

# 20 DELICIOUS RECIPES

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# SPINACH AND ARTICHOKE DIP

Serves: 6 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

## NOTES FROM GINA

I've been making this recipe for years and it's a go-to for parties. My friends and family always request (or should I say affectionately demand?) that I make it!

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese, divided
- ½ cup fat-free sour cream
- ¼ cup (1 ounce) grated fresh Parmesan cheese, divided
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 (14-ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 1 (8-ounce) block 1/3-less-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1 (8-ounce) block fat-free cream cheese, softened
- 5 ounces of frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained, and squeezed dry
- (13.5-ounce) package baked tortilla chips (about 16 cups)

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Combine 1 ½ cups mozzarella, sour cream, 2 tablespoons Parmesan, and next 6 ingredients (through spinach) in a large bowl; stir until well blended.
3. Spoon mixture into a 1 ½-quart baking dish.
4. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup mozzarella and remaining 2 tablespoons Parmesan.
5. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until bubbly and golden brown.
6. Serve with tortilla chips or whatever crackers/bread you prefer!

# BUFFALO CHICKEN DIP

Serves: 4 - 6 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes

## NOTES FROM BRIDGET

I make this dip for every family gathering, and it's a staple during football tailgates and watch parties! I brought it to a Christmas party one year and I've never seen a dish cleared so fast. I don't like spicy food and trust me this recipe is not super spicy at all!

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups** shredded cooked chicken
- 1 package (8 ounces)** cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup** Frank's RedHot® Original Cayenne Pepper Hot Sauce
- ½ cup** ranch dressing
- ½ cup** blue cheese crumbles

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Spoon into shallow 1-quart baking dish.
2. Bake 20 minutes or until mixture is heated through; stir. Sprinkle with green onions, if desired, and serve with chips, crackers and/or cut up veggies.

# BACON MAC AND CHEESE MUFFINS

Makes: 24 Muffins | Prep Time: 60 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes



## NOTES FROM CHRIS

I snagged this recipe from Chef Alain Bossé of Nova Scotia – aka [The Kilted Chef](#) – and they are so sinful I have to ration how often I make them. The recipe here is as he crafted it, but I add another cup of cheese and 6 extra slices of bacon to the muffin mixture (why skimp, right?) and I leave out the green onions for personal taste. Scrumptious. FYI these freeze extremely well and can be reheated in a 350° oven for 10 minutes beautifully!



# BACON MAC AND CHEESE MUFFINS

Makes: 24 Muffins | Prep Time: 60 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

## INGREDIENTS:

### Muffin ingredients:

- ¼ cup** butter
- 1** medium onion, diced
- ¼ cup** all-purpose flour
- 2 cans** of 2% or fat free evaporated milk
- 1½ tsp** sea salt
- 2 cups** each of grated sharp cheddar, white, and old yellow cheese
- 9** slices of cooked bacon, chopped
- 3** green onions, chopped
- 1** box elbow macaroni

### Topping ingredients:

- ½ cup** panko
- ⅓ cup** Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup** grated old cheddar cheese
- 1 tsp** olive oil
- 3** slices of cooked bacon, chopped

## DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

### To make the muffins:

1. Cook the pasta per the package directions, set it aside in the strainer.
2. Melt butter in a 6-quart saucepan.
3. Add onions and cook until translucent.
4. Add flour and cook over low heat, stirring for few minutes.
5. Whisk in evaporated milk and salt.
6. Bring the mixture to a boil, lower heat, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally (scrape that bottom so it doesn't burn!) until sauce has thickened.
7. Add cheese, cooked bacon and green onions, stirring until melted.
8. Add the cooked pasta into the pot and stir until well mixed.
9. Butter the muffin tin.
10. Divide pasta mixture evenly into each muffin slot.

### To make and apply the topping:

1. Combine panko, Parmesan cheese, cooked bacon and olive oil in medium bowl.
2. Sprinkle pasta mixture first with grated cheddar cheese, and then with panko and bacon topping.

### To bake:

Bake in preheated 375°F oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until tops are golden brown. If you're baking two trays, it's often best to bake them one at a time because ovens can be notorious for baking unevenly when multiple trays are involved. But that's your call! Either way, let muffins rest in pans for 10 minutes before removing from pans.

# GREEK WHITE BEAN SALAD

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Setting Time: 30 - 60 minutes

## NOTES FROM LAUREN

Make it your own! The fun part about this salad is you can add whatever you want, and it tastes fantastic! To make it more filling add protein (tuna, chicken, tofu, or shrimp), other veggies like bell peppers, cauliflower, or add some nuts or avocado.

## INGREDIENTS:

2 cans white beans (cannellini, great northern white beans), drained and rinsed well  
½ medium red onion, chopped  
2 **tbsp** red wine vinegar  
½ large lemon, juiced  
1 **tbsp** olive oil  
½ **tsp** salt  
1 **tsp** garlic powder  
1 **tsp** dried oregano  
10 **oz** grape or cherry tomatoes, halved  
1 English cucumber, diced  
½ **cup** chopped flat leaf parsley (about ½ bunch)  
¼ **cup** sliced Kalamata olives  
Feta cheese, optional

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Start by chopping the red onion into small pieces.
2. Add the onion to the mixing bowl. Add the red wine vinegar and lemon juice to the onion and let sit 3-5 minutes.
3. While onions are soaking, cut the tomatoes, dice the cucumber, chop the parsley and rinse and drain the beans.
4. Combine all the ingredients (olive oil, salt, garlic powder, oregano, tomatoes, cucumber, parsley, olives, and white beans) to the bowl with the onions and stir well.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add feta cheese, if you like.
6. If time allows, let salad sit in the fridge for 30 minutes to 1 hour to allow flavors to incorporate.

# INA GARTEN'S BASIL PESTO

Yields: 4 cups | Prep Time: 15 minutes

## NOTES FROM ROSS

My wife Misty found this pesto recipe 10 years ago and it's been a staple in our dinner line-ups since. With little kids in the house, when you find something that everyone likes, it becomes a regular in the rotation and this recipe checks all the boxes. The thing I like best about this recipe is that it makes a big batch, and you can just freeze the rest in individual servings until you're ready to use them.

**Pro tip: use the pesto as your base sauce on homemade pizza and you won't be sorry!**

## INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ cup** walnuts
- ¼ cup** pinoli (pine nuts)
- 3 tbsp** chopped garlic (9 cloves)
- 5 cups** fresh basil leaves, packed
- 1 tsp** kosher salt
- 1 tsp** freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ cups** good olive oil
- 1 cup** freshly grated Parmesan

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Place the walnuts, pinoli, and garlic in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Process for 15 seconds.
2. Add the basil leaves, salt, and pepper.
3. With the processor running, slowly pour the olive oil into the bowl through the feed tube and process until the pesto is thoroughly pureed.
4. Add the Parmesan and puree for a minute. Use right away or store the pesto in the refrigerator or freezer with a thin film of olive oil on top.

# QUINOTTO (QUINOA RISOTTO)

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 40 minutes | Cook Time: 1 hour

## NOTES FROM GINA

While I was hosting a press trip in Peru for client [Learning Journeys](#), we took an immersive cooking class in Cusco to make Quinotto. This is essentially like risotto but made with quinoa and it's a popular Peruvian dish. I loved it so much, I brought the printed copy of the recipe home and have made it often. (Fun side note: I was pregnant while on the trip and this dish totally seduced me...I continued to crave it after I got back, and I think I made it once a week!). Over the years, I somehow misplaced the original printed recipe but was lucky enough to find this one online at [Food Republic](#). It's just like I remember it in Peru!

## INGREDIENTS:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>4-5 cups</b> vegetable or chicken stock | <b>½ cup</b> white wine  |
| <b>2-3 tbsp</b> olive oil                  | <b>¼ cup</b> heavy cream   |
| <b>4 cups</b> chopped mixed wild mushrooms | <b>½ cup</b> grated Parmesan, Grana Padano or other grated cheese            |
| <b>2 tbsp</b> unsalted butter, divided     | Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste, chives or cilantro to garnish |
| <b>2</b> medium shallots, finely chopped   |  |
| <b>3-4</b> garlic cloves, minced           |  |
| <b>2 cups</b> raw quinoa                   |  |

## DIRECTIONS:

1. In a saucepan, bring the stock up to a boil and reduce to a simmer while you are working on the other ingredients.
2. Heat a large sauté pan with straight sides over high heat. Add the oil and when it starts to shimmer, add about half the mushrooms. You don't want to overcrowd the pan, and the mushrooms should be in a single layer. Leave them for 2 to 3 minutes to develop a nice golden brown. Add 1 tablespoon of butter, season with salt and toss to cook another minute. Remove using a slotted spoon and repeat with the rest of the mushrooms and another tablespoon of butter. Set aside.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low and add shallots and garlic. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until translucent, and then add quinoa. Toast for about a minute and then add the white wine. Let it reduce by half and then stir in about 2 cups of the hot stock. Continue adding stock, a ½ cup at a time, stirring in intervals for 15 minutes. You'll need between 4 and 5 cups of stock to achieve a "risotto-like" texture. Cover for the last 5 minutes.
4. Add in the reserved mushrooms, heavy cream, cheese and season to taste. Serve immediately, garnish with fresh herbs.



QUINOTTO (QUINOA RISOTTO)

# CHICKEN CONGEE

Yields: 4 cups | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 40 minutes

## NOTES FROM TIFFANY

Congee was one of my favorite things to eat growing up and I still enjoy it every now and then. My grandma makes it every morning for breakfast and my mom used to make it for me when I got sick. There are many different variations but the chicken one is my favorite...it's the equivalent of a warm bowl of chicken noodle soup on a cold day!

## INGREDIENTS:

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>¾ cup</b> of white rice                          | <b>2 pieces</b> green onion   |
| <b>12 oz</b> boneless chicken breast, thinly sliced | cilantro (to taste)           |
| <b>8 cups</b> water                                 | <b>1 tsp</b> salt             |
| <b>0.5 oz</b> ginger                                | <b>1 tsp</b> chicken bouillon |

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash rice by filling a bowl with some water, massaging and mixing rice with your hands and draining. Repeat 3 times for good measure.
2. Add 8 cups of water in a large pot and bring to a boil. While you're waiting for it to boil, prep your veggies and meat.
3. Chop ginger into thin slices, and then into thin strips. Chop a few strands of cilantro (to taste) and green onion into small pieces.
4. Cut the chicken into thin slices and set aside in a bowl.
5. Wait for your pot to boil before adding rice. It's important not to add the rice before the pot starts boiling.
6. Once the pot (water only) is boiling, add the rice and stir it around a bit. Another important tip - don't stir the rice once the pot is boiling yet again, otherwise it will be more likely to stick to the bottom of the pot.
7. Cover the pot (water and rice) and wait until it's boiling again.
8. Once the pot is boiling again, partially cover the pot and let it cook at medium heat for 25 minutes. Depending on what "medium heat" is for your stove, you might need to cook it at medium heat for longer.
9. After 25 minutes, either proceed with this step or cook it for longer. Taste the rice to see if you like the consistency. The longer you leave the dish simmering, the thicker the congee will get and the softer the rice. So if you prefer a thicker consistency (almost like risotto), simmer the dish for longer.
10. Once you're satisfied with the consistency of the rice, start whisking the pot rapidly and constantly for 2-3 minutes. This helps speed up cooking time, and helps break down the rice into smaller, fluffier pieces.
11. Set the stove to high heat, and slowly add the chicken over the course of 30 to 60 seconds, stirring constantly as you go. If you add it all at once, it will clump up.
12. Stir the chicken around for another 1-2 minutes. Once the pot is boiling again, it should be ready.
13. Almost there! Add the strips of ginger, as well as salt and chicken bouillon. Stir everything around for 20-30 seconds.
14. Turn off the heat, and pour the jook (Cantonese for "congee") into your favorite bowl. Garnish with the green onions and cilantro.

# NANA'S BACON FRIED RICE

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes

## NOTES FROM MADISON

This is my nana's recipe that she passed on to my dad. It's one of my favorite meals that he makes for dinner! The finished rice can be kept in a warm oven in a covered casserole dish for as long as 30 minutes before serving without drying out. It can also be made several days ahead and frozen. Just leave it at room temperature for 2 hours before warming in the oven.

## INGREDIENTS:

- ½ lb. bacon
- 3 eggs
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 4 cups cold cooked rice – 1 to 2 days old
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup green onion, thinly sliced

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut the bacon into ¼-inch pieces, then fry. Drain on plate with paper towels to absorb the extra grease.
2. Beat eggs until white and yolk are well mixed. Using 1 tbsp of oil in the skillet, scramble eggs breaking them up into small pieces. Put aside on plate.
3. Heat 3 tbsp of oil in a clean skillet or wok and add rice. Mix letting the oil coat the rice thoroughly. Blend in soy sauce and salt.
4. Add eggs, green onion, and bacon. Mix thoroughly and serve.

# VIETNAMESE CREPES (BANH XEO)

Serves: 6 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes | Steam Time: 15 minutes

## NOTES FROM TIFFANY

Banh Xeo is a Vietnamese style crepe stuffed with shrimp, pork, and beansprouts. I just love the crispiness of the crepe and the savory flavors of this dish! It's definitely a household favorite.

## INGREDIENTS:

**1 cup** rice flour  
**¼ cup** cornstarch  
**½ tsp** salt  
**¼ tsp** ground turmeric  
**1 cup** water  
**½ cup** coconut cream  
**1 cup** sliced scallion, green parts only  
**1 lb** prawns, peeled and deveined  
**8 oz** pork butt/shoulder/belly, thinly sliced  
**3 cups** bean sprouts  
**¾ cup** vegetable oil for frying

### Dipping sauce (nuoc cham):

**2 tbsp** fish sauce  
**¼ cup** water  
**3 tbsp** granulated sugar  
**2** garlic cloves, finely chopped  
**1 tbsp** lime juice  
**1** red chili, thinly sliced

### For serving:

**1** handful of Thai basil  
**1** handful of Vietnamese mint  
**1** handful of peppermint  
a few pieces of lettuce

## DIRECTIONS:

1. To make the batter, combine rice flour, cornstarch, turmeric, and salt in a bowl. Whisk in coconut cream and water. Stir in the green scallion. Set aside to rest for 1 hour.
2. To make the dipping sauce, combine everything in a bowl and whisk together until combined. Set aside until ready to serve.
3. Add a tablespoon of oil to the pan over med-high heat. Add the portioned prawns and pork and cook until pork is browned and prawns are opaque, about 1 minute. Separate the mixture on two opposite sides of the pan leaving a border in the middle.
4. Ladle ⅓ cup of batter into the pan, swirl to cover the pan and fillings. Add a little bit of batter to fill the empty spots.
5. Cover the pan with a lid and cook for 3 minutes until everything is cooked through.
6. Uncover the lid, drizzle 1 tablespoon of oil around the edges and cook for another minute until the bottom and edges are crispy.
7. Slide a spatula under one side and fold crepe over to cover the fillings. Transfer the folded crepe to a plate.
8. Slide finished crepe onto prepared rack and place in oven to keep warm at 225 degrees F while you make the remaining crepes.
9. Repeat with remaining oil, batter and fillings for 5 more crepes, wiping the pan with absorbent paper between batches.
10. Serve the crepes immediately with lettuce, herbs and nuoc cham (dipping sauce).



VIETNAMESE CREPES (BANH XEO)

# LINGUINE WITH TOMATO, BASIL & BRIE

Serves: 4-6 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 1 hour

## NOTES FROM ROSS

This recipe comes from my mom, who has been making it since we were kids – especially in the summer when she picks the fresh, ripe ingredients right from her garden. There’s a lot to love about this dish, and I make it for my own family now. It’s so simple and yummy, and super easy to scale up or down depending on the number of people you’re feeding. Plus, it makes for utterly fantastic leftovers. However, what I love most about it are the last five words of the last sentence of the recipe, which is written on a notecard in my mom’s handwriting: “Serve at once, **passing peppermill and grated cheese.**” It reminds me of the many family meals shared around my parents’ table that were buzzing with a fun, energetic, and communal vibe!

## INGREDIENTS:

- 4 large ripe tomatoes, cut into ½” cubes
- 1 lb brie, rind removed, torn into irregular pieces
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, cut into strips
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely minced
- 1 cup plus 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 ½ lb linguine
- Freshly grated Parmesan

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine tomatoes, brie, basil, garlic, 1 cup olive oil, ½ teaspoon salt & pepper in large serving bowl. Prepare at least 2 hours before serving, covered at room temperature.
2. Bring 6 quarts water to boil, add 1 tablespoon olive oil and remaining salt. Add linguine and cook al dente.
3. Drain pasta and immediately toss with tomato, brie, basil, garlic mixture. Serve at once, passing peppermill and grated cheese.

# CAJUN MEATLOAF

Serves: 6 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 1 hour

## NOTES FROM VICKIE

This is spicy hot, so I've learned to adjust the ingredients in this recipe a bit by increasing the meat to 2lbs of beef and 1 lb of pork, and increase the evaporated milk to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup, and the ketchup to a full 1 cup; use 3 eggs and 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups of breadcrumbs. BUT, I keep all the spices and veggies as they appear in the recipe. The end result still has heat but it's much more tolerable and leaves enough for leftovers. But here's the original recipe "as is" in case you want to go for the super-hot version!

## INGREDIENTS:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>4 tbsp</b> unsalted butter  | <b>1 tbsp</b> Worcestershire sauce                  |
| <b><math>\frac{3}{4}</math> cup</b> finely chopped onion             | <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> cup</b> evaporated milk |
| <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> cup</b> finely chopped celery            | <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> cup</b> ketchup         |
| <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> cup</b> finely chopped green bell pepper | <b>1 <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> lbs</b> ground beef   |
| <b><math>\frac{1}{4}</math> cup</b> finely chopped green onion       | <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> lb</b> ground pork      |
| <b>2 tsp</b> minced garlic   | <b>2</b> eggs, lightly beaten                       |
| <b>1 tbsp</b> Tabasco® sauce   | <b>1 cup</b> very fine dry breadcrumbs              |

## Seasoning mix ingredients:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>2</b> whole bay leaves                | <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> tsp</b> white pepper  |
| <b>1 tbsp</b> salt                       | <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> tsp</b> ground cumin  |
| <b>1 tsp</b> cayenne (ground red pepper) | <b><math>\frac{1}{2}</math> tsp</b> ground nutmeg |
| <b>1 tsp</b> black pepper                |   |

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine the seasoning mix ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.
2. Melt the butter in a 1-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions, celery, bell peppers, green onions, garlic, Tabasco®, Worcestershire and seasoning mix.
3. Saute until mixture starts sticking excessively; about 6 minutes, stirring occasionally and scraping the pan bottom well.
4. Stir in the milk and ketchup.
5. Continue cooking for about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Remove from heat and allow mixture to cool to room temperature. REMOVE BAY LEAVES.
7. Place ground beef and pork in an ungreased 9 x 13 inch baking pan.
8. Add the eggs, cooked vegetable mixture (cooled) and the bread crumbs. Mix by hand until thoroughly combined.
9. In the center of the pan, shape the mixture into a loaf that is about 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, 6 inches wide and 12 inches long.
10. Bake uncovered at 350° for 25 minutes, then raise heat to 400° and continue to cook until done, about 35 minutes longer. Serve immediately.

# SPEZZATINO (STEW)

Makes: approx. 8 entrée portions | Prep Time: 60 minutes | Cook Time: 90 minutes of final simmering

## NOTES FROM CHRIS

I learned how to make this dish from the cook at [Tenuta di Spannocchia](#) while volunteering at an archeological dig in Tuscany, Italy in 1999. The dig crew stayed at this glorious castle, and every night we ate together family style out in the gardens. I've been making this stew at home to eat family style with guests ever since and people scrape their dish spotless. The below recipe is my own iteration, tweaked over 20+ years since learning the original. Maybe it's the full bottle of wine that makes it so tasty? Serve it with potatoes, polenta, or – my fam's fave – over wide, flat noodles. Crusty bread to sop up the remaining sauce is a must!

## INGREDIENTS:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 medium carrots, peeled  | 1 tsp salt                                      |
| 4 hearty celery stalks  | 3.5-4 cups white wine (sauvignon blanc is best) |
| 6 garlic cloves   | 4 cups plain tomato sauce                       |
| 5 large sage leaves   | Salt and pepper                                 |
| ¾ cup olive oil   |   |
| 4-5 lbs pork shoulder, cut into large cubes and trimmed of most egregious fat |   |

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Mince carrot, celery, sage, and garlic together in a food processor (or by hand, if you're feeling vigorous).
2. Heat the olive oil in a 6-quart sauce pot and then sauté the veggie mixture slowly under medium heat.
3. Once that mixture is golden and soft, add the meat and the tsp of salt.
4. Keep the heat on medium and occasionally stir the meat until it's brown and well-coated with the veggie mixture. This takes approximately 20 minutes.
5. After the meat is fully browned (not dark, just no longer pink), add the wine and allow it to reduce for 20 minutes.
6. Add the tomato sauce.
7. Turn heat to low and allow the stew to simmer for 90 minutes or until the meat is so soft you can cut it with a fork.
8. Stir occasionally while it simmers. And it's a good idea to skim off some of the fatty oil that releases from the meat while cooking during this stage
9. Season with salt and pepper per your taste.



SPEZZATINO (STEW)

# BEST DARN HAM SANDWICHES

Makes: 24 mini sandwiches

Prep Time: 15 minutes | Setting Time: 60 minutes or overnight | Cook Time: 15 minutes

## NOTES FROM MADISON

My dad makes these ham sandwiches for almost every family gathering. They are always a hit!

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 -12 packs of sweet Hawaiian rolls (the small dinner rolls)
- 1 ½ lb of Virginia ham
- 12 slices of Swiss cheese
- 1 stick of real butter
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp of poppy seeds or sesame seeds

## DIRECTIONS:

1. You will need two 9 x 13 pans. Place the bottoms of 12 rolls in each pan. Place ham (about 2 shaved slices or so) on the rolls. Cut the cheese slices into 4 parts and place 2 small pieces on each sandwich. Put the dinner roll tops on.
2. In a saucepan, mix butter, Worcestershire sauce, onion powder, garlic powder and seeds over medium heat. Wait until all butter is melted and then brush the melted mixture over the tops of the rolls.
3. Cover with foil and let sit in the fridge for 1 hour or overnight (If you want to bake them right away, you can also...the flavor just gets richer if the sandwiches have the chance to sit for a while.)
4. Preheat oven to 375 and bake for 15 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve. They are delicious hot and even at room temperature.

# PASTA ALLA GRICIA

Serves: 2-4 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

## NOTES FROM VICKIE

Simpler and better (IMHO) than spaghetti carbonara, but the guanciale is key. Feel free to double the recipe for a pound of pasta (who makes a half-pound of pasta anyway?) and if doing that, always use about a pound of guanciale. This reheats beautifully in the microwave (if you're lucky enough to have leftovers).

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 **tbsp** extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 **oz** guanciale (salt-cured pork jowl), cut into  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces
- 8 **oz** rigatoni
- Kosher salt
- 2 **tsp** coarsely ground black pepper, preferably ground with a mortar and pestle
- 3 **oz** Pecorino Romano, finely grated on the small holes of a box grater (about 3 cups)

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-low flame. Cook guanciale, stirring often, until it starts to brown and crisp, 10–15 minutes; it will shrink dramatically as the fat renders. Transfer to a small bowl with a slotted spoon; reserve skillet (do not wipe out).
2. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling lightly salted water, stirring occasionally, until pasta is about halfway cooked (not quite al dente); drain, reserving 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups pasta cooking liquid.
3. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pasta cooking liquid to reserved skillet and bring to a gentle boil over medium heat, swirling often to encourage drippings and liquid to emulsify, about 1 minute. Add pasta and cook, tossing often and adding more pasta cooking liquid as needed, until pasta is al dente and a thick, glossy sauce forms, 5–7 minutes (this second cooking is why you undercook the pasta initially).
4. Increase heat to medium-high. Add guanciale, pepper, and two-thirds of Pecorino; toss well to combine and melt cheese. Serve pasta topped with remaining Pecorino.



PASTA ALLA GRICIA

# PAN SEARED SEA SCALLOPS

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 12 minutes

## NOTES FROM LAUREN

Don't skip pat drying, it helps with the sear and to form that beautiful golden exterior. For a creamy sauce, add in about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of heavy cream along with the lemon juice after letting the white wine cook off for about 3 minutes in Step 6.

## INGREDIENTS:

**1lb** sea scallops cleaned/if frozen, thawed  
**1 tbsp** olive oil  
**1 tsp** salt  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp** pepper

### White wine garlic sauce:

**2 tbsp** butter  
**3-4** garlic cloves minced (to taste)  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup** white wine (I use Chardonnay)  
**1 tsp** lemon juice  
**2 tbsp** finely chopped parsley  
salt and pepper to taste

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Prep: Thaw frozen scallops in the refrigerator (not on the countertop) and drain the juices. Often a shucked scallop has a little crescent-shaped piece sticking out of the side. Tear that off (it should tear easily). It's the abductor muscle and is extra tough...not great for eating. Pat the scallops dry.
2. Drizzle the scallops with a little olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
3. Heat a large, non-stick frying pan over high heat. Add the scallops, taking care not to overcrowd the pan. If you add too many scallops they will steam instead of sear.
4. Cook the scallops for 2-3 minutes per side, depending on their size, until they are golden brown on both sides.
5. Remove and set aside.
6. In the same pan, melt the butter then add the garlic. Cook for 30 seconds then pour in the white wine, lemon juice and parsley. Allow to come to a simmer and reduce for 3-5 minutes until the sauce has thickened slightly.
7. Add the scallops back in the pan to warm.
8. Plate scallops and drizzle sauce over them and lightly sprinkle with fresh parsley.

# RED WINE SANGRIA

Yields: 8 servings | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Chilling Time: 24 hours

## NOTES FROM GINA

The best sangrias are made with Spanish wines. My preference is Garnacha wine! It has natural berry notes, so pairs really well with the fruit used in Sangria.

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 bottles red Spanish table wine
- 1 cup brandy
- ½ cup triple sec
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup pomegranate juice
- ½ cup simple syrup, or more to taste (equal parts sugar and water, heated until sugar dissolves, cooled)
- Orange slices (1 orange)
- Apple slices (1 apple, any kind you prefer)
- 1 cup blackberries
- Handful of pomegranate seeds

## DIRECTIONS:

Mix all ingredients together and let stand in a tightly sealed container or pitcher for at least 24 hours in the refrigerator before serving. Note: start with the amount of whole fruit listed, but you can add more as you see fit to fill your pitcher!

# POLENTA BERRY CAKE

Serves: 6-8 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Bake Time: 50 minutes | Cooling Time: 10 minutes

## NOTES FROM VICKIE

I am not a baker...it's way too science-y for me. For other foods, I follow recipes then find I can adjust and improvise, but baking requires a precision and patience I lack in the kitchen. However, during the pandemic, I started some modest baking. A friend shared this recipe, and we all love it so much – even my skeptical mother! – it's now a family favorite and I had to make TWO for Christmas when we finally all saw each other again. Hilarious note: one time I made this the berries sunk into the middle of the cake instead of laying on top, so the top was berry-free. It made no difference to the taste but was a surprise to cut into it and see them. So that was fun. :)

## INGREDIENTS:

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>1 cup</b> unbleached all-purpose flour                | <b>1 tsp</b> pure vanilla extract |
| <b>1/3 cup</b> fine yellow cornmeal                      | <b>1/2 tsp</b> grated lemon zest  |
| <b>1 tsp</b> baking powder                               | <b>2</b> large eggs               |
| <b>1/2 tsp</b> salt                                      | <b>1/3 cup</b> whole milk         |
| <b>12 tbsps (1 1/2 sticks)</b> unsalted butter, softened | <b>1 cup</b> blueberries          |
| <b>3/4 cup plus 2 tbsps</b> sugar                        | <b>1 cup</b> raspberries          |

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350.
2. Butter and flour a 9-inch springform pan, tap out the excess flour.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt.
4. In a large bowl, with an electric mixer on medium speed, beat the butter until creamy, about 2 minutes. Gradually add 3/4 cup of the sugar and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in the vanilla and lemon zest. Beat in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary. On low speed, mix in half of the dry ingredients. Add the milk. Mix in the remaining dry ingredients and beat just until smooth, about 1 minute.
5. Spread the batter in the pan. Scatter the berries over the top and sprinkle with the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar.
6. Bake for 45 minutes or until the cake is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool the cake in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove the pan rim and cool completely on the rack.
7. Cut the cake into wedges and serve or cover and store at room temperature for up to 24 hours.



POLENTA BERRY CAKE

# GREAT GRANDMA BARG'S POUND CAKE

Serves 18 (That sounds crazy, but grandma slices 18 perfectly sized pieces every time.)

Prep Time: 10 minutes | Bake Time: 40 minutes

## NOTES FROM LAUREN

This cake has been served at every family party since I can remember. It's still special every time my Grandmother makes her mother's pound cake. Serve with a side of vanilla ice cream and if you want to get frisky, you can make a nice lemon glaze (my own addition)!

## INGREDIENTS:

3 eggs

1 ½ cup of self-rising cake flour (Great Grandma Barg swears by Presto!)

2 cups of sugar

½ pint cream

Round Bundt pan (or other fun shaped pan)

### Optional Lemon Glaze:

1 ¾ cups of confectioners sugar

¼ cup of lemon juice

the zest of one lemon (or more if you like it extra lemony!)

1 tsp of salted butter

## DIRECTIONS:

### Cake Directions:

1. Grease the cake pan with butter and a light dusting of all-purpose flour.
2. Beat eggs, add sugar then flour.
3. Stir all together and then add cream.
4. Once all ingredients are combined, pour into the Bundt pan.
5. Bake 40 min at 375 degrees.

### Lemon Glaze Directions:

1. In a large measuring cup (a 4-cup capacity one is best for this), combine the sugar, lemon juice and lemon zest.
2. Add in the butter then microwave on high for 45 seconds.
3. Take out the measuring cup and whisk until smooth, making sure there are no lumps.
4. Let it sit for a few minutes then pour it over your creation.

Great Grandma will know if you don't get 18 slices!



(So will grandma!)

# CRUNCHY BROWNIES

Serves: 10-12 | Prep Time: 5 minutes | Bake time: 27-30 minutes (9x9 pan)

## NOTES FROM BRIDGET

This is an easy twist on a classic recipe. My grandmother makes these all the time and everyone absolutely loves them!

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 box of brownie mix
- 1/3 cup of Vegetable Oil
- 1-2 eggs
- Water
- [Hershey Symphony Bars](#) (the Hershey bars with toffee and almonds)

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Prepare box brownie mix like you normally would (my favorite is [Duncan Hines Chewy Fudge](#)).
2. Pour half of your prepared brownie mix into baking dish.
3. Line 2-3 Hershey Symphony Bars on top.
4. Pour other half of brownie mix on top of the Hershey Bars.
5. Bake according to brownie mix instructions.

# CANDIED ALMOND WREATHS

## (FOR CHRISTMAS!)

— Makes: 2 wreaths | Prep & Cook Time: 30 minutes —

### NOTES FROM CHRIS

My late Great-Aunt Fanny LaPoma (on my dad's side of the family) was legendary for these wreaths at Christmas time. And when my parents first married, she shared the secret recipe with my mom and personally taught her how to make them...the greatest "seal of approval" a newcomer to the family could ever hope to receive. My mom makes them in disposable pie tins and wraps them in cellophane to give out during the holidays. They're so addictive (with a list of drooling fans) that mom has often made 30 or more in a season!

### INGREDIENTS:

8 oz blanched slivered almonds  
4 oz granulated sugar  
1 large lemon, cut in half  
Butter for greasing pie tins

Colored nonpareils  
Two 9" aluminum pie tins  
Bowl of ice water

### DIRECTIONS:

1. If you have a small kitchen scale, that's better to use than a measuring cup for the almonds because 8 oz is a "net weight" not "net volume" measurement. But if you have no scale, just use 9 or 10 oz of almonds to ensure you have enough.
2. Grease each pie tin slightly, both bottom and a tiny bit up the edge from the bottom.
3. In a medium saucepan, add the almonds and sugar and stir over medium heat until the almonds begin to caramelize together.
4. Keep stirring continuously until the almonds are golden brown in color, which may only take 5-6 minutes.
5. **Tip:** They burn very quickly, so the moment they turn golden brown, remove the pot from the heat and keep stirring.
6. Quickly remove the almonds from the pot by scraping half into each of the buttered pie tins.
7. Use the half lemon to press the almonds into the bottom of the pie tin.
8. **IMPORTANT:** Be careful not to touch the hot almonds with your fingers (it ain't fun), and if you do, put your fingers in the bowl of ice water immediately. We learned this the hard way. :)
9. As you flatten the almonds into the bottom of the tin, twist the lemon in the center of the tin to make a hole, so it spreads the almonds into a wreath shape.
10. Once you've formed the wreath, continue to press the lemon down all around the wreath so it will harden and stick together. You've got to do this quickly because the almonds will harden quite fast.
11. Sprinkle the nonpareils all around the top of the wreath while it's still hot.
12. Let cool for 30-60 minutes.
13. Then gently push up on the bottom of the pie tin to remove the wreath. You can wipe the bottom of the wreath very carefully to remove excess butter (same for the pie tin) and replace.
14. Break apart the pieces of the wreath like almond bark and enjoy!



CANDIED ALMOND WREATHS