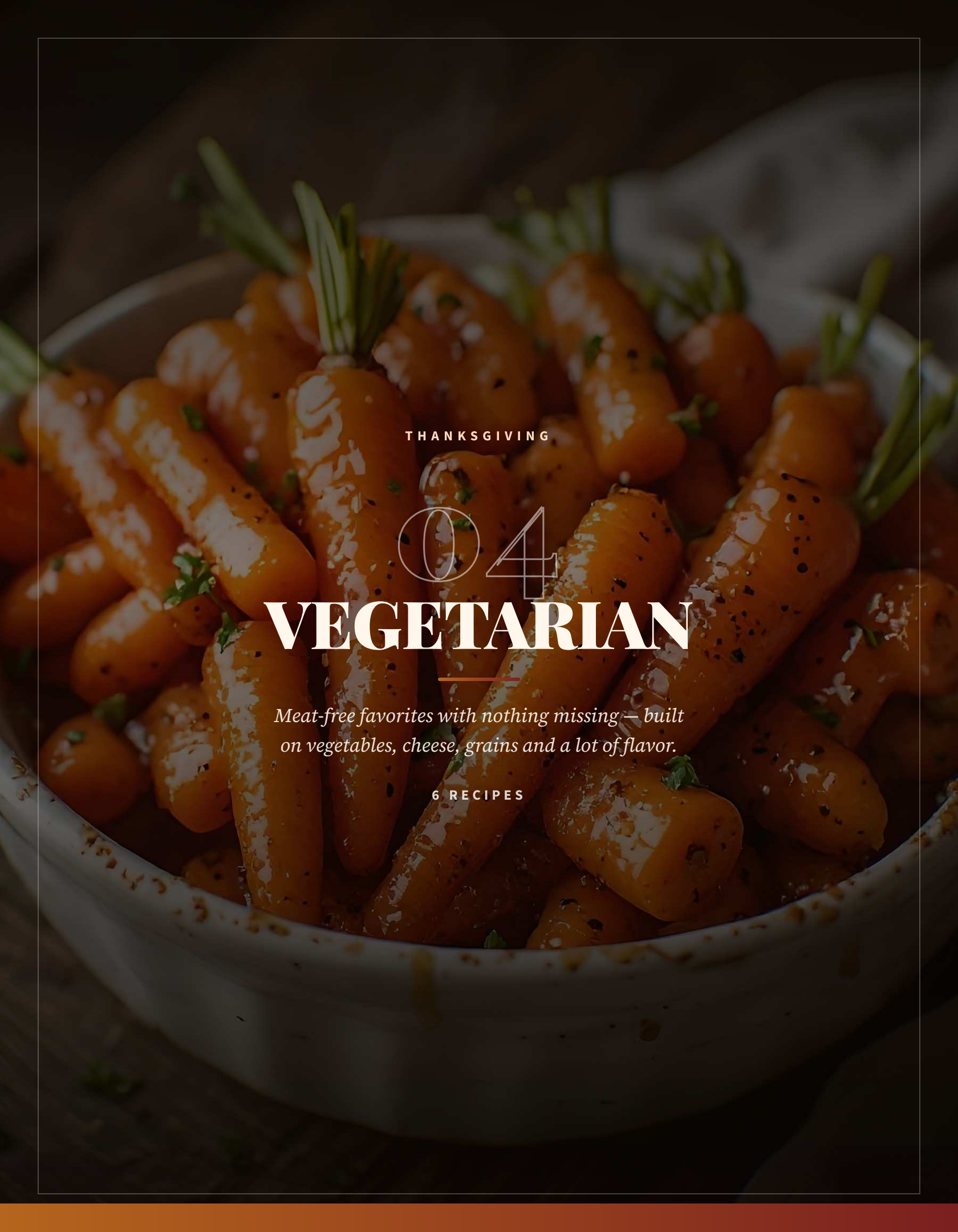
02 Method

- 1 **Day 1-3 before Thanksgiving: Apply the dry brine.** Remove the turkey from its packaging and take out the giblets and neck from the cavity (save them for gravy stock if desired). Do NOT rinse the turkey — rinsing sprays bacteria across your sink and countertops and adds surface moisture you're trying to remove. Pat the turkey completely dry on all surfaces — including inside both the main cavity and the smaller neck cavity — using paper towels. Be thorough: any remaining surface moisture slows the brine's penetration.
- 2 **Mix the dry brine.** In a small bowl, whisk together the kosher salt, baking powder, black pepper, and any optional aromatics you're using until evenly combined. Check that the baking powder is distributed evenly — clumps of baking powder on the skin can create light spots during roasting.
- 3 **Apply the brine.** Starting with the breast, loosen the skin by sliding your fingers (or a thin flexible spatula) between the skin and the breast meat on both sides, being careful not to tear the skin. Rub approximately one-third of the salt mixture directly onto the breast meat under the skin, distributing it as evenly as possible with your fingers. Rub the remaining two-thirds evenly over all exterior surfaces of the turkey — including the back, thighs, drumsticks, and wings. Reach inside the main cavity and rub a small amount on the interior walls. Getting the brine under the breast skin is the most important step: salt that sits only on top of the skin seasons the skin's exterior but does very little for the meat underneath.
- 4 **Refrigerate uncovered.** Place the turkey breast-side up on a wire rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet or shallow roasting pan — this elevates the bird so air circulates underneath, drying all surfaces evenly. Slide it onto a refrigerator shelf uncovered. Do NOT cover with plastic wrap or a bag. The goal is maximum airflow around the bird to desiccate the skin. Refrigerate for a minimum of 24 hours and up to 72 hours. Longer is better: a 14-lb turkey brined for 48 to 72 hours will have noticeably more seasoned meat and crispier skin than one brined for only 24. If you are squeezed for time, 12 hours is the bare minimum for meaningful effect.
- 5 **Thanksgiving morning: Take the chill off.** Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 1 hour before it goes in the oven. A cold-center bird roasts unevenly — the breast can overcook before the thigh reaches temperature. The 1-hour counter rest allows the temperature to equalize. Do NOT rinse the turkey at this point; the salt has fully absorbed. The skin will look translucent and dry — that is exactly right.
- 6 **Prepare the roasting pan.** Preheat the oven to 425°F with a rack in the lowest position. Scatter the quartered onion, halved garlic head, and chopped celery in the bottom of a large roasting pan. Pour 1 cup of stock over the vegetables. Place a V-rack or flat rack in the pan and set the turkey breast-side up on it. Rub the turkey skin all over with 2 tablespoons of neutral oil or softened butter — this step adds a final layer of surface fat that promotes the deep mahogany browning that makes the bird look (and taste) restaurant-quality.
- 7 **Roast at 425°F for the first 30-45 minutes.** Slide the turkey into the oven and roast at 425°F for 30 to 45 minutes, until the skin is set and starting to turn golden. The high initial blast browns the skin's surface proteins (Maillard reaction) and begins the crisping process while the skin is still dry from the brine. Do not open the oven during this period; every degree lost extends total cook time.
- 8 **Reduce heat and continue roasting.** After 30-45 minutes, reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. Continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh — pointing toward the hip joint, not touching bone — reads 165°F. As a timing guide: a 12-lb bird needs roughly 2½ to 3 hours total; 14 lbs: 3 to 3½ hours; 16 lbs: 3½ to 4 hours. These are guidelines, not rules — start checking the thigh temperature 30 minutes before the estimated total time. Do not baste. Each time you open the oven door, you lose 25°F and delay the cook. More critically, basting adds moisture to the skin surface you worked hard to dry out over 1–3 days. A properly dry-brined turkey bastes itself from the fat under the skin.

- 9 **Check for doneness accurately.** The USDA safe minimum for all turkey is 165°F. Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, at the inner thigh/body junction (not touching bone), and confirm it reads 165°F. Also check the breast in its thickest point: on a breast-up bird the exposed breast often races ahead of the thigh, so pull the bird as soon as the slower thigh hits 165°F — the breast will usually be a touch higher, and carryover adds a few more degrees during the rest. If the breast is climbing too fast and threatens to overshoot 165°F before the thigh catches up, tent just the breast loosely with foil for the final 30–45 minutes to even things out. (Experienced cooks following Serious Eats pull the breast as low as 150°F and rely on time-at-temperature pasteurization during the long rest; 165°F is the simplest safe target for everyone else.)
- 10 **Rest for 45 minutes — do not skip this step and do not tent.** Transfer the turkey to a carving board. Let it rest uncovered for 45 minutes minimum. Resting is not optional theater: it allows the muscle fibers, which contract tightly during roasting and squeeze out juice, to relax and reabsorb the juices back into the meat. A turkey carved immediately after roasting will lose most of its juice on the cutting board. A properly rested turkey stays juicy through second helpings and leftovers. Do NOT tent with foil — foil traps steam, and steam softens the crispy skin you spent three days producing. The turkey will stay hot enough to eat for 1 full hour after coming out of the oven.
- 11 **Carve and serve.** Remove the legs and thighs first by cutting through the joint; then remove the breast meat in two large lobes by running a knife along the breastbone and following the ribcage. Slice each breast lobe crosswise at a slight angle for the thinnest, most dramatic slices. The skin at this point should shatter audibly when the knife passes through it.

WHY IT WORKS

For a 14-lb turkey: mix 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (or 1 tablespoon plus ½ teaspoon Morton's kosher salt) with 1 teaspoon baking powder and 1 teaspoon black pepper.

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic bowl filled with roasted carrots. The carrots are coated in a glossy, golden-brown sauce and garnished with fresh rosemary sprigs and finely chopped green herbs. The background is dark and out of focus.

THANKSGIVING

04

VEGETARIAN

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

6 RECIPES



Nº 22

— BOB EVANS · COPYCAT

Glazed Carrots

Every popular copycat Bob Evans glazed carrots recipe misses the same thing: the restaurant's sauce is primarily honey, not brown sugar.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	20 min	4	Easy	90

01 Ingredients

- 1 lb baby carrots (about 3–3½ cups)
- 1½ tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar (or light brown — dark has more molasses depth)
- ¼ cup water
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon distilled white vinegar or apple cider vinegar (see technique notes)

WHY IT WORKS

Because most copycat recipes use brown sugar as the primary — or only — sweetener.

02 Method

- 1 Combine everything in the skillet.** Add the baby carrots, butter, honey, brown sugar, water, salt, and vinegar to a cold skillet. Turn the heat to medium-high.
- 2 Cover and cook until fully tender.** Once the butter melts and the liquid begins to bubble, cover the skillet. Cook 10–12 minutes, stirring once halfway, until the carrots are completely fork-tender — a fork should slide in with zero resistance. If the thickest carrot still has any firmness, replace the lid and cook 2 more minutes. Under-cooked carrots are the most common mistake.
- 3 Uncover and reduce the glaze.** Remove the lid and increase heat to medium-high. Cook, stirring gently every 1–2 minutes, for 7–10 minutes until the liquid reduces to a thick, shiny glaze that coats the carrots rather than pooling at the bottom of the pan. It will look loose and watery for the first few minutes — then suddenly thicken and turn glossy. Watch carefully in the last 2 minutes; honey burns faster than plain sugar.
- 4 Taste and serve.** Taste for salt and balance. The vinegar should not be detectable as 'vinegar' — if the sweetness tastes flat or cloying, add one more small splash. Serve immediately; the glaze continues to thicken as it cools.



Nº 23

— BOUCHON • COPYCAT

Bistro Macaroni au Gratin

Thomas Keller's Bouchon Bistro macaroni au gratin at home — the dish from Saveur's Thanksgiving veterans story: a clove-and-bay infused béchamel with minced onion cooked into the roux, finished with Comté and a golden breadcrumb crust.

PREP
20 min

COOK
50 min

SERVES
8 (side dish)

LEVEL
Intermediate

CAL
865

01 Ingredients

FOR THE INFUSED MILK:

- 8 cups whole milk
- ½ medium yellow onion (this half stays intact — stud it with 6 whole cloves)
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 white peppercorns

FOR THE BÉCHAMEL AND MORNAY:

- 12 tbsp (1½ sticks) unsalted butter
- ½ medium yellow onion, minced (the other half of the onion above)

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 lb (about 5 cups loosely packed) Comté, freshly grated (Gruyère or fontina are the closest substitutes)
- ¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- Fine sea salt and white pepper to taste

FOR THE GRATIN:

- 1 lb elbow macaroni
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs or panko
- Unsalted butter for the gratin dish

Bistro Macaroni au Gratin CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Infuse the milk.** Combine the 8 cups of whole milk, the clove-studded onion half, bay leaves, and white peppercorns in a heavy saucepan over the lowest possible heat. Heat until steam rises and the surface just barely trembles — do not boil. Steep for 20 minutes. The milk should smell faintly warm and spiced but not aggressively clove-forward. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer into a large measuring cup or bowl and discard the solids. Keep warm.
- 2 Cook the pasta.** Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil while the milk infuses. Cook the elbow macaroni 2 minutes under the package's al dente time — the pasta will finish cooking in the oven. Drain well. Do not rinse. Set aside.
- 3 Build the roux with onion.** Melt the 12 tablespoons of butter in a wide, heavy-bottomed pot (at least 4 quarts) over medium heat. Add the minced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5–7 minutes until fully soft and translucent — no browning. Add the flour all at once and whisk constantly for 2–3 minutes, until the roux is smooth, pale golden, and smells faintly nutty. The minced onion will be visible but will dissolve completely into the sauce.
- 4 Build the béchamel.** Begin adding the warm infused milk slowly — start with 1 cup, whisking vigorously to prevent lumps before adding the next cup. Once all 8 cups are incorporated and the mixture is smooth, bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Cook for 10 minutes, whisking frequently, until the sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon firmly — run your finger across the back of the spoon and the line should hold cleanly. This simmer cooks the flour completely.
- 5 Make the mornay.** Remove the pot from heat entirely. Add all the grated Comté (or Gruyère) and stir with a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula until fully melted and the sauce is glossy. Season with the freshly grated nutmeg, fine sea salt, and white pepper. Taste — the sauce should be deeply savory and nutty, with warmth from the nutmeg and cloves.
- 6 Combine and assemble.** Heat the oven to 375°F. Butter a 9×13-inch gratin dish or large baking dish generously. Add the cooked, drained elbow macaroni to the pot with the mornay sauce and stir to coat every piece. Pour the entire mixture into the prepared gratin dish and spread level. Mix the melted butter with the breadcrumbs in a small bowl until every crumb is coated. Scatter evenly over the surface.
- 7 Bake until deeply golden.** Bake at 375°F for 40–45 minutes until the breadcrumb crust is a deep amber-brown (not pale tan — genuinely browned) and the sauce is visibly bubbling at the edges of the dish. If the crumbs darken before 40 minutes, tent loosely with foil. Rest for 5–10 minutes before serving so the sauce sets slightly.

WHY IT WORKS

The sauce is entirely different. American mac uses cheddar (or Velveeta/cream cheese) to build a sharp, saucy coating.



Nº 24

— CHICKEN SALAD CHICK · COPYCAT

Grape Salad

The famous Chicken Salad Chick Grape Salad copycat recipe: red and green seedless grapes folded into a sweetened cream cheese and sour cream dressing, finished with a brown sugar and pecan topping.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	0 min	8	Easy	295

01 Ingredients

FOR THE GRAPE SALAD:

- 2 lbs seedless grapes — red, green, or a mix (about 6 cups; rinse and dry thoroughly)
- 8 oz full-fat block cream cheese (Philadelphia or store brand, NOT spreadable/tub), softened to true room temperature for at least 1 hour
- ½ cup full-fat sour cream
- ⅓ cup granulated white sugar

- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Optional: 1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest — brightens the dressing and balances the sweetness

FOR THE TOPPING (ADD JUST BEFORE SERVING — DO NOT MIX IN):

- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup pecan halves or pieces, coarsely chopped and lightly toasted

Grape Salad CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Dry the grapes.** Rinse the grapes well and spread them on a clean kitchen towel or paper towels. Pat dry and let air-dry for at least 15 minutes. Wet grapes dilute the dressing and make the salad watery. If any grapes are very large (larger than a cherry), halve them so they're uniform — smaller grapes are easier to eat and coat more evenly.
- 2 Soften the cream cheese.** Unwrap the block cream cheese and leave it at room temperature for at least 1 hour before using. It should press easily with no resistance and feel soft and pliable but not warm. Do not skip this step — cold or even slightly-cold cream cheese will lump no matter how hard you mix.
- 3 Beat the cream cheese.** Using a hand mixer, stand mixer, or a sturdy spatula, beat the softened cream cheese alone until it is completely smooth, light, and fluffy — no lumps anywhere. With a hand mixer, this takes about 2 minutes on medium speed. With a spatula, press and fold for 3 to 4 minutes until you can no longer feel any graininess.
- 4 Add the dressing ingredients.** Add the sour cream, granulated sugar, vanilla extract, and lemon zest (if using) to the beaten cream cheese. Beat on medium speed (or stir vigorously) until completely smooth and silky, about 1 minute. Taste: the dressing should be noticeably sweet, lightly tangy from the sour cream, and have a clean vanilla finish. Adjust sugar if your grapes are very tart.
- 5 Fold in the grapes.** Add the dry grapes to the cream cheese dressing and fold gently with a rubber spatula until every grape is evenly coated. Do not stir aggressively — you want the grapes intact, not crushed. The dressing will seem thin at first; it thickens during chilling.
- 6 Refrigerate.** Cover the bowl tightly and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving. Overnight (8 to 12 hours) is noticeably better — the dressing thickens and clings to the grapes, and the flavors meld. The salad keeps refrigerated for up to 2 days.
- 7 Toast the pecans (optional but recommended).** In a dry skillet over medium heat, toast the chopped pecans for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly golden. Toasting deepens their flavor significantly. Spread on a plate to cool before using as the topping. If pressed for time, skip this step — raw pecans work, just with less depth.
- 8 Top and serve.** Just before serving — not before — scatter the brown sugar and toasted pecans evenly over the surface of the salad. Do not stir. The topping should sit on top as a crunchy, sweet layer. Serve immediately from the bowl or from individual servings. If you are making this for a party and want to transport it, bring the topping in a separate small container and add it at the table.

WHY IT WORKS

The brown sugar and pecans are meant to stay crunchy on top — if you mix them into the salad, the brown sugar dissolves into the dressing and the pecans soften from the moisture of the grapes and cream cheese.



Nº 25

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Fresh Cranberry Sauce

The viral TikTok fresh cranberry sauce recipe — 4 ingredients, 15 minutes, and it makes every canned version taste like sugared gel. Orange zest, a cinnamon stick, and the one cooling trick that makes it set perfectly every time.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
5 min	12 min	12	Easy	68

01 Ingredients

THE SAUCE:

- 12 oz (340g) fresh cranberries, rinsed — discard any that are soft or shriveled
- 1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (120ml) fresh orange juice (from about 2 navel oranges)
- ½ cup (120ml) water
- 1 tablespoon fresh orange zest (from the same oranges — zest before juicing)

- 1 cinnamon stick

- Pinch of fine salt

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS:

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (adds warmth and rounds out the tartness)
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup (swap ¼ cup of the sugar for less sweetness and a caramel note)
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice (deepens the warm-spice character)

Fresh Cranberry Sauce

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Zest and juice the oranges first.** Zest both navel oranges over a small bowl — you need about 1 tablespoon of zest. Then juice them and measure out ½ cup. (Zesting after juicing is almost impossible — the skin puckers and the zest tears.) Set aside.
- 2 Dissolve the sugar.** Combine the sugar, orange juice, and water in a medium (3-quart) saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly for 2–3 minutes until the sugar is completely dissolved. You'll see it go from cloudy to clear. Don't rush this step by cranking the heat — partially dissolved sugar can crystallize on the sides of the pan as the sauce cooks and create gritty pockets in the finished sauce.
- 3 Add the cranberries and cinnamon stick.** Add all the rinsed cranberries and the cinnamon stick to the saucepan. Raise the heat to medium-high. Stir to coat the cranberries in the syrup.
- 4 Cook until most cranberries have burst — 10 to 12 minutes.** The cranberries will start popping within 3–4 minutes — audibly, with some enthusiasm. This is the pectin releasing from inside the berry. Stir every 2 minutes. The sauce will foam briefly and then settle. At 8 minutes, most cranberries will have burst and the sauce will be thin but deeply colored. At 10–12 minutes, the sauce should be noticeably thicker and coat the back of a spoon. Remove from heat when most cranberries have burst but a handful still hold their shape. If every cranberry has fully dissolved into liquid, it'll set firm and dense rather than soft and scoopable.
- 5 Stir in the orange zest, salt, and any optional extras.** Off the heat, stir in the fresh orange zest, a pinch of fine salt, and vanilla extract or maple syrup if using. The zest goes in at the end (not the beginning) because the volatile oils that give it fragrance evaporate quickly in a hot pan — adding it at the end keeps the orange flavor bright and citrusy rather than cooked and dull.
- 6 Cool at room temperature, then refrigerate.** Pour the sauce into a bowl or serving dish. Let it cool at room temperature for about 30 minutes — it will look thin and almost runny at this point. Do not panic. Cranberries contain one of the highest natural pectin concentrations of any fruit (comparable to quince and crabapple), and that pectin sets as the sauce drops below 120°F. After the room-temperature rest, move it to the refrigerator for at least 1 hour, ideally overnight. The finished texture should be thick, glossy, and scoopable — not pourable and not solid jelly. Remove the cinnamon stick before serving.

WHY IT WORKS

The difference comes down to three things: texture, flavor, and acidity balance.



Nº 26

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Creamy Mashed Potatoes

The viral TikTok mashed potatoes technique that explains why restaurant versions always taste better: Yukon Gold potatoes, warm butter folded in piece by piece, hot cream, and a potato ricer. No lumps. No gluey mess. Ready in 30 minutes.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	20 min	6	Easy	315

01 Ingredients

- 2 lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt (for the cooking water), plus more to taste
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons / 115g) unsalted butter, sliced into tablespoon pieces, at room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (180ml) heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper (or black pepper)
- Optional: 2 oz (55g) cream cheese, softened, for extra richness
- Optional garnish: 2 tablespoons chopped chives, 1 tablespoon melted butter, flaky sea salt

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Creamy Mashed Potatoes

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Start in cold salted water.** Place the potato chunks in a large pot and cover with cold water by 2 inches. Add 1 tablespoon of kosher salt — the water should taste noticeably salty, not faintly so. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a steady boil and cook for 15–18 minutes until a fork slides through a chunk with zero resistance. Test the thickest piece.
- 2 Drain and steam-dry.** Drain the potatoes in a colander, then immediately return them to the empty hot pot. Set the pot over low heat for 5 minutes, shaking gently every minute or so, until no steam rises from the potatoes and the surface of each chunk looks visually dry. This step removes the residual boiling water so your fat incorporates cleanly.
- 3 Warm the cream.** While the potatoes are steam-drying, heat the cream in a small saucepan over low heat or in a microwave until steaming but not boiling (about 30 seconds in a microwave, 2 minutes on the stovetop). Cold cream hitting hot potato causes the fat to seize; warm cream folds in silkily.
- 4 Rice the potatoes while hot.** Working quickly so the potatoes stay warm, pass every chunk through a potato ricer directly back into the pot, or press through a food mill. If using a masher, press in smooth strokes and stop as soon as lumps disappear — do not work them further. Ricing while the potatoes are still steaming is what makes the texture possible; let them cool and the texture becomes dense.
- 5 Fold in butter piece by piece.** Add the room-temperature butter pieces one at a time to the riced potatoes, folding gently with a rubber spatula after each piece until it disappears completely before adding the next. The potato starch absorbs each piece in sequence; rushing this step and adding all the butter at once produces a broken, greasy result. If using cream cheese, add it at this stage before the cream.
- 6 Stream in warm cream.** Pour the warm cream in a slow, steady stream, folding gently as you go. Stop and taste after ½ cup — the potatoes may be exactly where you want them. Add the remaining cream only if you want them more fluid. Season generously with salt and white pepper.
- 7 Serve immediately or hold.** Spoon into a warmed bowl, create a small well in the center, and add a pat of butter that melts on contact. Finish with chives and a pinch of flaky salt if using. If holding for up to 2 hours, press plastic wrap directly against the surface to prevent a skin and keep the pot over the lowest burner heat.

WHY IT WORKS

Two reasons: significantly more butter and cream than home cooks are comfortable using, and technique. Restaurant mashed potatoes typically use 1 stick of butter per 2 lbs of potatoes plus ¾ cup of cream.



Nº 27

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Green Bean Casserole From Scratch

The viral TikTok green bean casserole from scratch: real mushroom cream sauce, blanched fresh green beans, and shatteringly crispy fried shallots — no canned soup, no canned beans. Ready in under an hour.

PREP
20 min

COOK
40 min

SERVES
8

LEVEL
Medium

CAL
280

01 Ingredients

BLANCHED GREEN BEANS:

- 1½ lbs fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt (for the blanching water)

HOMEMADE MUSHROOM CREAM SAUCE:

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large yellow onion, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 12 oz cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or ½ teaspoon dried thyme)
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour

- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken broth (or vegetable broth to keep it vegetarian)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

CRISPY FRIED SHALLOTS:

- 3 large shallots (about 6 oz total), peeled and very thinly sliced into rings
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- About 1 cup vegetable or canola oil, for frying

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Green Bean Casserole From Scratch

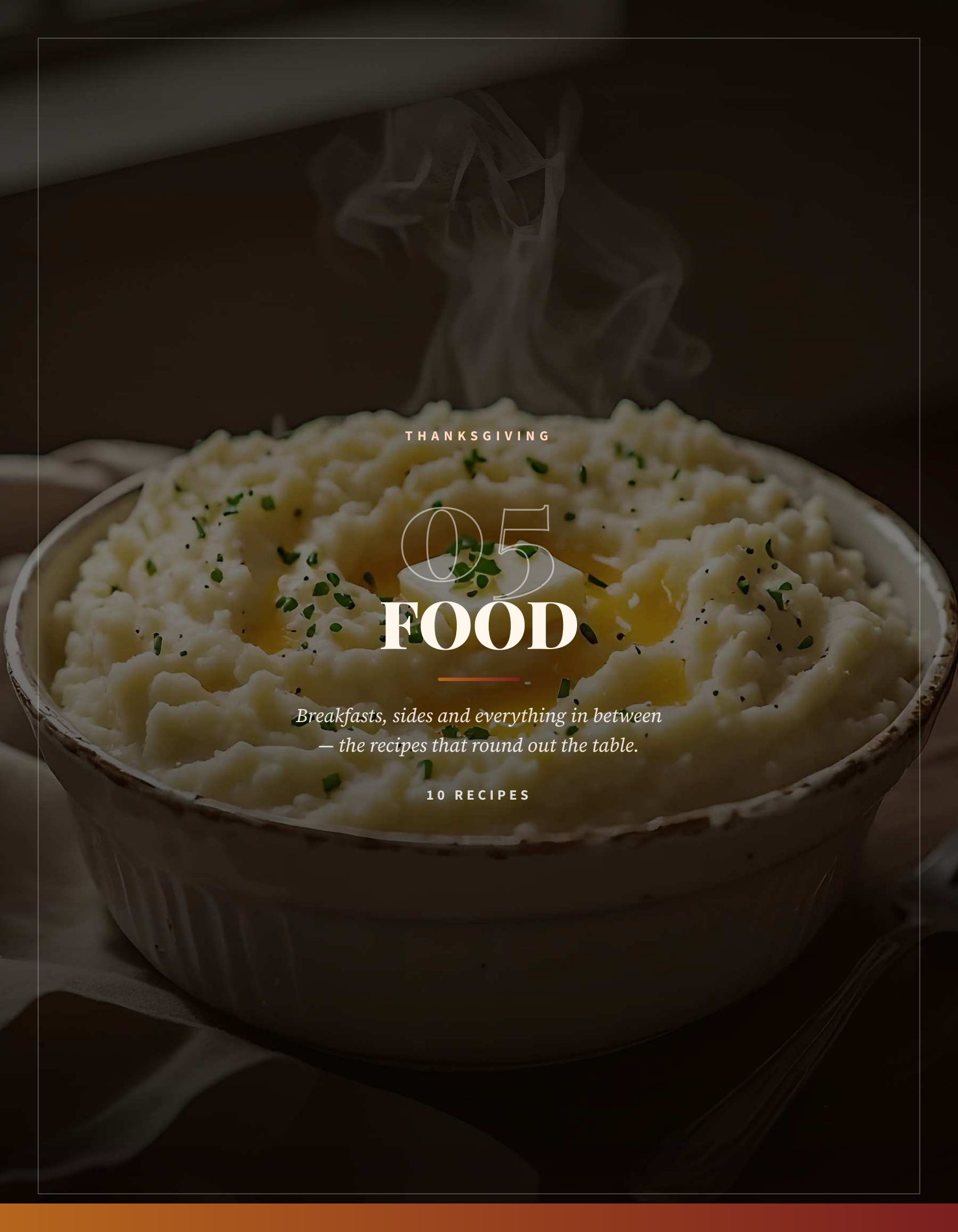
CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Blanch the green beans.** Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a rolling boil. Add the green beans and cook for 3 to 4 minutes — they should turn vivid jade green and be just barely fork-tender, with a little snap still in the center. While they cook, fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. The moment the beans are done, drain them and transfer immediately to the ice bath. Leave for 2 minutes, then drain thoroughly and spread on a clean kitchen towel. Pat very dry. Any water left on the beans will dilute and thin the sauce during baking.
- 2 Fry the crispy shallots.** In a medium saucepan, heat about 1 inch of vegetable oil over medium-high heat to 375°F (use an instant-read thermometer if you have one — the temperature matters). While the oil heats, toss the sliced shallots with the 3 tablespoons of flour and ¼ teaspoon salt until every ring is lightly coated. Working in two batches to avoid crowding, add the shallots to the hot oil. They should sizzle immediately. Fry for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring once or twice, until they are deep golden brown. Watch closely — shallots go from perfect to burned in under a minute. Lift them out with a slotted spoon onto paper towels and spread in a single layer. Salt lightly while still hot. They will crisp further as they cool. (Oven shortcut: toss flour-coated shallots with 1 tablespoon oil, spread on a parchment-lined baking sheet, and bake at 400°F for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring once halfway.)
- 3 Build the mushroom cream sauce.** Preheat the oven to 350°F. Melt the butter in a large oven-safe skillet (12 inches or wider) over medium heat. Add the diced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the minced garlic and sliced cremini mushrooms. The mushrooms will immediately release a significant amount of liquid — this is normal. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, for 8 to 10 minutes until every bit of that liquid has evaporated and the mushrooms are sitting in a dry, fragrant, golden-brown layer. Do not rush this step. Mushrooms left with moisture in them will produce a watery sauce that no amount of flour will fix. Add the thyme and stir for 30 seconds.
- 4 Add the flour and liquids.** Sprinkle the ¼ cup of flour evenly over the mushrooms. Stir constantly for 1 full minute to cook out the raw starch taste — the mixture will look dry and paste-like. Add the broth gradually in three additions, whisking after each addition until the mixture is smooth before adding more. Pour in the heavy cream and soy sauce. Raise the heat slightly to bring to a gentle simmer, then reduce to medium-low. Cook, stirring frequently, for 5 to 7 minutes until the sauce is thick enough that it coats the back of a spoon and a line drawn through it holds cleanly. Season with the teaspoon of salt and half teaspoon of pepper. Taste — it should be deeply savory and mushroom-forward.
- 5 Assemble and bake.** Remove the skillet from the heat. Fold the blanched, well-dried green beans into the sauce until every bean is coated. Fold in half of the crispy shallots — they'll absorb a little moisture and deepen the flavor throughout the casserole, while the reserved half stays on top and crisps in the oven. If using a 9×13-inch baking dish rather than an oven-safe skillet, transfer the mixture now. Bake uncovered for 25 minutes, until the sauce is actively bubbling around the edges. Remove from the oven, scatter the remaining crispy shallots evenly over the top, and bake for 5 more minutes until the topping is deep golden and crunchy.
- 6 Rest and serve.** Let the casserole rest for 5 minutes before serving — the sauce firms and tightens as it cools slightly, so it won't be runny at the table. The finished dish should be creamy and cohesive, with bright green beans visible in a thick sauce and a genuinely crunchy top layer.

WHY IT WORKS

Blanch 1½ lbs of fresh green beans in salted boiling water for 3–4 minutes, then immediately transfer to an ice bath — this locks in the bright green color through the bake.



THANKSGIVING

05
FOOD

*Breakfasts, sides and everything in between
— the recipes that round out the table.*

10 RECIPES



Nº 28

— BOB EVANS · COPYCAT

Mashed Potatoes

Bob Evans' famously creamy, buttery mashed potatoes at home — Yukon Golds steam-dried and mashed with softened butter, warm cream, and sour cream for that signature silky texture. 35 minutes, serves 6.

PREP

10 min

COOK

25 min

SERVES

6

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

370

01 Ingredients

- 3 lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt (for the boiling water)
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- ½ cup heavy cream, warmed
- ¼ cup full-fat sour cream
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- Kosher salt to taste

WHY IT WORKS

Two things: real potatoes and sour cream. Unlike KFC's well-known instant-potato mashed (which works because of the gravy, not the potato), Bob Evans uses and markets real potatoes as a core part of their farm-fresh identity.

02 Method

- 1 **Start in cold water.** Place the cubed potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold, heavily salted water (it should taste like mild seawater). Starting cold ensures the potato cooks evenly from the inside out — dropping into boiling water cooks the exterior before the center is ready.
- 2 **Boil until fully tender.** Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a steady simmer. Cook 15–18 minutes until the potatoes are completely fork-tender with no resistance at the center. If the fork drags even slightly, cook 2 more minutes.
- 3 **Steam-dry.** Drain thoroughly. Return the empty pot to the stovetop over low heat. Add the potatoes back and cook, stirring gently, for 1–2 minutes until the surface looks dry and matte. This drives off water that would otherwise dilute the butter and cream.
- 4 **Mash and add butter.** Remove from heat. Add the softened butter and mash with a potato masher or push through a ricer. Mash until the butter is fully incorporated and no dry potato chunks remain. Work quickly while the potatoes are hot — they absorb fat best when steaming.
- 5 **Fold in the cream and sour cream.** Pour in the warmed heavy cream and add the sour cream. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon in a folding motion until the potatoes are silky and fluffy. Warming the cream is essential — cold liquid shocks the starch and can cause the texture to seize.
- 6 **Season and finish.** Add the garlic salt and white pepper. Stir once more, taste, and adjust salt. Serve hot, with an extra pat of butter melting on top.



Nº 29

— 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

30 min (plus 1 hr or overnight to dry the cornbread)

LEVEL

Medium

CAL

240

COOK

55 min

SERVES

12

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)

Cornbread Dressing CONTINUED

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 crumbs 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 crumbs produce a gummy, dense dressing. The crumbs 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 crumbs. 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-crumby, 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.



N° 30

— JOEL ROBUCHON • COPYCAT

Joël Robuchon Pommes Purée

The Joël Robuchon pommes purée copycat recipe: 500g potatoes, 250g cold butter, no cream — passed twice through a fine sieve, finished with hot milk.

PREP

15 min

COOK

30 min

SERVES

6

LEVEL

Medium

CAL

388

01 Ingredients

- 500g (1 lb 2 oz) La Ratte or Yukon Gold potatoes, whole and unpeeled
- Fine sea salt, for the cooking water and to finish
- 250g (9 oz / 2 sticks + 1½ tbsp) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1-tablespoon pieces, kept refrigerator-cold until use

- 125ml (½ cup) whole milk
- Fine sea salt, to taste (about ¾ to 1 tsp total)

OPTIONAL FINISHING:

- White pepper, very small pinch
- Flaky sea salt, for serving

Joël Robuchon Pommes Purée

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Cook the potatoes whole.** Place the potatoes, unpeeled and whole, in a saucepan. Cover with cold water by at least 2 inches. Add 1 tablespoon fine sea salt. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to a low simmer. Cook for 25 to 35 minutes depending on size — a small paring knife or metal skewer should slip in and out of the center of each potato with zero resistance. Do not rush with high heat: a rolling boil can break the potato's skin and flood the flesh with water, diluting flavor and starch structure. Start testing at 25 minutes.
- 2 Peel while hot — immediately.** Drain the potatoes. Peel them immediately, while they are still very hot, using a kitchen towel or paper towels to protect your hands. Do not run them under cold water or wait for them to cool — peeling while hot is critical. Cold potatoes develop a waxy outer layer that changes the texture of the final purée. Work quickly.
- 3 Rice the potatoes.** Pass the hot peeled potato through a fine ricer or a tamis (drum sieve) into a wide, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Pass twice for the smoothest result. Do NOT use a blender, food processor, or stand mixer at any stage — overworked starch goes gluey and no amount of butter rescues it.
- 4 Dry the potato.** Place the saucepan over medium heat. Stir the riced potato vigorously and constantly with a wooden spoon or stiff spatula for 3 to 5 minutes. You will see steam actively rising off the mass as the excess cooking moisture evaporates. The potato will look slightly drier and begin to just barely stick at the very bottom of the pan. When the steam slows noticeably and the potato looks visibly fluffier and drier, it is ready. This step is not optional — moisture left in the potato dilutes the butter emulsion.
- 5 Add the cold butter, piece by piece.** Reduce the heat to the lowest possible setting. Take your cold butter from the refrigerator. Add one or two pieces (about 15 to 30g) to the hot dried potato. Using a whisk or wooden spoon, work the butter in completely — fold and press it into the potato, moving the pan off the heat briefly if the butter is melting too fast rather than emulsifying. The potato should look glossy and creamy after each addition, not greasy or separated. Only when the previous addition is fully incorporated do you add the next. Continue in the same way through all 250g of butter. This takes 10 to 12 minutes. Patience here is the entire recipe.
- 6 Add hot milk.** Heat the milk in a small saucepan or microwave until steaming — you want about 70°C / 160°F. Do not boil. Pour the hot milk into the potato in a thin, steady stream while whisking or stirring constantly. The purée will loosen from a thick paste to a flowing, pourable, almost sauce-like consistency. Add as much milk as needed to reach a consistency that falls slowly off a spoon in ribbons — like very thick heavy cream. You may not need all the milk.
- 7 Season and finish.** Taste the purée and season with fine sea salt — it needs more than you expect, typically $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 teaspoon total. Add a very small pinch of white pepper if you like. For the smoothest possible result, pass the finished purée through a fine-mesh sieve one final time, pushing it through with a flexible spatula. Taste once more.
- 8 Serve immediately.** Transfer to a warm serving bowl. To plate restaurant-style, spoon the purée into a shallow bowl, then use the back of a spoon to spread it into a thin swooping circle — the purée should be soft enough to spread almost effortlessly. Finish with flaky sea salt and serve at once. The purée firms as it cools.

WHY IT WORKS

Cold butter is the whole mechanism. When cold butter is added gradually to hot, dry potato over low heat, the water inside the butter cells forms a stable emulsion with the potato's starch — the same principle as an emulsion sauce.



Nº 31

— PETER LUGER • COPYCAT

Creamed Spinach

The real Peter Luger Creamed Spinach copycat: blanched-and-squeezed fresh spinach folded into reduced heavy cream with sautéed onion, garlic, Parmigiano-Reggiano, and nutmeg.

PREP
15 min

COOK
20 min

SERVES
4

LEVEL
Easy

CAL
310

01 Ingredients

SPINACH:

- 2 lbs fresh baby spinach — this cooks down dramatically; 2 lbs yields about 1½ cups of squeezed spinach, which is the correct steakhouse-sized portion for four people
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt (for the blanching water — use more than you think; well-salted water seasons spinach from the inside)
- Ice for the ice bath

CREAM SAUCE:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced (about ¾ cup)

- 2 cloves garlic, minced

- 1 cup heavy cream

- ½ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (grate it yourself — see FAQ on why pre-grated fails)

SEASONING:

- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg (pre-ground works but has noticeably less fragrance)
- Kosher salt to taste
- Freshly cracked black pepper to taste

Creamed Spinach CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Set up the ice bath.** Fill a large bowl with cold water and a generous amount of ice. Set it next to the stove — you will need to move quickly from boiling water to ice bath.
- 2 **Blanch the spinach.** Bring a large pot of generously salted water (should taste like mildly salty soup) to a rolling boil. Add the baby spinach — it will fill the pot at first and sink within seconds. Stir with tongs and blanch for 60 to 90 seconds, just until the spinach is uniformly wilted and a vivid, bright green. Do not overcook; gray-green spinach cannot be reversed.
- 3 **Ice bath.** Immediately transfer the spinach to the ice bath with tongs or a spider strainer. Let it cool for 2 minutes, until fully chilled. This stops the cooking instantly and locks in the color.
- 4 **Squeeze completely dry — do not rush this step.** Drain the spinach into a colander, pressing out the excess ice water. Transfer it in two or three portions to a clean, dry kitchen towel (not terry cloth — it absorbs too much). Gather the corners of the towel, twist, and wring over the sink, pressing firmly with both hands. Open the towel, redistribute, and squeeze again. The spinach is ready when it feels nearly dry and no more water drips when pressed. This removes a significant amount of liquid that would otherwise break the cream sauce.
- 5 **Chop the spinach.** Transfer the squeezed spinach to a cutting board and rough-chop 3 or 4 times with a knife — you want pieces, not a paste. Set aside.
- 6 **Build the sauce.** In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the diced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 6 minutes until completely softened and translucent, just beginning to turn golden at the edges. Add the minced garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring.
- 7 **Reduce the cream.** Pour the heavy cream into the pan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 4 to 5 minutes until the cream has reduced by about one-third and coats the back of a spoon. The surface will look slightly thicker and the bubbles at the edge will look more substantial. Do not rush this with high heat — a rapid boil can cause the cream to separate.
- 8 **Add the Parmigiano-Reggiano.** Remove the pan from the heat briefly and stir in the freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano until fully melted and smooth, about 30 seconds. Return to medium-low heat.
- 9 **Fold in the spinach.** Add the chopped, squeezed spinach. Fold it into the cream sauce gently but thoroughly until every piece is coated. Cook over medium-low heat for 2 minutes, stirring, until the spinach is warmed through and the sauce has absorbed some of the spinach's remaining moisture.
- 10 **Season.** Add the freshly grated nutmeg, a generous pinch of kosher salt, and cracked black pepper. Taste — squeezed spinach typically needs more salt than you expect because the blanching and squeezing removes much of the seasoning. Adjust until the flavors are rounded and savory. The finished texture should be thick and coating: when spooned onto a plate, it should mound slightly rather than spread into a puddle. If it seems too thin, continue simmering over low heat. If it seems too thick, stir in a tablespoon of cream.
- 11 **Serve immediately** or hold warm over very low heat with occasional stirring, up to 10 minutes.

WHY IT WORKS

Béchamel (butter + flour + milk) is the classic French route to creamed spinach, and it produces a perfectly decent result — but flour gives it a slightly starchy, gluey mouthfeel that is very different from what you experience at Peter Luger.



Nº 32

— PETER LUGER • COPYCAT

German Fried Potatoes

Peter Luger's famous German Fried Potatoes at home: thick-sliced Russets parboiled until 75% done, then pan-fried in beef tallow in a screaming-hot cast iron until shattering-crispy outside and fluffy inside.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
15 min	30 min	4	Easy	310

01 Ingredients

POTATOES:

- 2 lbs Russet potatoes (about 4 medium) — Russets fry more crisply than Yukon Golds because of their higher starch content; do not substitute waxy potatoes
- 1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons Diamond Crystal kosher salt, divided — 1 tablespoon for the boiling water, 1½ teaspoons for finishing (or 1 tsp Morton for finishing)

FOR THE FRY:

- 3 tablespoons beef tallow (see FAQ for sourcing and substitutes)
- ¾ teaspoon cracked black pepper

OPTIONAL (TRADITIONAL GERMAN ADDITION):

- 1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced

OPTIONAL GARNISH:

- 1 tablespoon flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

German Fried Potatoes CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Parboil the potatoes (do not skip this step).** Place the whole, unpeeled Russets in a large pot and cover with cold water by at least 2 inches. Add 1 tablespoon of kosher salt to the water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Once boiling, cook for 12 to 15 minutes — the time depends on potato size. Test at 12 minutes: insert a small knife or skewer into the center of the largest potato. It should meet real resistance — the potato should feel firmly cooked through the outer inch but still slightly stiff in the dead center. This is 75% done, not fully tender. Do not let them reach fork-tender or they will fall apart when sliced and fry unevenly.
- 2 **Cool completely.** Drain the potatoes immediately and spread them on a cutting board or sheet pan. Let them steam-dry for at least 20 minutes, until cool enough to handle. For the best results: refrigerate the whole parboiled potatoes uncovered overnight or up to 2 days. The surface dries further in the refrigerator, which produces a more shattering crust when fried. This is the best make-ahead move for a dinner party.
- 3 **Peel and slice.** Peel the cooled potatoes if desired (see FAQ — leaving skins on is fine). Slice into rounds $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. Slight variation in thickness is acceptable and natural; it creates variation in crispiness across the batch. Do not slice thinner than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch — they will break during frying.
- 4 **Heat the fat.** Add the beef tallow to a 12-inch cast-iron skillet. Heat over medium-high heat for 2 to 3 minutes until the tallow is fully melted, shimmering, and just beginning to smoke. The fat should generously coat the bottom of the pan. Tallow smokes at a higher temperature than butter — do not rush this stage; insufficient heat is the main reason home versions turn out greasy instead of crispy.
- 5 **Fry in a single layer — work in batches.** Add the potato slices in a single layer without touching or overlapping. For a 12-inch skillet, this is roughly half a batch at a time. Do not crowd the pan — crowding drops the fat temperature and causes steaming instead of frying. Fry undisturbed for 3 to 4 minutes. Watch the edges: when you see a deep golden-brown creeping up the sides of each slice, they are ready to flip. Do not peek or stir before the 3-minute mark.
- 6 **Flip once and finish.** Use a thin metal spatula to flip each slice. The bottom should be a deep mahogany gold — the same color as the Maillard crust on a properly seared steak. Cook the second side for another 3 to 4 minutes until it matches the first side.
- 7 **Add onion (if using).** When the potatoes are on their second side, push them to the outer edge of the pan. Add the sliced onion to the hot fat in the center. Cook for 3 minutes, tossing the onion occasionally, until it has softened and turned golden. Toss everything together for the final minute.
- 8 **Season and serve.** Transfer to a warm platter or serve directly from the cast iron. Season generously with the remaining $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons of kosher salt and the cracked black pepper. Garnish with parsley if desired. Serve immediately — these potatoes lose their shatter within 10 minutes of leaving the pan.

WHY IT WORKS

Three things: parboiling, beef tallow, and thickness. Most home versions start with raw potatoes, which means the exterior turns golden before the interior is cooked — so you're choosing between a raw center or a burnt crust.



Nº 33

RUTHS CHRIS • COPYCAT

Ruth's Chris Potatoes au Gratin

Ruth's Chris Potatoes au Gratin made at home: thinly sliced Yukon Golds layered in garlic-thyme-infused heavy cream with Gruyère and sharp white cheddar, baked golden in a cast-iron skillet.

PREP

25 min

COOK

65 min

SERVES

8

LEVEL

Medium

CAL

460

01 Ingredients

- 2½ lbs Yukon Gold potatoes (about 5 to 6 medium), unpeeled

FOR THE GARLIC-THYME CREAM:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or ½ teaspoon dried thyme)
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

FOR ASSEMBLY:

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened (for the dish) + 1 tablespoon cold butter, cut into ½-inch pieces (dotted on top)
- 6 oz (about 1½ cups shredded) Gruyère cheese, freshly shredded
- 2 oz (about ½ cup shredded) sharp white cheddar, freshly shredded
- Flaky salt for finishing (optional)

Ruth's Chris Potatoes au Gratin

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Prep the oven and equipment.** Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously butter a 2-quart baking dish (a 9×13-inch pan, two 6-inch cast-iron skillets, or a comparable oval casserole). Shred the Gruyère and white cheddar; combine them in a bowl. Set aside.
- 2 Infuse the cream.** Combine the heavy cream, minced garlic, thyme, salt, pepper, and nutmeg in a small saucepan. Heat over medium, stirring occasionally, until the cream is steaming and fragrant — about 3 to 4 minutes. Do not let it boil. Remove from heat and let the cream steep for 5 minutes, then taste; it should taste distinctly of garlic and thyme. This infused cream is what gives every layer flavor, not just the bottom.
- 3 Slice the potatoes.** Using a mandoline set to 1/8 inch (or a sharp knife), slice the potatoes into rounds. No need to peel — the skin softens completely in the long bake. Keep the slices in a bowl of cold water as you work to prevent browning, then drain and pat dry before assembling.
- 4 Build the first layer.** Arrange half the potato slices in the buttered baking dish in overlapping shingle rows, like fish scales — each slice overlapping the previous one by about half. Season lightly with a pinch of salt. Pour half the infused cream evenly over the potato layer. Scatter one-third of the cheese mixture evenly over the top.
- 5 Build the second layer.** Repeat with the remaining potato slices, slightly overlapping in shingle rows. Pour the remaining infused cream evenly over the top. Cover the surface completely with the remaining two-thirds of the cheese. Dot with the cold butter pieces.
- 6 Bake covered.** Cover the baking dish tightly with aluminum foil. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes — the trapped steam softens the potatoes and allows the cream to absorb into every layer before the top browns.
- 7 Uncover and finish.** Remove the foil and bake 20 to 25 minutes longer, until the cheese is deep golden-brown and beginning to develop a few dark spots at the edges, and a thin knife inserted into the center meets no resistance from any potato layer. If the top browns before the potatoes are fully tender, tent loosely with foil, reduce heat to 325°F, and continue baking 10 minutes more.
- 8 Rest before serving.** Let the gratin rest at room temperature for 10 minutes. The cream, absorbed into the potatoes during baking, thickens slightly as it cools and binds the layers so the gratin holds its shape when portioned. Finish with a pinch of flaky salt if desired. Serve directly from the baking dish, or spoon portions into pre-heated cast-iron skillets for the sizzle effect.

WHY IT WORKS

Russet potatoes are high-starch and absorb liquid aggressively, which sounds desirable but creates a problem in a gratin: by the time the cream thickens and the potatoes are fully tender, Russets have turned granular and mealy.



Nº 34

— RUTHS CHRIS • COPYCAT

Ruth's Chris Sweet Potato Casserole

Ruth's Chris Sweet Potato Casserole made at home: whipped sweet potatoes under a brown sugar and pecan praline crust that caramelizes into a crackly candy layer.

PREP

20 min

COOK

30 min

SERVES

8

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

520

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SWEET POTATO FILLING:

- 3 lbs whole sweet potatoes (about 3 to 4 medium), baked and scooped (yields approximately 3 cups)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- ½ cup (1 stick / 113g) unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled

- ⅓ cup whole milk (or evaporated milk for a slightly richer filling)

FOR THE PECAN PRALINE TOPPING:

- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup pecans, roughly chopped (not pulverized — you want distinct pieces)
- ⅓ cup (5½ tablespoons / 75g) unsalted butter, melted

— RUTHS CHRIS · COPYCAT

Ruth's Chris Sweet Potato Casserole

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Bake the sweet potatoes.** Preheat oven to 350°F. Pierce each sweet potato a few times with a fork and place directly on the oven rack (no foil or pan — you want dry heat on all sides). Bake 50 to 60 minutes, until completely soft and a knife meets no resistance. Remove and let cool enough to handle.
- 2 Make the filling.** Scoop the sweet potato flesh into a large mixing bowl — discard the skins. You need approximately 3 cups of mashed sweet potato. Add the granulated sugar, salt, vanilla, beaten eggs, melted butter, and milk. Beat with an electric hand mixer or whisk vigorously until the filling is completely smooth and silky, with no lumps. Taste and adjust salt if needed.
- 3 Fill the baking dish.** Lightly butter a 2-quart baking dish (9×13 inch works, as does a 9×9 or comparable oval casserole). Pour in the sweet potato filling and smooth into an even layer.
- 4 Make the pecan topping.** In a medium bowl, stir together the brown sugar, flour, chopped pecans, and melted butter until evenly combined and resembling wet sand. Spread the topping evenly over the sweet potato filling, covering the surface completely.
- 5 Bake.** Bake at 350°F for 25 to 30 minutes. The filling is set when it doesn't jiggle when you gently shake the dish. The topping is done when it reaches a deep amber-brown and looks glassy and caramelized — like the surface of a praline, not a pale crumble. Do not pull it early: the color should be distinctly darker than when it went in.
- 6 Rest before serving.** Let the casserole sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving. The topping is liquid caramel when it first comes out of the oven; resting allows it to firm from a liquid to a crackly praline crust. Serve with a large spoon, breaking through the topping.

WHY IT WORKS

Because it essentially is one. The filling calls for a full cup of granulated sugar on top of the natural sweetness already in the sweet potatoes, plus half a stick of melted butter and vanilla extract.



Nº 35

— SMITH AND WOLLENSKY • COPYCAT

Smith & Wollensky Prime Rib

Smith & Wollensky's famous prime rib made at home: a USDA Prime standing rib roast seasoned with salt, pepper, garlic, and dried herbs, roasted low-and-slow at 225°F to a perfectly even medium-rare.

PREP

30 min (+ 2–3 hr room-temp rest)

COOK

4 hr 30 min

SERVES

6

LEVEL

Medium

CAL

720

01 Ingredients

THE ROAST:

- 1 bone-in standing rib roast, 3 ribs (7 to 8 lbs) — USDA Prime preferred; well-marbled Choice is a good substitute
- 3 tablespoons Diamond Crystal kosher salt (or 2 tablespoons Morton kosher salt)
- 2 tablespoons coarse-ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crumbled fine
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil (grapeseed, avocado, or vegetable)

FOR THE AU JUS:

- Pan drippings from the roast
- 2 cups low-sodium beef stock
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste

FOR THE HORSERADISH CREAM:

- ½ cup sour cream (or crème fraîche for a richer result)
- 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish, drained well
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- White pepper to taste

Smith & Wollensky Prime Rib

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Season and dry-brine (24–48 hours ahead, or 2–3 hours ahead minimum).** Pat the roast completely dry on all surfaces with paper towels. In a small bowl, mix the salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, rosemary, and oil into a thick paste. Rub the paste evenly into all surfaces of the roast — the fat cap, the meat surfaces, between the rib bones. Set the roast bone-side down on a wire rack set over a rimmed sheet pan. Refrigerate uncovered for 24 to 48 hours if time allows (the salt draws moisture out and then reabsorbs it, seasoning the meat throughout and drying the exterior for better crust formation). If cooking same-day, skip the refrigerator: season now and leave at room temperature for 2 to 3 hours.
- 2 Come to room temperature (mandatory, 2–3 hours before roasting).** If refrigerating overnight, pull the roast from the refrigerator 2 to 3 hours before it goes into the oven. A 7 to 8 lb bone-in roast takes a full 2 to 3 hours to lose the cold from its center. Skipping this step produces the uneven 'gray band' exterior that separates home prime rib from the steakhouse version.
- 3 Roast low and slow.** Preheat oven to 225°F. Place the roast bone-side down in a roasting pan or Dutch oven (no rack needed — the bones act as their own rack). Insert a leave-in probe thermometer into the deepest part of the meat, angled so the probe tip sits in the thickest area without touching bone. Roast at 225°F without opening the oven. The roast will take 3½ to 5 hours depending on your specific oven and the exact weight — begin checking temperature at 3 hours. Pull the roast when the probe reads 120°F for medium-rare (the target after resting).
- 4 Rest (45 minutes).** Transfer the roast to a cutting board. Do not tent with foil — the heat trapped under foil steams the crust soft. Rest uncovered at room temperature for 45 minutes. Internal temperature will climb 5 to 8°F during this period from carryover. After resting, the internal should read 125 to 128°F at medium-rare. While it rests, make the au jus and horseradish cream (steps 5 and 6).
- 5 High-heat crust finish (the steakhouse exterior).** After the 45-minute rest, return the roast to a 550°F oven (or position it 6 inches below your broiler on its highest setting). Roast 10 to 12 minutes until the exterior is a deep mahogany and visibly caramelized — check at 10 minutes. The crust develops quickly at this temperature; do not leave unattended past 12 minutes. Pull and let stand 5 minutes before carving.
- 6 Make the au jus.** While the roast rests after the low-and-slow stage, pour all pan drippings into a fat separator or measuring cup. Let stand 5 minutes until the fat rises. Pour the meat juices (bottom layer) into a medium saucepan, discarding the excess fat (leave 1 tablespoon of fat in the pan for flavor). Add 2 cups beef stock and the Worcestershire sauce. Bring to a boil, scraping any browned bits from the roasting pan into the saucepan. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until slightly reduced and deepened in color. Taste and adjust salt. Strain through a fine mesh strainer into a small pitcher for serving. Keep hot over low heat until ready to serve.
- 7 Make the horseradish cream.** Combine sour cream, drained horseradish, Dijon, vinegar, salt, and white pepper in a small bowl. Stir to combine. Taste — the heat from the horseradish should be forward but not overwhelming; add more horseradish if needed. Refrigerate until serving. (Horseradish cream is served cold alongside the hot au jus — the contrast of temperatures is part of the presentation.)
- 8 Carve and serve.** Stand the roast on its cut surface. Using a long, sharp carving knife, cut down along the rib bones to remove them in one connected slab — run the knife flush against the bone surface. Set the bone slab aside. Now slice the boneless roast into portions ½ to ¾ inch thick, cutting perpendicular to where the bones were. Each portion should show the even medium-rare gradient from edge to center. To serve: pool 3 tablespoons of hot au jus in the center of each plate, lay the sliced prime rib on top, and place a tablespoon of cold horseradish cream to the side. The rib bones, cut into individual ribs, can be served separately — they are heavily flavored and among the best pieces of the roast.

WHY IT WORKS

Three factors: dry-aging, beef grade, and cooking scale.



Nº 36

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Brown Butter Herb Stuffing

The viral TikTok brown butter stuffing that fixes every Thanksgiving stuffing complaint — crispy top, custardy center, and a deep nutty flavor that butter-and-broth versions never reach.

PREP

25 min (+ 1 hr bread-drying)

COOK

55 min

SERVES

12

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

295

01 Ingredients

BREAD BASE:

- 1½ lbs (680g) day-old sourdough or brioche, crusts on, torn into 1-inch irregular pieces — about 12 loosely packed cups

BROWN BUTTER AROMATICS:

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick / 113g) unsalted butter
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into small dice (about 1½ cups)
- 4 large celery stalks, cut into small dice (about 1½ cups)
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh sage leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves (stripped from stems)

- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, very finely minced

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

CUSTARD:

- 2 large eggs
- 2½ cups (590ml) low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock, warmed

FINISHING:

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened (for greasing the pan)
- Flaky sea salt for the top (optional)

Brown Butter Herb Stuffing

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Dry the bread — this is the most important step.** Preheat the oven to 300°F. Scatter the torn bread pieces in a single layer across two rimmed baking sheets. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, rotating pans halfway, until the pieces feel completely dry and lightweight when you pick them up — they should sound hollow when tapped together and snap cleanly rather than bend. They should NOT be golden or toasted; you want dry, not browned. This step is the difference between stuffing that goes from moist to mushy (wet bread absorbs the custard and collapses) and stuffing that holds its structure after baking (dried bread absorbs the custard from the outside in, like a sponge, keeping the interior custardy while the exterior crisps). You can do this step up to 2 days ahead: let the dried bread cool completely, then store in an open bowl or paper bag at room temperature. Do not store in a sealed bag — it will steam and re-soften.
- 2 **Brown the butter.** Raise the oven to 375°F. In a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat, add the stick of butter. Use a light-colored or stainless pan if possible — the milk solids at the bottom turn from white to gold to brown, and you need to see them to catch the right moment (this is hard in a dark nonstick pan). Swirl the pan every 20 to 30 seconds. The butter will foam, then subside, then foam again slightly as the water fully evaporates. After 4 to 5 minutes, you'll see small golden specks forming on the bottom. Keep going. The moment those specks turn light amber (a warm honey-to-hazelnut color) and the butter smells intensely nutty — not sharp or acrid — immediately take the pan off the heat. The residual heat will carry it a shade further. The total time is usually 5 to 7 minutes from cold butter. If the specks are dark brown and the smell is sharp, the butter is over. Start over with fresh butter — it takes 2 minutes and the flavor difference in the finished stuffing is enormous.
- 3 **Build the aromatics in the brown butter.** Return the pan to medium heat. Add the diced onion and celery to the browned butter. Stir to coat everything in the butter, scraping up any browned milk solids from the bottom of the pan — those are flavor and belong in the stuffing, not left stuck to the skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is fully translucent and soft and the celery has lost its raw crunch, about 8 minutes. Add the minced garlic, sage, thyme, and rosemary and cook 2 more minutes, stirring constantly, until the garlic is fragrant and the herbs darken slightly and release their oils into the butter. Season with 1 teaspoon kosher salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Taste the aromatics on a piece of bread — they should taste aggressively seasoned, because once mixed with 12 cups of bread, the seasoning distributes significantly.
- 4 **Combine bread and aromatics.** Transfer the dried bread to a very large mixing bowl (the largest you have — the volume is substantial). Pour all the aromatics and browned butter over the bread. Using a large spoon or your hands (clean), toss the bread in the aromatic butter until every piece is coated and the herbs and vegetables are distributed evenly.
- 5 **Make the custard and soak the bread.** In a large measuring cup or bowl, whisk the 2 eggs until fully combined, then whisk in the warm (not hot — not boiling) stock until smooth. The mixture should be pale yellow and fully integrated with no streaks of egg white. Pour about two-thirds of the custard evenly over the bread mixture and toss to coat. Let it sit for 5 minutes to allow the dried bread to begin absorbing the liquid. Add the remaining custard and toss again. The bread should be well-moistened but not soupy — lift a piece: it should be damp all the way through with no pools of liquid sitting at the bottom of the bowl. If the mixture looks very wet, you have too much liquid and can leave 2 tablespoons behind. If the bread feels barely moistened after 5 minutes of resting, add 2 tablespoons more warm stock. Different breads have different absorptive capacity — sourdough is more absorbent than brioche.
- 6 **Transfer to the baking dish.** Grease a 9×13-inch baking dish generously with the 1 tablespoon of softened butter. Transfer the stuffing mixture into the dish and spread it into an even layer. Gently press the top flat with the back of a spoon — you want an even surface so the top crisps uniformly. If you like particularly crispy top pieces, use your hands to create a rough, irregular surface rather than a flat one: ridges and bumps will get crunchier than a smooth top. For flaky sea salt: scatter a small pinch over the top now, before covering with foil.

- 7 **First bake: covered, 40 minutes.** Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil, pressing the edges down so steam stays in. Slide it into the preheated 375°F oven. The foil holds in steam, which gently cooks the egg custard all the way through to the bottom of the dish and sets the interior into a cohesive, sliceable structure. Forty minutes is the minimum for a fully set center — less time and the stuffing may be custardy on top but doughy at the bottom. If your oven runs hot, check at 35 minutes by pressing the center through the foil; it should feel firm, not soft.
- 8 **Second bake: uncovered, 15 to 20 minutes.** Remove the foil and return the dish to the oven. The top should be pale and steamed-looking at this point — that's correct. Bake uncovered 15 to 20 minutes until the surface turns a deep golden-brown and forms a visibly crunchy crust. The edges of the dish will brown faster than the center; that's fine and is usually the part people fight over. If the center is lagging, give it another 5 minutes. Total bake time from cold: 55 to 60 minutes.
- 9 **Rest before serving.** Remove from the oven and let the stuffing rest uncovered for at least 10 minutes before scooping. Resting allows the custard to fully firm up — scooped immediately from the oven, it can break apart; scooped after 10 minutes, it holds clean in the spoon. For make-ahead serving, see the FAQ.

WHY IT WORKS

Plain melted butter is essentially fat plus water plus about 3% milk protein and milk sugar.



Nº 37

— VIRAL · 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

10 min

COOK

25 min

SERVES

6

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

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)

Easy Chicken and Dumplings

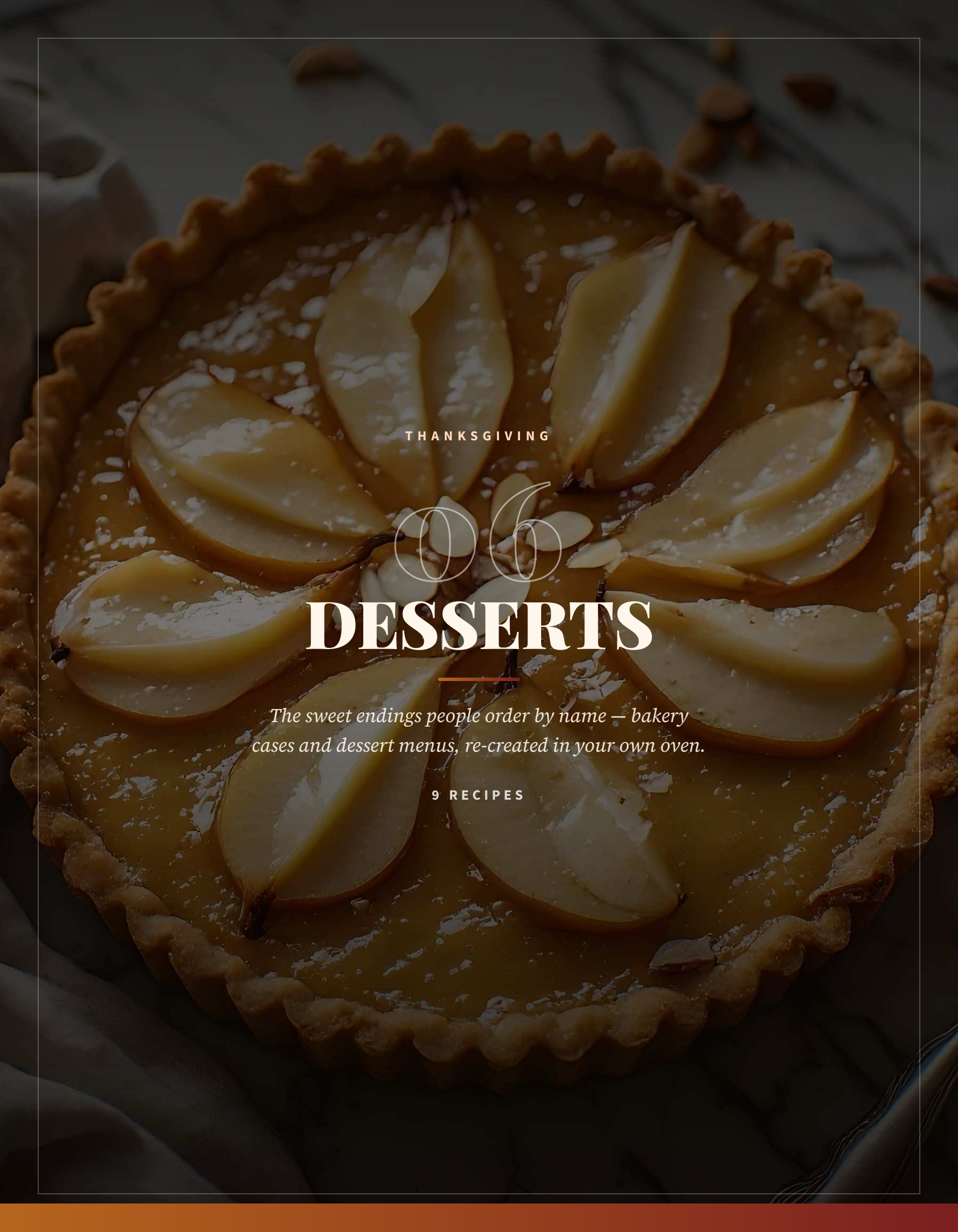
CONTINUED

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

You can, but they behave differently and this recipe is calibrated for biscuit dough. Homemade flour-and-fat dumplings are denser and take longer to cook through — 15 to 20 minutes — and they thicken the broth much more aggressively as the raw flour cooks out.



THANKSGIVING

06
DESSERTS

The sweet endings people order by name — bakery cases and dessert menus, re-created in your own oven.

9 RECIPES



Nº 38

— 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

45 min

COOK

40 min

SERVES

8

LEVEL

Intermediate

CAL

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

Pear Frangipane Tart CONTINUED

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.



Nº 39

— DOLLYWOOD · COPYCAT

Cinnamon Bread

The copycat Dollywood Cinnamon Bread recipe from The Grist Mill: individual dough pieces coated in melted butter and cinnamon sugar before baking, so every pull-apart edge is deeply caramelized.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	32 min	8	Intermediate	320

01 Ingredients

DOUGH:

- 1⅔ cups (210g) all-purpose flour, plus up to 3 tbsp more if dough is sticky
- 2¼ tsp (1 packet) instant yeast
- ½ cup warm water, 110°F — test on your wrist, should feel warm but not hot
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

CINNAMON SUGAR COATING:

- 4 tbsp unsalted butter, melted — for dipping the dough pieces

- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of kosher salt

VANILLA GLAZE:

- 1 cup (120g) powdered sugar
- 2–3 tbsp whole milk, starting with 2 and adding as needed
- ½ tsp pure vanilla extract

FOR SERVING (OPTIONAL):

- Apple butter — the official Dollywood alternative to the vanilla glaze, and arguably the better pairing

Cinnamon Bread

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Make the dough.** Combine the flour and instant yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large mixing bowl). In a separate small bowl, whisk together the warm water, sugar, and salt until the sugar dissolves — this step ensures even seasoning before the flour absorbs it. Pour the water mixture into the flour, add the egg, and mix on low (or stir with a wooden spoon) until a shaggy dough forms, about 1 minute. Add the softened butter and mix on medium speed with a dough hook for 7–8 minutes, until the dough is smooth, slightly tacky but not sticky, and pulls cleanly away from the sides of the bowl. To test: press a finger into the dough; it should spring back slowly. If it sticks to your fingers and won't release cleanly, add flour 1 tablespoon at a time until it does.
- 2 **First rise.** Shape the dough into a smooth ball, place it in a lightly oiled bowl, and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Set in a warm spot (the top of the oven or near a warm burner) for 1 to 1½ hours, until the dough has doubled in size. The exact time depends on room temperature — at 70°F it takes closer to 1½ hours; at 78°F closer to 1 hour. The dough is ready when a finger poked ½ inch deep leaves an indentation that fills back slowly rather than springing back immediately.
- 3 **Set up your coating station.** Grease a 9×5-inch loaf pan generously with butter. Put the melted butter in one shallow bowl. In a second shallow bowl, whisk together both sugars, cinnamon, and pinch of salt until no clumps remain. Have both bowls side by side next to the loaf pan — you'll be moving quickly with buttery hands.
- 4 **Coat the dough pieces.** Turn the risen dough onto a lightly floured surface and press it gently into a rectangle — do not punch it down hard. Divide into 8 roughly equal pieces (a kitchen scale helps; each piece is about 55–60g). Working one piece at a time: pick up a piece, drop it in the melted butter, turn to coat all sides, then lift it out and drop it in the cinnamon sugar. Use your hands to press the sugar mixture into all sides, including the flat ends. Every surface should be coated. Set the coated piece aside and repeat with the remaining 7 pieces.
- 5 **Build the loaf.** Stand 4 coated pieces upright in the loaf pan, pressing them gently against each other and against the short sides of the pan. Place the remaining 4 pieces on top, staggering them slightly so the seams don't line up. Press the assembled loaf gently so the pieces hold together. Any cinnamon sugar that falls into the pan stays there and caramelizes during baking — that's fine.
- 6 **Second rise.** Cover the pan loosely with a clean kitchen towel or lightly oiled plastic wrap. Let rise 45–55 minutes until the dough crowns 1 to 1½ inches above the rim of the pan. While it rises, preheat your oven to 350°F with a rack in the center position.
- 7 **Bake.** Bake uncovered for 30–35 minutes until the top is a deep, rich brown — not pale gold, but a genuine dark caramel color. The sugar coating caramelizes and creates a crust that should look almost lacquered. Check doneness with an instant-read thermometer: the center should read 190°F. If the top is browning too fast before the inside is done, tent loosely with aluminum foil for the last 10 minutes.
- 8 **Make the glaze and finish.** While the bread bakes, whisk together the powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons of milk, and vanilla extract until smooth. Add the third tablespoon of milk if the glaze is too thick to pour — it should drizzle off the whisk in a thin ribbon. Let the baked loaf cool in the pan for 10 minutes (enough to set the structure but still warm enough for the glaze to soak in slightly), then turn it out onto a wire rack or directly onto a serving board. Pour the glaze over the warm loaf so it runs down the sides and into the crevices between pieces. Serve immediately — pulled apart at the table.

WHY IT WORKS

Dollywood Cinnamon Bread is a pull-apart loaf sold at The Grist Mill bakery inside Dollywood theme park in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The key difference from a cinnamon roll: there is no interior swirl.



Nº 40

— NOTHING BUNDT CAKES • COPYCAT

Carrot

The famous Nothing Bundt Cakes Carrot bundt, made at home: spice cake mix + instant vanilla pudding + sour cream for the ultra-moist crumb, with finely grated carrots and well-drained crushed pineapple folded in.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	45 min	12	Easy	470

01 Ingredients

CAKE:

- 1 box (15¼ oz) spice cake mix — Duncan Hines, Betty Crocker, or Pillsbury all work
- 1 box (3.4 oz) instant vanilla pudding mix (not cook-and-serve) — cheesecake flavor also works
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup full-fat sour cream — do not substitute Greek yogurt or light sour cream; the fat content matters
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup whole milk — or substitute fresh carrot juice for deeper carrot flavor
- 1½ cups freshly grated carrots (about 3 medium carrots), moisture squeezed out

- ½ cup crushed pineapple, very well drained (press out the juice in a sieve)
- ½ cup chopped toasted pecans or walnuts — OPTIONAL; the bakery version has no nuts

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING:

- 8 oz full-fat block cream cheese, fully softened to room temperature
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, fully softened to room temperature
- 3 to 4 cups powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of fine salt
- 1 to 2 tablespoons heavy cream, only if needed to reach pipeable consistency

Carrot CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Grate and prepare the carrots.** On the fine side of a box grater (the small-hole side, not the large cheese-grating side), grate 3 medium carrots until you have 1½ cups loosely packed. Place the grated carrots in the center of a clean kitchen towel, gather the corners, and twist and squeeze firmly over the sink to remove excess moisture. You should expel a noticeable amount of liquid. Set the squeezed carrots aside.
- 2 **Drain the pineapple.** Tip ½ cup crushed pineapple into a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl. Press down firmly with the back of a spoon until the juice stops dripping — you want the pineapple nearly dry, so it adds flavor without flooding the batter. (Save the drained juice; a splash is lovely in the carrot-juice variation or just to drink.)
- 3 **Toast the nuts (optional).** If adding nuts, place the chopped pecans or walnuts in a dry skillet over medium heat. Stir constantly for 4 to 5 minutes until fragrant and lightly browned at the edges, then transfer to a plate and cool completely. Remember the bakery's Carrot has no nuts — add them only if you want them.
- 4 **Prep the pan.** Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously grease every surface of a 10-cup Bundt pan with Baker's Joy spray (best option — flour and oil in one can) or with softened butter applied with a pastry brush, then dust the entire inside with flour and tap out the excess. Every ridge and the center tube must be coated or the cake will tear on release.
- 5 **Make the batter.** In a large bowl, combine the spice cake mix, vanilla pudding mix, eggs, sour cream, vegetable oil, and milk. Beat on medium speed (or with a sturdy whisk) until completely smooth with no dry streaks, about 2 minutes. Do not overbeat. Fold in the squeezed grated carrots, drained pineapple, and (if using) the cooled toasted nuts with a rubber spatula until evenly distributed.
- 6 **Fill the pan and bake.** Pour the batter into the prepared Bundt pan and spread evenly. The batter will be noticeably thicker than standard box mix batter — this is correct. Tap the pan gently on the counter twice to release air pockets. Place in the center of the preheated oven and bake 40 to 45 minutes, until the top is set and springy and a toothpick inserted into a thick section comes out with moist crumbs attached — not wet batter, not dry. Start checking at 38 minutes. Overbaking is the single most common mistake.
- 7 **Cool and unmold.** Remove from the oven and cool in the pan on a wire rack for exactly 10 minutes — set a timer. Place a wire rack on top of the Bundt pan, grip both firmly, and invert in one confident motion. The cake should release cleanly. If it does not release within 5 seconds, gently rock the pan side to side — do not pry. Cool the cake completely before frosting, at least 1 hour.
- 8 **Make the frosting.** In a stand mixer or with a hand mixer, beat the softened cream cheese and softened butter together on medium-high speed until very light and fluffy with no lumps, about 3 minutes. Add the sifted powdered sugar 1 cup at a time, beating on low after each addition. Add the vanilla and salt. Beat on medium-high for 1 more minute until the frosting is thick and holds its shape when you lift the spatula — it should be stiff enough to pipe without slumping. If too stiff, add heavy cream 1 tablespoon at a time.
- 9 **Pipe the signature frosting.** Fit a large piping bag with a Wilton 1A tip (large round, ½-inch opening). Fill the bag about two-thirds full. Starting at the top of a ridge on the crown of the Bundt, apply firm pressure and pipe a thick rope of frosting that starts at the very top edge and drapes downward over the outer curve. Follow each ridge of the pan pattern, covering the top third of the cake and letting each rope drape 2 to 3 inches down the outer sides. You are not covering the full cake — just the crown and upper outer third. This is the Nothing Bundt Cakes look.
- 10 **Serve.** Best served at room temperature. If made ahead, refrigerate covered and bring to room temperature for 30 minutes before serving — cold cream cheese frosting is noticeably denser.

WHY IT WORKS

Three things set it apart.



Nº 41

— VIRAL • COPYCAT

TikTok Apple Cider Tiramisu (No-Bake Fall Dessert)

The fall tiramisu blowing up on TikTok: spiced apple cider replaces espresso, caramel mascarpone cream replaces the standard filling, and cinnamon-sautéed apples go between the layers.

PREP

30 min active + 4 hrs chilling (overnight best)

SERVES

6

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

580

COOK

15 min (spiced cider + apples)

01 Ingredients

FOR THE SPICED CIDER SOAK:

- 1½ cups (360ml) unfiltered apple cider — use cider, not apple juice (cider is pressed from whole apples and has deeper, slightly tannic flavor; apple juice is filtered and too sweet and thin for this soak)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 whole cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar (optional — adds a slight caramel note to the soak)

FOR THE CARAMEL MASCARPONE CREAM:

- 16 oz (450g) mascarpone cheese, at room temperature for 30 minutes — essential; cold mascarpone doesn't blend smoothly and causes lumps
- ½ cup (120ml) good caramel sauce, room temperature (see note — store-bought works well; Ghirardelli or Stonewall Kitchen are both reliable options)
- ¼ cup (30g) powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 cup (240ml) heavy whipping cream, cold

FOR THE CINNAMON APPLE LAYER (OPTIONAL BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):

- 2 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- Pinch of fine sea salt

FOR ASSEMBLY:

- 24–26 Savoiardi ladyfingers (one 7-oz / 200g package)
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder, for dusting
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon, for dusting
- Extra caramel sauce for drizzling, optional

— VIRAL • COPYCAT

TikTok Apple Cider Tiramisu (No-Bake Fall Dessert)

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Make the spiced cider soak — do this first so it has time to cool.** Combine the apple cider, cinnamon stick, cloves, allspice, and brown sugar (if using) in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. The cider will reduce by about ¼ cup and deepen in color and flavor. Remove from heat, discard the whole spices, and pour into a shallow bowl wide enough to dip ladyfingers flat. Cool completely to room temperature, then refrigerate while you make the cream — you want it cold or room temperature before dipping, never hot. Hot liquid saturates ladyfingers too fast and makes them fall apart.
- 2 **Make the cinnamon apple layer (optional but recommended).** Melt the butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the diced Granny Smith apples, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5–6 minutes until the apples have softened slightly — they should have some give but still hold their shape and not be mushy. The brown sugar will caramelize lightly around the apples. Spread onto a plate and let cool completely before layering. Warm apples will melt the mascarpone cream layer and make it slide.
- 3 **Make the caramel mascarpone cream — the most important part.** Beat the room-temperature mascarpone, caramel sauce, powdered sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt together with a hand mixer or stand mixer on medium speed for 30–45 seconds, just until smooth and combined. Stop as soon as the mixture is uniform — do not overbeat. Overbeating mascarpone causes it to break (the fat separates and you get a grainy, curdled texture that cannot be fixed). The mixture should be smooth, glossy, and hold a soft shape. In a separate bowl, whip the cold heavy cream on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form — the cream should hold a firm peak when you lift the beater, but not be so stiff it looks dry. Fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture in three additions, using a large rubber spatula with slow, deliberate strokes. The goal is a light, airy cream that still holds its shape. Taste — it should be notably sweet, caramel-forward, and warmly spiced. Adjust caramel sauce or powdered sugar if needed.
- 4 **Set up your dish.** Use an 8×8-inch square baking dish or a 9×6-inch rectangular dish. A glass or ceramic dish lets you see the layers from the side during assembly. If you want individual portions, use wide-mouth 8-oz mason jars or rocks glasses — break ladyfingers to fit and build layers vertically.
- 5 **Dip and build the first ladyfinger layer.** Working one at a time, dip each Savoiardi ladyfinger in the cooled spiced cider for 2 seconds per side (4 seconds total). Unlike Biscoff cookies, Savoiardi are porous and designed to absorb liquid — they need more time than Biscoff but still shouldn't be soaked through. The cookie should be moist all the way through but still hold its shape when you pick it up. If it bends or feels very soft, it's over-soaked. Lay the dipped ladyfingers in a snug single layer in the bottom of the dish. Fill any gaps with cookie pieces — they'll soften into the layers overnight and disappear.
- 6 **First cream layer.** Spoon roughly half the caramel mascarpone cream over the ladyfinger layer. Use a small offset spatula or the back of a spoon to spread it into an even layer all the way to the edges. Tap the dish gently on the counter to settle any air pockets.
- 7 **Apple layer.** Distribute the cooled sautéed apples evenly over the cream layer in a single scattered layer. They'll add texture, tartness, and apple flavor that comes through in every bite. Press them in very gently so they're embedded in the cream rather than sitting on top — this prevents them from shifting when you add the next layer.
- 8 **Second ladyfinger layer and remaining cream.** Dip and lay a second layer of ladyfingers over the apples the same way as the first — 2 seconds per side, snug rows. Spread the remaining caramel mascarpone cream over the top in an even layer. Run the spatula across the surface to get it as flat and smooth as possible — this is what will be visible when you dust the top, so it matters for presentation.
- 9 **Dust the top.** Mix the cocoa powder and cinnamon together, then dust through a fine-mesh strainer held about 6 inches above the dish. Tap the strainer gently for an even, thin coating. Hold the strainer high enough that the powder drifts down in a fine mist rather than falling in clumps. A good dusting has no bare patches and no thick piles. Drizzle a thin ribbon of additional caramel sauce over the cocoa if you want a finishing touch.
- 10 **Refrigerate — minimum 4 hours, overnight is much better.** Cover tightly with plastic wrap (without touching the cocoa surface) and refrigerate. During chilling, the spiced cider soaks fully into the ladyfinger layers, the cream firms up and the flavors meld together. At 4 hours it's good; at 8 hours (overnight) it's exceptional — the layers are cohesive, the apple flavor has bloomed into the cream, and the ladyfingers have fully softened into a tender, cake-like texture. Serve cold, straight from the dish.

WHY IT WORKS

Unfiltered apple cider is pressed from whole apples and retains skins, seeds, and pulp during pressing before being strained — it has a deeper, earthier, slightly tannic flavor compared to apple juice.



Nº 42

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Cream Puff Dessert

The viral TikTok cream puff dessert: layer graham crackers with vanilla pudding + Cool Whip filling, top with chocolate frosting, and refrigerate overnight. The crackers soften into a texture that genuinely tastes like eclair dough.

PREP

15 min

COOK

0 min (refrigerate 4 hrs–overnight)

SERVES

15

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

310

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CREAM FILLING:

- 2 boxes (3.4 oz each) instant vanilla pudding mix — *Jell-O brand is the classic choice; use 'instant' not 'cook-and-serve' (cook-and-serve requires heat and will not set properly when cold); both boxes go in at once; French vanilla adds a richer flavor if you prefer*
- 3 cups cold whole milk — *must be cold; warm milk makes instant pudding set unevenly; whole milk produces a thicker, creamier filling than 2% or skim*
- 1 container (8 oz) Cool Whip frozen whipped topping, thawed — *thaw in the refrigerator for 4 hours or at room temperature for 1 hour before using; do not substitute fresh whipped cream (it deflates overnight and the filling becomes watery)*

FOR THE LAYERS:

- 1 box (14.4 oz) honey graham crackers — *you'll need about 27 full crackers (3 layers of 9 crackers each); the honey variety has a mild sweetness that complements the vanilla filling; cinnamon graham crackers work and add a warm note; chocolate graham crackers make a richer dessert*

FOR THE CHOCOLATE TOPPING:

- 1 can (16 oz) chocolate frosting — *store-bought is traditional and easiest; Duncan Hines Milk Chocolate or Betty Crocker Rich & Creamy work well; microwave for 20 seconds to make it pourable*

OR FOR A HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE TOPPING:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1½ cups powdered sugar, sifted
- 3 tablespoons whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of kosher salt

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TikTok Cream Puff Dessert

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Make the cream filling.** Combine both boxes of instant vanilla pudding mix with 3 cups of cold whole milk in a large bowl. Whisk vigorously for 2 minutes until the mixture thickens noticeably — it should mound slightly when you lift the whisk. Do not rush this step; full 2 minutes of whisking activates the starch in the pudding. Let it sit for 2 more minutes to firm up. Add the thawed Cool Whip and fold gently with a rubber spatula, using wide strokes from the bottom of the bowl up. Stop when the mixture is uniform with no white streaks — overmixing deflates the whipped topping and makes the filling dense. The finished filling should look like thick, billowy soft-serve.
- 2 Build the first layer.** In an ungreased 9×13-inch baking dish, lay whole honey graham crackers in a single, even layer. You'll need about 9 full crackers; break them as needed to fill the corners. Do not overlap them — one single flat layer. The crackers will touch but not stack.
- 3 Add the first cream layer.** Spoon half the pudding filling over the graham crackers and spread into a smooth, even layer that covers every cracker to the edges. Use an offset spatula or the back of a spoon. The filling layer should be about ½ inch thick.
- 4 Add the second cracker layer.** Lay another complete, single layer of whole graham crackers directly on top of the first cream layer. Press very gently — you want the crackers to sit flat, not sink into the cream.
- 5 Add the second cream layer.** Spoon the remaining pudding filling over the second cracker layer and spread to cover completely, as you did with the first layer.
- 6 Add the third cracker layer.** Place the final layer of graham crackers on top of the second cream layer. This is the top of the dessert structure — make it as flat and even as possible.
- 7 Add the chocolate topping.** For canned frosting: microwave the unopened can (lid removed) for 20 seconds at 50% power to loosen it. Spoon onto the top cracker layer and spread with an offset spatula. The goal is a smooth, even chocolate top that reaches all four edges. For homemade: melt butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk in cocoa powder for 30 seconds until smooth and fragrant. Remove from heat. Whisk in powdered sugar, milk, vanilla, and salt until smooth and pourable. Pour over the top cracker layer and spread immediately — the homemade topping sets faster than store-bought frosting.
- 8 Refrigerate.** Cover the pan tightly with plastic wrap or aluminum foil. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours, but overnight (8 to 12 hours) produces the best result. During this time, the graham crackers slowly absorb moisture from the cream filling and soften from the outside in, transforming from crunchy to soft and yielding — the same texture as choux pastry or eclair dough. This transformation is what makes the dessert taste like a real eclair rather than a graham cracker sandwich.
- 9 Slice and serve cold.** Use a sharp knife to cut into 15 squares (5 rows of 3). A knife dipped in hot water wipes cleaner between cuts. Serve directly from the refrigerator — the cream filling softens quickly at room temperature. Leftovers keep covered in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. The texture continues to improve through day 2, when the crackers are fully softened and the layers have melded together.

WHY IT WORKS

Make the cream filling: whisk 2 boxes (3.4 oz each) instant vanilla pudding with 3 cups cold whole milk for 2 minutes until thick. Fold in one 8-oz container of thawed Cool Whip until just combined — no streaks.



Nº 43

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars

The swirled pumpkin cheesecake bars all over TikTok every fall: buttery graham cracker crust, a split vanilla-and-pumpkin cheesecake filling swirled into a marble pattern, baked at 325°F without a water bath.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
30 min	45 min	24 bars	Easy	235

01Ingredients

GRAHAM CRACKER CRUST:

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs (about 16 full graham cracker sheets, processed fine)
- ¼ cup (50g) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (113g / 1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- Pinch of kosher salt

CHEESECAKE FILLING:

- 3 packages (8 oz / 226g each = 24 oz total) full-fat block cream cheese, at room temperature for at least 2 hours — do not use tub cream cheese or reduced-fat
- 1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (170g) full-fat sour cream — Greek yogurt at a 1:1 ratio also works

- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

PUMPKIN LAYER (ADDED TO HALF THE BATTER):

- 1 cup (240g) canned pumpkin purée — NOT pumpkin pie filling (the labels look nearly identical; check for zero added sugar or spices)
- 1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice — OR: 1 tsp ground cinnamon + ¼ tsp ground ginger + ¼ tsp ground nutmeg + ⅛ tsp ground cloves

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:

- Lightly sweetened whipped cream for serving (assembles in 2 minutes: ½ cup heavy cream + 1 tbsp powdered sugar + ¼ tsp vanilla, beaten to soft peaks)
- A light dusting of cinnamon over the whipped cream

Pumpkin Cheesecake Bars

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Pull the cream cheese and eggs out of the refrigerator 2 hours before you start.** This is the step most home bakers skip, and it's the reason most homemade cheesecake has a lumpy, grainy, or uneven texture. Cold cream cheese doesn't beat smooth — it breaks into chunks with soft spots between them, and no amount of additional mixing will fix it once that happens. Set the three blocks of cream cheese on the counter in their original packaging (or on a plate) and leave the eggs next to them. Two hours is the minimum; if your kitchen is cold, allow 2½ to 3 hours. Room-temperature eggs incorporate more evenly into batter and produce a smoother, more consistent texture.
- 2 **Preheat the oven to 325°F and prepare the pan.** Line a 9×13-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides — these become handles that let you lift the entire slab of bars out of the pan cleanly after chilling, making cutting dramatically easier. Lightly spray the parchment with nonstick spray.
- 3 **Make the crust.** In a medium bowl, combine the 2 cups of graham cracker crumbs, ¼ cup of sugar, ½ cup of melted butter, and a pinch of salt. Stir with a fork until every crumb is coated and the mixture feels like damp sand — when you squeeze a small handful, it should hold together. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and press it firmly and evenly across the bottom, using the flat base of a measuring cup or a glass to compact it. The goal is a crust that's dense enough that it doesn't crumble when you cut a bar — loose or thin crusts break apart. Bake the crust for 10 minutes at 325°F until fragrant and just barely beginning to set at the edges. Remove and set aside to cool for 10 minutes. Do not turn off the oven.
- 4 **Beat the cream cheese and sugar until completely smooth.** Add all three packages of room-temperature cream cheese to a large bowl. Using a hand mixer or the paddle attachment of a stand mixer, beat on MEDIUM-LOW speed for 2 to 3 minutes, scraping down the sides and the bottom with a spatula every 60 seconds, until the cream cheese is entirely smooth with zero lumps. Add the 1 cup of sugar and beat another 1 minute until fully incorporated. This is the moment where patience pays off — if the batter has any lumps at this stage, stop and beat longer rather than proceeding. Any un-beaten lumps now will be visible in the baked bars. If you're having trouble getting the cream cheese smooth, the most likely cause is that it's still too cold.
- 5 **Add sour cream and vanilla.** Add the ¾ cup of sour cream and 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract to the bowl. Beat on low for 30 seconds until just combined. Scrape down the sides.
- 6 **Add the eggs on LOW speed — this is the most important technique step.** Set the mixer to its LOWEST setting. Add the eggs one at a time, beating for only 10 to 15 seconds per egg — just until each one disappears into the batter. Between eggs, scrape down the sides and bottom with a spatula to ensure even mixing. The reason for this careful technique: eggs beaten at high speed or for too long introduce air bubbles into cheesecake batter. Those bubbles expand during baking, rise to the surface, and pop — leaving cracks and an uneven texture on the top of your bars. Cheesecake batter should look dense and glossy, not fluffy or aerated. If it looks like it has tiny bubbles through it, it's been over-mixed.
- 7 **Divide the batter and make the pumpkin half.** Using a large spoon or flexible spatula, scoop approximately half of the batter (roughly 2 heaped cups) into a separate medium bowl — you don't need to measure precisely; eyeballing it is fine. To the bowl with the separated batter, add the 1 cup of canned pumpkin purée and the 1½ teaspoons of pumpkin pie spice. Stir gently by hand until fully combined and uniformly orange. The pumpkin batter will be slightly thicker and more orange than the vanilla half — this color contrast is what makes the swirl visible.
- 8 **Layer and swirl the two batters.** Working over the cooled graham cracker crust, alternate spoonfuls of the plain vanilla batter and the pumpkin batter across the surface. The goal is a rough checkerboard pattern of roughly equal-sized dollops — don't pour all the vanilla in one half and all the pumpkin in the other, because that creates a two-tone bar rather than a swirl. Aim for 10 to 12 alternating dollops of each. Use a butter knife, offset spatula, or wooden skewer to drag through the batter in long, fluid S-curves and figure-8 motions to create the marble effect. Keep the knife moving in one continuous direction rather than making short back-and-forth strokes, which muddies the colors. Six to eight long swipe motions are enough — over-swirling blends the batters into a solid tan color and erases the pattern. Step back and look at the surface: you should see distinct ribbons of orange-pumpkin and cream-white alternating through the top.

9

Bake at 325°F for 40 to 45 minutes. Place the pan in the center rack of the oven. Bake until the edges are firm and opaque — they should not jiggle at all when you gently shake the pan — but the center 2 to 3 inches should still have a distinct, slow wobble. The center will look slightly underdone; that's correct. It will set fully as it cools. If the entire surface is stiff with no wobble, the bars are overbaked — overbaked cheesecake has a dry, rubbery texture. If the center is liquid rather than wobbling, give them another 5 minutes.

10

Cool slowly in the oven, then at room temperature, then refrigerate. When the bars are done, turn off the oven and prop the door open about 2 inches using a wooden spoon or oven mitt. Leave the bars inside with the door cracked for 1 full hour. This step is the most effective way to prevent cracks: cheesecake that cools too quickly in the oven contracts faster than the crust and surface, and that differential contraction tears the surface. Slow, gradual cooling allows the cheesecake to contract evenly. After 1 hour in the cracked oven, transfer the pan to a wire rack and let it reach full room temperature — another 45 minutes to 1 hour. Then refrigerate, uncovered, for at least 4 hours. Overnight is better: the texture of pumpkin cheesecake bars improves significantly after 8 to 12 hours of chilling — they become denser, firmer, and more cleanly sliceable.

11

Cut and serve. Lift the cold bars out of the pan by the parchment overhangs. Place the entire slab on a large cutting board. Fill a tall glass with hot water and dip a long, sharp knife in the water, then wipe it completely dry with a kitchen towel. Make one long, confident cut the full length of the pan in one motion — do not saw back and forth. Wipe the blade, dip in hot water again, dry, and make the next cut. Repeat for every cut. This single technique — clean, warm blade — is the difference between neat bars with perfect swirl visible on the cut edge and bars with ragged, torn edges. The warm knife melts through the chilled cheesecake cleanly; a cold dry knife drags and tears. Cut 4 strips across the long side and 6 strips across the short side for 24 equal bars. Serve cold, with optional whipped cream.

WHY IT WORKS

Cold cream cheese doesn't beat smooth — it breaks into clumps with softer, wetter spots between them, and those clumps stay in the finished bars as dense, lumpy pockets. The bars taste fine but the texture is uneven and the appearance looks amateur.



Nº 44

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Pumpkin Dump Cake (Don't Stir It)

The viral TikTok pumpkin dump cake: silky pumpkin pie custard on the bottom, golden buttered cake-mix streusel on top, five ingredients, 10 minutes of work.

PREP

10 min

COOK

50–60 min

SERVES

12

LEVEL

Easy

CAL

410

01 Ingredients

FOR THE PUMPKIN CUSTARD LAYER:

- 1 can (15 oz) pure pumpkin puree — pure pumpkin, NOT pumpkin pie filling. Pie filling already has sugar and spices added; using it produces an overseasoned, cloying custard with no control over the spice balance.
- 1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk — not condensed milk (which is sweetened and will make the custard sticky and overly sweet). Evaporated milk has a concentrated, slightly caramelized dairy richness that makes the custard taste more like a real pumpkin pie than whole milk or half-and-half would.
- 3 large eggs — the binding agent that turns the pumpkin-milk mixture into a genuine custard. Beaten in, they set the layer firm enough to contrast the crumble topping. 3 eggs = firmer, sliceable custard; 4 eggs = richer, denser; 3 is the TikTok standard.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar — the brown sugar adds a faint molasses note that deepens the fall flavor without making it cloying; all granulated works if you don't have brown
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice — a blend of cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and often allspice. You can mix your own: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon + $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ginger + $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp nutmeg + $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp cloves. If using a spice cake mix (instead of yellow), reduce this to 1 teaspoon to avoid a clove-heavy result.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt — don't skip; salt in a custard is what makes sweet flavors taste rounded and full instead of flat and sugary

FOR THE STREUSEL TOPPING:

- 1 box (15 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz) yellow cake mix, DRY — the single most important specification. Do NOT prepare the cake mix (no eggs, no oil, no water from the box directions). You want the dry powder to sit as a layer on top of the custard; it absorbs only the butter poured from above, creating a sandy, crispy crumble. Use yellow cake mix as the baseline — it has a neutral, buttery character that contrasts the spiced custard without competing. Spice cake mix works but adds more cinnamon and cloves on top of what's already in the custard.
- 1 cup (2 sticks, 226g) unsalted butter, melted — this is the full amount, not $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. The custard layer holds a lot more moisture than canned fruit does in a regular dump cake, which means the cake mix needs full butter coverage to brown evenly. Reduce to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and you will have white powdery patches where the dry mix never cooked. Every visible speck of cake mix must be touched by butter.

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS:

- 1 cup chopped pecans — scatter over the cake mix BEFORE pouring the butter; they toast alongside the cake mix and add crunch and slight bitterness that cuts through the sweet custard. The most popular variation.
- Vanilla ice cream, for serving — not optional in TikTok terms; the warm-cold contrast is part of the experience

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TikTok Pumpkin Dump Cake (Don't Stir It)

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).** Grease a 9×13-inch baking dish with butter or nonstick spray. Set it aside. Melt both sticks of butter now — either in a small saucepan over low heat or in a microwave-safe bowl in 30-second intervals. Set aside to cool slightly while you make the custard.
- 2 Make the pumpkin custard.** In a large bowl, combine the pumpkin puree, evaporated milk, eggs, granulated sugar, brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, and salt. Whisk until smooth and uniform — there should be no visible streaks of egg white or lumps of pumpkin. The mixture should look like loose pumpkin pie filling: orange, glossy, and pourable. Taste it: it should taste well-spiced, slightly sweet, and like a good pumpkin pie filling. If it tastes flat, add a pinch more salt. If it tastes too sweet already, that's fine — the cake mix topping is neutral and will balance it. Pour the custard into the prepared baking dish and spread into an even layer with a spatula.
- 3 Add the cake mix layer. DO NOT STIR.** Open the box of dry yellow cake mix and sprinkle it evenly over the custard layer. Distribute it from side to side and corner to corner, ending up with a relatively even depth across the whole pan. Some minor unevenness is fine. The critical rule: do not stir it into the custard at any point from this step forward. Not even a little. If you stir, the dry cake mix absorbs the wet custard immediately, the two layers merge into a homogeneous wet batter, and you get a dense, uniform cake instead of the distinct two-texture result (custard bottom, crispy crumble top) that makes this recipe work. The layers must stay separate throughout baking.
- 4 Pour the melted butter over everything.** This is the step that determines whether your topping is golden and crispy or white and powdery. Hold the measuring cup or saucepan about 6 inches above the pan and pour the butter in a slow, back-and-forth motion, moving across the entire surface. You are trying to touch every visible speck of cake mix with butter. When you've used about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the butter, pause and look for white patches — areas where the dry cake mix hasn't been touched. Direct the remaining butter there. If you have a pastry brush, use it to nudge butter into corners and edges. The entire surface should look damp and slightly amber when you're done — no dry white spots remaining.
- 5 Bake 50–60 minutes.** Place the pan on the center rack and bake undisturbed. At the 40-minute mark, check: the edges should be golden and beginning to pull slightly from the sides; the topping in the center will still be pale gold. Continue baking. At 50 minutes, the topping should be evenly deep golden brown — the color of a toasted graham cracker — and the custard should be visibly bubbling at the edges. Gently shake the pan: the edges should be set, and the center should have only a slight jiggle (the same slight jiggle as a properly baked pumpkin pie). If the center sloshes actively, continue baking in 5-minute increments. If the topping is deeply browned but the center still jiggles significantly, tent loosely with foil and continue baking — the foil prevents further topping browning while the custard finishes.
- 6 Cool 15 minutes before serving.** This step is not optional. The custard layer continues setting as the pan cools — pulling it out of the oven and immediately scooping will give you a wet, runny custard that doesn't hold its shape and makes the two-layer reveal impossible. After 15 minutes the custard will be firm enough to scoop cleanly. Serve warm: use a large spoon to pull a serving that shows both layers — golden crumble on top, orange custard below. Place in a bowl, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream directly on top of the warm crumble. The ice cream melts immediately into the hot butter crumble. That's the reveal.

WHY IT WORKS

Because the no-stir rule is what produces the two-texture result that makes this recipe work. When the dry cake mix sits on top of the wet custard without mixing, a moisture boundary forms between the wet layer below and the dry layer above.

Nº 45

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

TikTok Pumpkin Pie Rice Krispie Treats

The viral TikTok pumpkin pie rice krispie treats: white-layer 'crust' pressed into muffin cups, filled with orange pumpkin-spice rice krispie filling that mimics a real pie cross-section. No baking, 40 minutes, makes 24 mini pies.

PREP
20 min

COOK
20 min (+ 15 min set)

SERVES
24 mini pies

LEVEL
Easy

CAL
130

01 Ingredients

CRUST (PLAIN LAYER):

- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 cups mini marshmallows (about 7 oz / 200g) — or 40 large marshmallows cut in half. Mini marshmallows melt faster and more evenly.
- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal (or any puffed rice cereal)
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt — amplifies the sweetness and prevents the crust from tasting flat

PUMPKIN FILLING (ORANGE LAYER):

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 cups mini marshmallows (about 3½ oz / 100g)
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice — OR: ½ tsp ground cinnamon + ¼ tsp ground ginger + ⅛ tsp ground nutmeg + ⅛ tsp ground allspice

- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (for stronger spice presence — optional but recommended)
- 3–4 drops orange gel food coloring — gel, not liquid. Liquid food coloring adds water and can make the mixture seize and lose its pliability. Start with 3 drops and add more if the color isn't vivid enough.
- 3 cups Rice Krispies cereal

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:

- Whipped cream from a can or piped — one small rosette per mini pie for the full pumpkin pie look
- Pinch of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice dusted over the whipped cream
- Caramel drizzle — a few drops of store-bought caramel sauce over each pie

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TikTok Pumpkin Pie Rice Krispie Treats

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Spray the muffin tin generously.** Coat every cup of the mini muffin tin with nonstick spray, making sure to get the sides as well as the bottom. This is the most important prep step — undertreated cups cause the pies to tear when you unmold them. Set the tin within arm's reach of your stove; you'll need to work quickly once the cereal mixture is ready.
- 2 **Make the crust batch.** Melt 5 tablespoons of butter in a large pot over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Once fully melted, add 4 cups of mini marshmallows and the ¼ teaspoon of salt. Stir constantly until the marshmallows are completely melted and the mixture is smooth and pulls away from the sides of the pot, about 3 to 4 minutes. Do not turn up the heat to speed this along — high heat makes the mixture stiff and less pliable. Remove the pot from heat and fold in the 6 cups of Rice Krispies with a silicone spatula until every piece of cereal is coated. The mixture should be pliable and slightly sticky.
- 3 **Form the crust cups — work fast.** Spray a tablespoon or the back of a small spoon with nonstick spray. Scoop about 1½ tablespoons of the plain cereal mixture into each mini muffin cup. While the mixture is still warm and pliable, press it down and up the sides to form a shallow cup shape — aim for a bottom layer about ¼ inch thick with walls rising ¼ to ½ inch up the sides. A small round bottle sprayed with nonstick spray is ideal: press straight down to flatten the bottom, then wiggle it to push material up the sides. Work through all 24 cups before the mixture cools; if it starts to stiffen, briefly warm the pot over low heat for 30 seconds, stirring, to restore pliability. If the mixture sticks to your tool, respray with nonstick spray. You will have some leftover crust mixture — this is intentional to ensure all 24 cups are adequately filled.
- 4 **Make the pumpkin filling batch.** In a second large pot over medium-low heat, melt 3 tablespoons of butter. Add 2 cups of mini marshmallows and stir constantly until completely melted and smooth. Remove from heat. Add the pumpkin pie spice and the optional ground cinnamon and stir until fully incorporated. Add 3 drops of orange gel food coloring and stir vigorously — the color should distribute evenly within 10 to 15 strokes. Check the color: it should be a bright autumn orange. If it looks pale or peach, add one more drop and stir again. Fold in the 3 cups of Rice Krispies until completely coated.
- 5 **Fill the cups.** Working quickly while the orange filling is still warm, scoop about 1 tablespoon of the orange mixture into each crust cup, pressing gently so it makes contact with the crust walls and fills any gaps. The orange layer should sit level with or just slightly above the top of the crust walls. If the two layers look like they're separating, press the rim of the crust down gently against the filling — the warmth of the filling will help them bond. The two-layer cross-section (pale crust outside, orange filling inside) is the TikTok visual payoff.
- 6 **Let them set at room temperature for 15 minutes.** Do not refrigerate — chilling makes them too hard to unmold cleanly and changes the texture. At room temperature the treats firm up but stay slightly chewy, which is the correct texture. After 15 minutes, press gently on the top of one pie — it should feel solid but not rock-hard.
- 7 **Unmold carefully.** To release each mini pie, slide a thin butter knife or offset spatula around the inside edge of the cup to loosen it, then press up gently from the bottom with your thumb (from beneath the tin) or use a spoon handle to pop them out. If the tin has removable bottom cups, push up through the bottom. If a pie sticks, don't force it — run the knife around the edge again and try once more. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet or serving platter.
- 8 **Add toppings just before serving.** A small rosette of whipped cream piped onto the top of each mini pie and a pinch of pumpkin pie spice dusted over completes the visual. Add toppings within an hour of serving — whipped cream from a can deflates and weeps after about 90 minutes. For caramel drizzle, use a teaspoon to drizzle 3 to 4 drops over each pie immediately before serving.



Nº 46

— VIRAL · COPYCAT

Pumpkin Roll

The viral TikTok pumpkin roll recipe — a tender spiced pumpkin sponge cake rolled up while still hot (the trick that prevents cracking) and filled with tangy cream cheese frosting.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	15 min	10	Medium	285

01 Ingredients

PUMPKIN SPONGE:

- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (160g) pure pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (95g) all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp fine salt

FOR ROLLING:

- 3–4 tbsp powdered sugar, for the towel
- 1 clean, smooth-weave cotton or linen kitchen towel (not waffle-weave)

CREAM CHEESE FILLING:

- 8 oz (225g) full-fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 6 tbsp (85g) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (120g) powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Pinch of fine salt

TO FINISH:

- 2–3 tbsp powdered sugar, for dusting before serving

Pumpkin Roll CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 Prep everything before you start.** Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a 15×10-inch jelly roll pan with parchment paper and spray generously with nonstick spray — the sides too. Lay a clean kitchen towel flat on the counter and dust it generously with 3 to 4 tablespoons of powdered sugar, spreading it over an area at least as large as the pan. Have it ready and waiting; you need to move fast when the cake comes out.
- 2 Make the sponge.** Beat the eggs and granulated sugar together with an electric mixer (or vigorously by hand) for about 2 minutes until thick and slightly pale — you want the mixture to hold a ribbon briefly when the beater is lifted. Beat in the pumpkin puree and vanilla until smooth. Sift the flour, cinnamon, baking powder, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and salt directly into the bowl. Fold gently with a spatula until just combined — stop when you no longer see dry flour; a few thin streaks are fine. Do not overmix.
- 3 Spread the batter.** Pour the batter into the prepared pan and use an offset spatula or the back of a large spoon to spread it in an even, thin layer all the way to the corners and edges. The layer should be about ¼ inch thick. Uneven spots bake at different rates and can create thicker, drier areas that crack when rolled.
- 4 Bake for 13 to 15 minutes.** The cake is done when the surface looks set and the center springs back gently when pressed with a fingertip. It should not look wet or jiggly. Pull it at 13 minutes if your oven runs hot. Do not overbake — a dry sponge cracks.
- 5 Roll it immediately.** The moment the pan comes out of the oven, run a thin knife around the edges to loosen any stuck spots. Invert the pan over the prepared towel and let the cake fall out; peel off and discard the parchment paper. Starting at a short end, use the towel to help you roll the cake tightly into a log — the towel rolls up inside the cake, and that is correct. Set the roll seam-side down on a wire rack. Cool completely at room temperature, about 1 hour. Do not refrigerate during cooling.
- 6 Make the filling.** While the cake cools, beat the room-temperature cream cheese and butter together until completely smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the sifted powdered sugar, vanilla, and salt. Beat on low until incorporated, then on medium until fluffy, about 1 more minute. Taste — it should be smooth, sweet, and tangy. Refrigerate until the cake is fully cool.
- 7 Assemble.** Gently unroll the cooled cake — it should open flat without cracking. Spread the cream cheese filling evenly over the surface, leaving a ½-inch border along all four edges. Re-roll the cake (without the towel this time), using firm, even pressure. Some filling will press toward the edges; that is normal.
- 8 Chill and serve.** Wrap the roll tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour (or up to 3 days). When ready to serve, unwrap, set on a platter, and dust generously with powdered sugar. Slice ¾ to 1 inch thick with a sharp knife, wiping the blade between cuts.

WHY IT WORKS

Hot cake is flexible — the steam has kept the gluten network loose and pliable. Cold cake is set and brittle; trying to curl it into a roll after it cools produces cracks through the surface.

From a browser tab to *your kitchen counter.*

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