

# **COOKBOOK IN A DAY**



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**Saturday 14 May 2022**







# Cookbook in a Day



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## **Well, this is something a bit different...**

For over a decade, we've run an annual collaborative writing event where a whole bunch of super talented authors from all across the planet get together and write a novel in a day, and because we're great at naming things, we called it Novel in a Day. Over that time, we've done all sorts of genres and covered all sorts of styles from horror to scifi, romance to military, almost everything really... except non-fiction.

So, just to see if we can, we gave it a go. This cookbook was written in a single day in 2022, and was great fun to write. Plus, unlike our normal fiction efforts, also generated some nice things for us to eat!

We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we did writing it.

**Tim**

*Saturday 14 May, 2022*

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# Cookbook in a Day







## **Beef Roast with Root Veggies**

*by Pacifika*



Both of my grandmothers lived in the same town, but we had a two hour drive to see them, so we'd only see them maybe once a month, weather permitting. I definitely had a favorite grandmother: my Grandma Bard. She was the grandma that stories are made about, the type that cooks and bakes every delicious thing.

For my birthday, she would bake a yellow cake with

chocolate frosting. That's not the recipe I chose because she'd use a cake mix and pre-made frosting. Anyone can do that.

Cookies of various types were usually tucked away in her freezer too, and after greeting his mom and dad, the freezer was always my father's his next stop. Thumb print cookies with Ghirardelli Flicks or Hershey's Kisses in the center, chocolate chip cookies with and without walnuts from the tree in the backyard, and peanut butter cookies that I might have helped with. My job with the peanut butter cookies was to press them down with the fork to make the funny bumps in them.

My very favorite thing my grandmother would make when we'd go over there was roast. I loved her roast. She would cook it for a few hours and then for the last half hour or so, she'd pull the foil off or whatever she had covering it, and the top would get a crust. I loved that. I have no idea if she ever made anything else with it. There were probably potatoes and gravy as well as green beans or some vegetable. I have no recollection. I only remember her roast.

Once I had my own family, I started cooking roasts with potatoes, onions and garlic cloves. I'd put it all in the pan in the morning. At that point, the roast was usually frozen. Once everything was in the pan and seasoned, foil spanning the top of the pan, I'd be off with the kids. We'd leave the house around 10am and not get back until 4:00ish. I would then pull the foil off the roast and let it sit for a little longer. Once my husband got home, I'd pull the roast from the oven and let it sit.

Dinner time was bliss. The roast was always perfect, the potatoes were soft, the onions and garlic were nearly paste. A friend had introduced me to seasoning with onion soup mix which made a nice gravy too.

The beauty of this is that you can use pretty much any protein and any root vegetables. I can't stand cooked carrots and since they flavor the meat, I don't put them in. Sometimes for my family, I'll cook them on the side. You can use mushrooms if you like them. I wouldn't put in anything that will cook fast though. Green beans and peas will be nothing by the time it's done. Same with cabbage I think. But you could probably throw any of those in during the last fifteen minutes to a half hour.

You can even season it any way you prefer. Sometimes I like to do the roast with taco seasoning or Italian seasonings instead.

Beef roast is still one of my favorite foods. Lately, I cook it in the Instant Pot, but for this, I've pulled out my glass roasting pan and cooked it old school.

Just like my Grandma would have done.

## INGREDIENTS

*1 3-5 lb beef roast, whatever is cheap. You can also make this with a roasting chicken if you want or even a pork roast\*

*A few potatoes of choice (I've done this with a variety of baby potatoes but also used various larger potatoes roughly cut into big chunks. Reds and Yukon golds are my favorite.*

*A few onions, same thing, roughly cut into fourths or so. They'll be roasting a long time so large is good. You can even get small onions and not cut them at all. I like the sweet variety of onion, but yellow or red onions are also good.*

*Garlic If you like garlic, use a lot. If you don't, you can just use some garlic powder or minced garlic on top of the roast, but I often use whole skinned garlic cloves.*

*Carrot if you're so inclined. I'm not a fan so I don't put them in.*

*Onion soup mix packet or brown gravy packet*



## METHOD

Preheat oven at 350 F/175 C

This takes several hours, so you can start it in the morning before leaving for work and just cook at a lower temperature. Even as low as 250F if you'll be gone for a full work day.

In a large roasting pan, put the cut up potatoes, onions and whole garlic cloves around on the bottom as a little platform for the roast. Add some salt and pepper to those veggies.

Place the roast on top of the veggies. Season it well with salt and pepper all over and place on top of the veggies. Put the rest of the veggies around the roast in the pan. Feel free to put garlic cloves and onion on top of the roast, but don't pile it high.

Sprinkle the packet of gravy or onion soup all over the top of the roast and the veggies.

Cover with foil.

When the oven is ready, put the foil covered pan in and leave it alone for at least four hours.

Note: If your roast is frozen, leave it for at least six hours.

Do not lift that foil to peek. Just leave it alone. Let it sit in there and get all yummy and juicy and delicious.

Wait for it.

Once its time is up, take the foil off, setting it aside because you'll want it again soon. Baste the roast with the juices. I just use a huge spoon to do that. Return it to the oven for another 20 or 30 minutes if you want to crust up the top of it. Just keep an eye on it. It can go from perfect to dry in seconds.

You can also cut a slit in the foil or otherwise leave it open just a little bit at the very start to let it vent as it cooks. That will also brown up the top. Be warned that will also get rid of a lot of the pan juices, and you risk it drying.

Pull it out of the oven again and cover with the foil to let it all rest while you dig up some bread rolls or, better yet, make some Yorkshire puddings.

After letting it sit for 15 or 20 minutes, cut it up. I like chunks, but other people like to slice it in thick slabs. Also delicious.

Dish it up and enjoy.

# Possum Eggs

*by Pete340*



The completely true non-fiction tale of  
**The Possum Under the Porch**  
recorded by the nice lady  
and narrated by the possum herself

Horace says we should go for a walk in the woods and I say no somebody has to stay here and take care of our den and he says no we should go and so we do. We get to the woods and he tries to climb on top of me again and I say Horace get off of me and he doesn't and I say it again and he does. I tell him since we're here we should get some leaves to take back to the den because the old ones are all dried out and crumbly. I find a nice pile and wrap my tail around them and pull them against my backside and start walking back but then I see that Horace isn't with me. I look back and he's trying to get some leaves but he's so dumb he can't do it right. He just has one pushed up against his big butt. So I go back by myself and then Horace follows me with just that one stupid leaf. I get to the edge of the woods and the mean man is in front of our entrance and picking up his hammer and drill. He leaves but now there's a big board across the entrance and we go up to it and we can't get in. Well, I can, I find a small space at one end and I can dig under it a little and barely squeeze through so I go in. Horace is too big and klutzy. He stands outside like a big klutzy dummy and says we should just find some other place to live. I tell him no, I like it here, I'm staying and I don't like him any more because he keeps trying to climb on top of me and he has dumb ideas like this walk that ruined our den and because he's so stupid and klutzy and he should leave. So he does. Yay! But now I think what happens when I have babies and I'm too big to get through that little space and I'm sad but not for long because there's a bunch of loud scary noises and I'm scared and I duck into my den and hide and I peek out and I see the board go away. The nice lady made the mean man take it back so now I can get in and out even when I get bigger with my babies so now I'm happy. And now I hear



the nice lady and the mean man clumping around over my head and the mean man is talking about eating possum eggs, eww, gross. The nice lady should just make him leave. Like Horace.

### INGREDIENTS

*4 eggs (chicken eggs; possums don't lay eggs)*

*a pinch of salt*

*2 teaspoons lemon juice (fresh or packaged)*

*a bit of butter*

*1/2 lb. bulk sausage*

*1/4 lb. mild cheddar cheese*

### METHOD

Time to Prepare: approximately 25 minutes

Serves: two, generously

A casual Internet search for recipes with “possum” in their name shows several recipes that contain eggs, sausage, and cheese. This recipe attempts to balance all three, with each ingredient supplying its unique textures and flavors.

**Note** - Don't think of this as scrambled eggs with sausage and cheese. That would have twice as many eggs. The dish consists of sausage and cheese bound together with eggs.

The recipe intertwines prep work with cooking. If you're a fan of *mise en place*, as I am, this feels unnatural. The reason for doing it this way is to help enforce resting time for the egg proteins to denature and for the cooked sausage to cool. If you prefer to do the prep work first, be sure not to rush the cooking steps.

Break the eggs into a deep mixing bowl. Whisk to break up

the yolks, then add the salt. Whisk to mix in the salt and incorporate air.

Break up the sausage and brown it in an 8-inch non-stick skillet. When done, move the sausage onto a plate and spread it out so that it can cool. If there's a lot of fat in the pan, wipe some of it out. There should be a bit of leftover fat to cook the eggs in.

Dice the cheese; it should be in chunks roughly an eighth to a quarter of an inch in size.

By now the eggs should have darkened noticeably.

Put the pan back on medium heat, and add a bit of butter. If the butter sizzles the pan is too hot. The butter should melt and bubble gently.

Add the lemon juice to the eggs and whisk again. Pour the egg mixture into the pan. If the eggs sizzle the pan is too hot; take the pan off the heat and let it cool a bit.

Stir the eggs with a rubber spatula every ten or fifteen seconds. The goal is to slowly warm them, not to immediately cook them.

When the eggs begin to coagulate, fold in the cooled sausage. Continue folding the eggs and sausage over the heat until the eggs have cooked most of the way through. Remember that eggs continue to cook when you take them off the heat; don't fully cook them in the pan, or they will end up overcooked.

Fold in the cheese and remove from the heat. The cheese should still be in recognizable chunks but slightly melted. Turn out onto plates, and serve with home-made whole wheat bread, butter, and orange marmalade.

## **Beef Short Rib with Risotto**

*by Pigfender*



I do all the cooking in the Pigfender house. Not that Mrs PF doesn't have a keen palate and an imaginative and adventurous soul when it comes to food; she does... she's just always been far more interested in the eating part of the process than the cooking one and it became clear very early in

our relationship that we'd both rather eat something that I'd cooked. It's reached the stage now that on the rare occasions that I do go away with work or visiting friends I'll stay away for a maximum of two nights to make sure she doesn't starve... Mrs PF knows how to cook two things and one of those is takeaway.

But I love cooking. One of my favourite things to do on the planet is chop onions (leading to to occasional complaint of over zealous inclusion of the things in dishes — probably the most unusual of which is in a ham sandwich), and experiencing new food is now a core part of our vacationing strategy. A friend of mine once told me that he likes to go to a nightclub whenever he goes to a city for the first time as that gives him a way to calibrate the soul of the place. Mrs PF and I do the same thing, although instead of nightclubs we make sure we spent time hanging out in the local supermarkets to see what and how people eat.

One of our very earliest food holidays was in Milan in the early 2000s. Mrs PF and I were still young and early in our careers, with the 'not long out of university' salaries and student debt to prove it, and I was incredibly excited to try Italian food properly. I'd eaten plenty of it in the UK of course — indeed, I'd cooked plenty too — but I'd never had a "real" risotto so had shied away from cooking it. I wanted to experience it where it was done best, and I'd decided Milan — home of risotto alla milanese, the simplest and purest of all the risottos — was where I was going to find out exactly what it was supposed to be like.

So with this in mind, Mrs PF and I booked ourselves one "fancy" restaurant meal while we were there. We dressed up (suit and tie for me, a lovely dress for Mrs PF), and headed to the restaurant. Our reservation was for 7:30pm and being both

prompt and excited, we turned up right on time at 7:30pm... to find the door locked. We looked at our watches. We looked at the door. We looked at each other, and then for good measure checked our watches again. It was 7:30pm, so I knocked.

A small man opened the door. "Si?"

"Ah... erm. Mi dispiace, non parl..."

"Yes, can I help you?"

"Yes, we have a dinner reservation for 7:30pm"

"Okay?"

Mrs PF and I look at each other.

"It's 7:30," I say.

"Oh. So, you'd like to come in?"

We were shown to our table in the middle of an incredibly beautiful dining room. The walls were covered with oil paintings depicting everything from ancestral portraits to the Italian countryside. The carpets were plush and not the sort of thing you'd want to spill tomato sauce on.

We sat down and took in our surroundings. There were perhaps six other tables, but no other guests. The waiter brought us water and bread, but no menu, so we sipped the water and waited.

Then the waiter brought out plates of ornate amuse bouches, carefully constructed pieces of edible art and set them down in front of us. One was a cone filled with microscopic 'popcorn' made from poppy seeds. It was delicious, but we still had no menus.

We were brought another course... and then another... but still no menus, and no other guests.

At this point I was starting to panic. The food was amazing, and unlike anything I'd ever tried, but I was finding it impossible to relax and take it all in. As I mentioned before,

Mrs PF and I were not long out of university, and our salaries barely covered our student debts. We'd saved what we could for the vacation but... I had absolutely no idea how much this meal was going to cost us. All I knew was there was no way it could be cheap. I started mentally working out how much headroom I had on various credit cards if I absolutely needed to, and trying to guess just how long it would take me to pay it all off.

After the next course, came the prosecco trolley. Which of the three would we like a glass of, we were asked. Absent any other clues, we both picked the one in the middle. It was crisp with soft bubbles, tasted somehow three dimensional, and lingered creamily on the palate. By this point I was convinced each sip was costing me the same as a month's rent.

After the fourth course, we were finally brought menus. With prices. I could once again breathe. Fears of indebted servitude slipped away. Other diners turned up. We relaxed.

I deliberately chose the strangest things I could on the menu for the rest of the meal. One dish I picked was pasta in coffee sauce. I reasoned there was no way something that odd would be on the menu unless it was amazing. I was right; nearly 20 years on it's still one of the most delicious and inventive things I've ever eaten...

Which is why I never got to try their risotto. I had that for the first time the next day for lunch, sitting on a table outside a cafe. This is my approximation of what they served...

## *INGREDIENTS*

### **For the Risotto...**

*200g risotto rice*

*1x banana shallot*

*1x glass of white wine*

*Olive oil*  
*Plenty of good chicken stock*  
*2 tablespoons of grated parmesan*  
*2 tablespoons of butter*  
*A pinch of powdered saffron*

### **For the Short Rib...**

*2x beef short ribs*  
*Seasoning*  
*Olive oil*  
*Plenty of good beef stock*  
*1x banana shallot*

### **METHOD**

The recipe serves two humans. Having a roasted meat on the side of risotto is atypical, with Ossobuco being a notable exception, but I find that putting some strong flavoured meat like this is a nice way to make a risotto (which would normally be a ‘middle’ course in a traditional Italian meal) stretch to be a larger filling single-plate meal. You could, of course, just make a larger risotto but I find that I get bored of that before I get full of it!

Start with the short rib. You’ll need a large casserole pot with a lid that is suitable for both the hob and the oven (a Le Creuset dutch oven is perfect). Start by preheating the oven (making sure the shelves are arranged to be able to accommodate your casserole dish) to 160 degrees C.

Season the short ribs on all sides. I use Maldon sea salt, freshly ground black pepper and a light sprinkling of Old Bay (a cajun or creole mixed spice will work as well, or just stick to the salt and pepper). Let that sit while you heat up the pot on the hob, with a splash of oil. At this point your other half may

interrupt you to tell you to open the windows and put the extractor fan on. This is perfectly normal.

Once up to temp, brown the short ribs on all sides. Your looking for a nice even brown and a bit of a crust. Once done, take the pot off the heat. Add a peeled and halved banana shallot to the pot (a medium onion works just as well) and then enough good quality beef stock to almost but not quite cover the ribs.

Put the lid on the pot and place carefully in the oven. These will cook slowly for the next 2-3 hours, but I like to take them out and check on them every 45 minutes to see how they're doing. The stock will reduce heavily over that time, and checking in makes sure it doesn't totally evaporate away. You can always add a touch of water if worried, but but the end of the cooking time you're looking for a heavily reduced thick glaze.

About 45 minutes from the end of the beef cooking time, start the risotto.

Put the chicken stock in a saucepan and put it on the hob over a low heat. You're looking to heat it up and keep it at a 'soup eating' temperature rather than boil it. As with the beef stock earlier, store bought is fine. You probably need a litre of the stuff, but if you end up needing more than you've got, water is okay for the last few ladles worth. Stock made from cubes should be avoided — they're far too salty and usually have all sorts of other things (herbs, etc) that will impact the flavour and appearance of the final dish. I use a bouillon / glace one that is a thick concentrate liquid that you dilute with water to make your stock ("Essential Cuisine Glace" - available from online stockists). If you don't want to use chicken stock, a vegetable one will do nicely, just remember that the quality of the stock you use will define more than



anything else the quality of the final dish.

Heat up a couple of table spoons of olive oil in a different saucepan over a medium heat. It doesn't need to be extra virgin, but it's nicer so that's what I use. If you have a particularly expensive or nice bottle though, save that for salads and such the like where you won't be completely masking the flavour by frying off onions in it.

Speaking of which, finely chop a banana shallot (again, a small to medium onion will do fine). You're looking for the pieces to be about the same size as the rice grains. At this point, if you've tried to be far more "chef-y" than you actually are, you may need to locate a band aid for your finger and get a fresh onion... but I've not needed this step in ages so I must be getting better.

Fry off the onion in the pan, stirring constantly. You're just looking to soften the onion so that it goes translucent, not brown (just a couple of minutes). Once you're happy with that, add the risotto rice. It has to be a 'risotto' rice; regular rice types won't work. I've used both Carnaroli and Arborio, and while I'm told Carnaroli is supposed to be 'better', I personally can't tell the difference. Fry this off, stirring continually until all the rice and onion are mixed together and the rice is completely coated and glossy.

At this point you add your glass of white wine to the rice and stir. I've also made this with rosé, prosecco and at a push a glass of tap water with a teaspoon of lemon juice in it. Usual rules apply for cooking with wine... if you wouldn't drink it, don't cook with it.

At this point, you should get used to stirring. Don't stop from here on out until your done. You need to keep the rice moving. Turn the heat down to low and stir until the wine is nearly all absorbed. Then add a ladle of the warm stock. Stir

until that is all absorbed. Then add a second ladle of stock. If you're using saffron, add it with this ladle of stock and keep stirring. The saffron I use comes in little pre-measured sachets of 0.1g each, and I put two in. Saffron is ridiculously expensive for what it is, but it gives the risotto an amazingly rich golden yellow colour, like the richest egg yolks you've ever seen. It'll also do the same thing to your clothes and any pale work surfaces if you're not careful. The saffron is essential for a "Risotto alla Milanese", but you can leave it out if you like. It's a subtle flavour, and nowhere near as significant to the final dish as the quality of the stock.

Once this has been nearly fully absorbed, add another ladle of the warm stock. Stir until that is nearly all absorbed. Keep going until the rice is cooked all the way through. This will take about 30 minutes, and the easiest way to tell is to bite into a single grain. If there is still a hardish, white centre, it needs more cooking.

Once you're happy the rice is cooked through, stop adding more stock and reduce to the consistency you like (see the photo of the finished dish for an idea) and then take off the heat, leaving it for two minutes. Then vigorously stir in a tablespoon or two of butter and about the same quantity of freshly grated parmesan. It doesn't need to be one of these fancy old-aged parmesans, but it must be freshly grated. Better to leave it out altogether than use pre-grated or anything that comes in a shaker.

Serve the risotto with the now super-tender beef short ribs, and spoon a little of the heavily reduced stock over the beef as a glaze.

# **Magic Fried Chicken**

*by Sophia Wickman*



My mother was a brilliant cook, but she hated cooking, especially the kind of cooking that involved several stages and a lot of mess, which is why her fried chicken was such a rare treat. But the occasion for which she always made it, without

fail, was for the outward leg of The Long Journey, our summer trip to visit my paternal grandmother in what was once Hungary, was then Czechoslovakia and is now Slovakia.

Early in her marriage my mother made a decision not to do two things, learn Hungarian, or how to drive. She reckoned that she could never do either well enough to satisfy my father, and she was probably right. The consequence of this refusal was that my father had to all the driving, on his own, always. In this case from London to his Mother's house in Nagymegyer/Velky Meder. In two days. Because he hated staying in hotels. He also hated eating in restaurants. This is where the fried chicken came in. My mother would pack two bags of provisions, so big that they took up all the space in the footwells of the back seats of our Triumph Herald. There would be sandwiches, biscuits, cake, fruit, bread, pickles, tins of Heinz potato salad, flasks of tea and coffee, and my mother's magic fried chicken.

The rule was we had to wait until Belgium to eat it. Which wasn't too hard because we had to leave London early in the morning to catch the car ferry to Ostend. But oh, that first heavenly mouthful was worth the wait! The crisp, chestnut brown breadcrumb coating, nutty and salty and the slippery succulent chicken inside, set off by a dill pickle cucumber. My mind's nose can smell it now, as evocative to me as Proust's madeleine was to him. The taste of summer, of travel, of excitement and of scrunched up knees. Things I will never taste again. I can make fried chicken. I can use the same ingredients, I can follow the same steps. It's not a hard recipe, but it never tastes the same...

There is a coda to this fried chicken riff. One summer, when I was about four or five having spent an idyllic month staying in my grandmother's village house: peach and apricot

trees, a vegetable garden, a well with a long pivoting pole to draw the water up in a bucket, cats, kittens, chickens and guinea fowl to chase and play with, my Nagymama put together our rations for the journey home. Jars of stuffed peppers in sweet tomato sauce, apricot and peach jam, preserves, compotes, fresh baked rolls and kifli, and the inevitable fried chicken. As she handed my mother the heavy package she turned to me and said "...and I made sure that it was your favourite chicken, the black and white one you were so fond of that I prepared for you...". Cue tears, shouting and hysterics induced by cross- generational and cross-cultural misunderstanding.

I made my parents stop as soon as we left the village, and wouldn't get back in the car until they had buried the fried-up remains of my feathered summer friend.

### INGREDIENTS

*Chicken pieces, thighs and drumsticks for preference*

*2 Eggs, beaten*

*150g Plain flour*

*150g Breadcrumbs, my mother made her own but I used fine panko breadcrumbs*

*Salt*

*Sweet paprika*

*250 ml Sunflower oil*

### METHOD

I don't have my mother's actual recipe, I'm not sure she had one as such. So this is the result of trial and error based on my memories of watching her cook.

Put the chicken pieces in a large bowl or zip lock bag and

salt liberally. Leave them to stand for a couple of hours.

Put the flour into a wide shallow bowl and season with a teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of paprika. Beat the egg in a similar bowl and put the breadcrumbs into a third.

Pat the chicken pieces dry, and cut off any flappy bits of skin and extraneous fat.



Dip each chicken piece first in the flour, then in the beaten egg and finally in the breadcrumbs.

Heat the oil in a high sided frying pan or wok.

When the oil is hot, gently lower in the chicken.

Fry on a medium to high heat, turning occasionally until crispy and golden brown, then put a lid on, and let the chicken cook through.

The breadcrumbs will turn a deep chestnut brown. The timings will depend on how big the chicken pieces are, and certainly in this case took longer than I thought it would. I don't remember chicken thighs being so huge in the 1970s, but maybe I was only given the drumsticks!

The end result should be succulent on the inside and crispy on the outside. Best eaten with a dill pickle and a chunk of bread.







# **Thai/Chinese Pork with Peppers**

*by xiamenese*



This is a family recipe, but as is the case with all our family recipes, its origins are not down a direct line within the family from parent to child. Let me explain.

My father was orphaned by the time he was 12, and although he was an excellent and creative cook, I think he learnt to cook when he was an *au pair* in Brussels for a year. My mother's parents, on the other hand lived well into their eighties, and my grandmother was a very good traditional cook. Apparently, people used to jostle and fight at the annual town fête to be first in the line at the cake stall to buy her cakes and tea cakes. They lived in Aspatria, a small town just north of the Lake District in Cumberland.

My grandmother must have taught my mother to cook—my mother was even better at making puff pastry than my grandmother—but on leaving school, my mother went to a college in Lancaster to train as a shorthand/typist and then moved down to London, where she met my father. In 1942 or 3, they left London for the then Belgian Congo, living in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) until the end of 1944 when they moved to Jerusalem, where I was born. They never had a home in England until my father died some 25 years later and my mother returned to England.

So for all those years, the food we loved and adopted was the food of the places we lived in, particularly Amman, Bangkok, Paris and Rabat in Morocco. Two of the dishes in particular have become real family recipes, this one and 'Moroccan chicken', the Rabati style chicken with preserved lemons and olives which was the family recipe of our maid Saadia. They truly deserve to be called family recipes because they were the family recipes of the friends who taught them to my mother, who passed them down to me and my brother, and in turn our children all make them... I hope they will

continue to be passed down the generations. Of the two, I have chosen 'pork with peppers' as it is quicker and easier to make and the basic technique is very versatile.

One day in 1951—I was not quite 6 years old—when we were living in Amman, my father came home from work and said, 'We're moving to Bangkok.' 'Where's Bangkok?' we said. In my mind it was a Tuesday, and the following Thursday, we were on a plane to Baghdad and then to Bangkok. It would be otiose to explain why we were moved in such short order, but for the next 7 years, Bangkok was our home, though John and I had to suffer the miseries of boarding school back in the UK. After setting up the British Council representation in Bangkok, my father was then moved over to be Professor of English at Chulalongkorn University, and that is when this recipe came into the family.

'C' was one of his first cohort of students and became like a member of the family. So when I went back to Bangkok in 1966, I met up with her again, and when Zélie and I spent nearly four years there in the early '70s, she helped us a lot; by then she was Dean of the Faculty of Letters at Chulalongkorn. I don't know if she's still alive, she'll be in her late 80s if she is. She was a tiny little woman; at 11 years old, in spite of being the smallest boy in my class at school, I was taller than her. She had been trained as a classical Thai dancer as a child and was totally double-jointed as a result; she could 'reverse' her elbows, which was really weird, and she could take her middle fingers and bend them back to touch the back of the wrist. But C it was who taught my mother her family recipe for 'pork with peppers'.

So why do I refer to it here as 'Thai/Chinese'?

One of the things that has always interested me about

Thailand is the historical integration of Chinese immigrants into the Thai population. In Thailand, they not only learnt the Thai language and adopted Thai customs, but they assumed Thai names. However, if you are in the know, you can tell from them if the family is originally of Chinese ethnic origin... Srichallalai, Soraritichingchaiya, Rojanasathien to give a few. Interestingly they tend to be longer than the ethnic Thai names. This level of integration, even where there was no marriage with ethnic Thai families involved, is unusual.

This is true of the historical immigrants, mostly from Chaozhou (Swatow) in northern Guangdong Province. In the countryside, however, there were pockets of ethnic Chinese, supporters of the Kuomintang who fled to Thailand in 1949 to escape the communist take over, who were Mandarin speakers and had not integrated. One day we were out on a weekend's 'temple hunt' and had ended up spending a night in a 'hotel' in a very poor village north-east of Bangkok. In Thailand, even in the poorest village you could always find someone who sold ice to keep food cool. So in the morning I asked for directions to the ice shop. There, when I asked for the ice, the people didn't understand my Thai. Let me say that this normally only happened in places where they were used to foreigners who couldn't speak Thai, so had the mind-set, 'This is a foreigner... I don't understand him!' and so didn't actually listen. I looked around and saw that the newspaper they were reading was in Chinese, so I asked for my ice in (broken) Chinese. It took me 45 minutes to get out of the shop as they tried to find out about this westerner who could speak a bit of Mandarin and read a bit of their newspaper. I wondered how they managed to get on if they couldn't communicate with the other villagers.

Then, the other day on a cookery programme on TV, one

of the presenters, giving a commentary on what a Thai woman was making, said words to the effect, 'She's combining Thai and Chinese elements... two totally different cuisines.' This is actually nonsense. There is much in common between the two not only in terms of techniques, but also including what one thinks of as 'signature ingredients'. That is especially true in everyday family cookery, but also if one gets away from the Cantonese/Beijing/Sichuan domination of what 'Chinese' cuisine is, to the dishes of Hunan, for instance, where lemongrass and basil, two Thai 'signatures', are used.

So is this a Thai dish or a Chinese dish? It's the family recipe of an ethnic Chinese family of Thai nationality with a Thai name, who, to the best of my knowledge couldn't even speak the Chaozhou dialect of Chinese.

Although we make 'pork with peppers' regularly, variants using the same technique are 'beef with onions' and 'chicken with ginger'. I have also adapted it recently, making the sauce separately to use over fried sea bream, i.e. 'fish with ginger'.

Please note: clearly, you need to determine the level of chilli that suits you and your diners and adjust the quantity accordingly. We like this dish spicy, hence what I give here.

### INGREDIENTS

*1 pork tenderloin >500 g[1]*

*2 green peppers[2]*

*2–3 bird's eye chillies*

*2 cloves garlic*

*1 tablespoon cornflour[3]*

*2 tablespoon light soy sauce[4]*

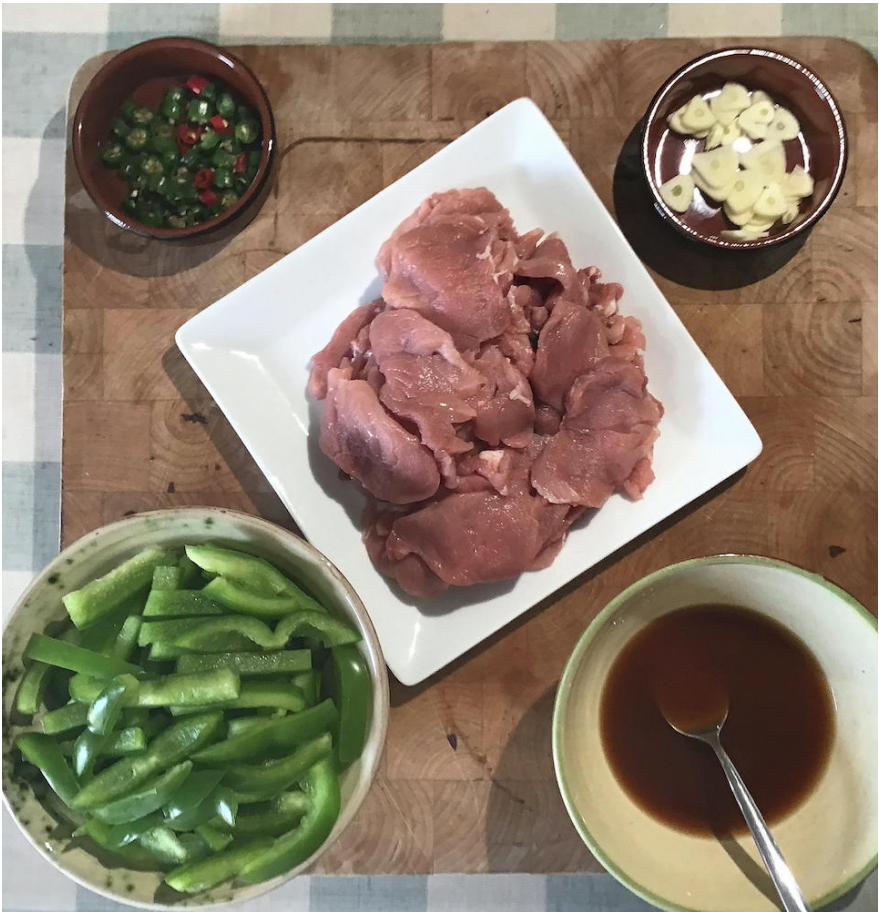
*2 tablespoon white vinegar[5]*

*12 tablespoons water*

*pepper*

*1 tablespoon oil*[6]

## METHOD



Slice the pork tenderloin across into thin rounds; cut the green peppers into narrow strips; cut the chillies up finely[7]; peel and slice the garlic thinly.

In a bowl, mix the cornflour, soy sauce, vinegar and water.

Heat a wok to medium-hot and put in the oil. When it is hot, add the pork and stir fry, separating all the pieces of pork making sure they are sealed on both sides. If you buy your tenderloin in a supermarket in the UK, it is likely to be bulked up with water. If you have that problem, when you've got the pork sealed, move it to the sides of the wok while all the

excess water is boiled off.

Give it a good grind of pepper, then add the garlic and the strips of green pepper and continue to stir fry for a few minutes. Stir the cornflour/soy sauce/vinegar/water mixture well to make sure all the cornflour is thoroughly incorporated and pour it into the wok—use a little water to get any cornflour remaining in the bottom of the bowl—and add the chilli, stirring well to make sure the sauce coats everything. Turn the heat down a bit and continue to stir fry for another 10 minutes or so until the pork is fully cooked. If the sauce is getting too reduced at any time, add a spoonful water and stir thoroughly. When it is cooked, it shouldn't be drowned in sauce, nor should it be dry but coated in the sauce.

Serve with plain rice, and any other Thai or Chinese style dishes if you so wish.

## Notes

[1] You could use another cut of lean pork if push came to shove, but tenderloin is much the best for this dish; you need to be able to cut it into thin pieces against the grain. For vegetarians or vegans, you could try substituting firm tofu or slices of king oyster mushrooms and adjust the cooking as necessary.

[2] Any sweet pepper will do, but the original recipe was for green peppers, and to me they have a more grassy taste that suits the dish better than sweeter, riper peppers.

[3] Potato flour or arrowroot—but I don't know about quantities of that... the sauce should be slightly thickened but not gloopy—would do as well, but don't use any wheat-type flour which needs cooking out.

[4] Kikkoman soy sauce is perfect but you may prefer other brands.

[5] Rice vinegar is traditional, though white malt vinegar does well. Don't use dark vinegar.

[6] We generally use rape seed (canola) oil, but any vegetable oil other than olive oil will do.

[7] We just cut the chillies into small bits, but you can de-seed them if you prefer. The other thing we have had to do, especially when our young granddaughter was with us, was not cook it with the chilli in but have that in a bowl with a little fish sauce to add at the table... something you might consider if someone at your table is chilli-averse, though I have to say it doesn't really taste the same.





# Ackee and Saltfish Recipe

*by Velviit*



Ackee and Saltfish is a very important meal in Jamaica. In fact it is the national dish.

My mother who was named Jasmine was a great cook. She would cook ackee and Saltfish often at easter time especially, and also on Sundays as a special breakfast or brunch.

I would wake up hearing the bantam cockerel, that we had in our large London garden crowing. I would hear my mother moving about the house, until she settled in the kitchen. The house would soon thereafter fill up with the aroma of scotch bonnet, thyme, onion and ackee. I would whisper to my sister to wake up. She in turn would whisper to my two brothers to wake up. Our youngest sister was already up and about. We would get dressed hurriedly and rush down the stairs. My mother would sometimes invite one of us to knead the dumpling dough. The dumplings would be fried and then eaten with the ackee and saltfish.

My father would slice the hard dough bread at the table, and my mother would butter the bread.

Often I said I didn't need butter on my bread, as the ackee had such a silky smooth texture.

We would sit at the table. A large family. Parents and five children. Our faces smiling as we ate ackee and saltfish, with hard dough bread and fried dumplings. Sweet reggae music playing on the radiogram.

Ackee and Saltfish has such a delicate flavour and lovely bright yellows, reds and greens from the ackee and the sweet peppers. It is part of my Jamaican cultural memory.

I hope that you make this dish and that you enjoy it.

### INGREDIENTS

*Dried and Salted Cod or other white fish 8 oz or 225 g. The filleted fish is most often used.*

*2 or 3 tablespoons of sunflower oil or other mild tasting vegetable oil*

*Finely chopped yellow onion 30g or half a medium onion*

*2 cups of roughly chopped sweet bell peppers, to include red, green and yellow coloured sweet peppers. Seeds should be removed.*

*Half Scotch bonnet pepper - very finely chopped*  
*1 spring onion or scallion chopped thinly*  
*2 cloves of garlic very finely chopped*  
*1 medium tomato sliced finely or tomato purée one tablespoon*  
*1 small spoon of ground thyme or 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh thyme*  
*1 large can of ackee 190g or 540g net weight of can or 340g after can is drained*

*Seasonings - Thyme, garlic, black pepper, medium curry powder and a pinch of salt. Salt is not strictly necessary as the salt fish provides salt.*

*Can be served with Jamaican hard dough bread. If hard dough bread is not available, then serve with a fresh white loaf. Can also be served with fried dumplings. Enjoy*

## METHOD

To prepare the dried and salted white fish, first wash it for a minute or two under running water. If you have frozen dried salted white fish, then follow the instructions on the packet to thaw the fish. After you have washed the fish, place it in a large saucepan and cover with water. Bring the fish and water to a roiling boil. Let the fish cook for another fifteen to twenty minutes. Turn off the heat. Use a fork to see whether the fish is cooked and also to remove a piece of fish to taste. The fish should taste salty like salted pork, and it should be pleasantly salty. If the fish tastes too salty, then turn on the heat and let the fish cook for a further ten minutes or until you are happy that the fish has a pleasant salty taste. At this point. Drain the salt water from the pan. Put the fish onto a plate and use a fork to pick the fish into small flakes, around half inch or a

little bigger in size.

Put the fish aside.

In a large non stick frying pan, add two tablespoons of sunflower oil, or sufficient oil to cover the bottom of the frying pan. Chop the onion, sweet bell peppers, garlic, scotch bonnet, tomato and scallion or spring onion. Add these to the frying pan and cook on a medium heat. Add the seasonings such as black pepper, teaspoon of medium curry powder and thyme. Add salt if this suits your taste. Stir the mixture gently, until the onions are translucent and the peppers are cooked.



Add the flaked cod to the mixture stirring gently until the fish is cooked and heated through.





Open the tin of ackee and drain away the water from the tin. When the ackee has been drained, you can add the drained ackee to the frying pan. Stir the mixture gently. Cook the mixture for a further five minutes maximum, as the ackee is delicate and cooks very quickly.



You are now ready to serve the ackee and saltfish with hard dough bread or fried dumplings or with plain white bread. Ackee and Saltfish is traditionally eaten as a breakfast or brunch. It can be eaten at any time as a main or as a side dish.

# **Potage Garbanzos Bacalao (Spanish Cod and Vegetable Stew)**

*by WingNWing*



## **It's Cooking, Not Chemistry**

Sometimes, life takes you full circle.

In my teens, I despised cooking. Part of that was deliberate



rebelliousness, resenting the automatic gender-based assumptions that making meals just went with the territory, being born female and all that. Plus, my college degree and first grown-up job was in chemistry – I did plenty of measuring, mixing, stirring, and heating in the lab, I really didn't want to do it again at home too at the end of the day.

So for a long time, I emphatically didn't cook at all. The only thing my mom taught me to make for dinner was reservations (luckily, I could afford that).

Fast forward a lot of years, and a lot of twists and turns. I'm part of the crew on a reproduction Spanish tall ship. We'd be open for public tours every weekend, hosting as many as two thousand people per day, then during the week we'd sail to a new town and next weekend do it all over again. It wasn't like a cruise ship with individual cabins and elegant dining menus either. Most of the space aboard was dedicated to educational decks and displays for the public, or basic ship's workings like engine room or navigation. There wasn't much room for our crew of about 25; we all slept together in a big dorm with bunk beds stacked two or three high, and only a curtain to give your space some privacy (said privacy was more virtual and a psychological courtesy rather than physical in any case).

The visitors loved to chat with crew members and ask us about our everyday lives. “How's the food?” was a common question, and my standard answer was, “It depends on whose turn it is to cook that day.”

There are no restaurants in the middle of the ocean, and no pizza delivery either. (How would you get it there? By helicopter?) We had to plan all our meals, and make them while the kitchen was rocking and bouncing on the waves, and improvise in case we miscalculated something or something

spoiled (or spilled!) because there was no popping over to the grocery to pick up a replacement or borrowing a cup of sugar from the neighbor. And the food had to be good, and hearty, to feed an extremely active and hardworking crew of 25, and be easy to adjust volumes so there was enough left over for the night watch (a lot of soups and stews and one-pot meals), ideally be able to stand around a bit and be tasty at room temperature, and be adaptable in case seas were rough and people were seasick.

And I discovered that this kind of cooking in many ways was the *inverse* of chemistry. Instead of exacting and measured, the recipes were just rough guidelines, to be adapted based on wherever inspiration, sea conditions, and available ingredients led you ... and it was wonderfully creative, and challenging, and plain old fun.

### **The Trainee**

The *cocinero* (chef) on my first tour was a patient and generous mentor named David, and I became his assistant. The crew fondly nicknamed me *cortadora* (cutter) or *pinche* (scullery maid). I had to unlearn everything I knew about chopping vegetables, and relearn it a new way to keep up the pace (preparing ingredients for 25 is a big change in scale compared to cooking for 2). Cutting always started with slicing of one side of whatever I was working on, if it was a round vegetable like a potato, creating a flat stable surface so things wouldn't roll around, making the knife slip and making you cut yourself. This approach is knife skills 101 in chef school, and everything is magnified when the boat is moving in even mild seas.

I learned a ton from David, both specific recipes and techniques, and also a general philosophy toward cooking and

ingredients. There are snapshots still in my mind: after chopping (say, an onion) he would rub the pieces between his fingers to separate them so they would fry up uniformly. But there was a sensuousness about it – not sexual but sensual in the way of “using all the senses” as he paid attention to the appearance and the texture and the smell of the food. He complained about the cheap, blunt, worn vegetable peeler we had, it dug too deep and wasted too much of the food – “it is taking the soul of the carrot” he said. He would wake from his siesta at four to serve dinner at eight. He had a particular play list that he played every day while we were working; he could tell just by which song was up, how much time he had left to have the meal ready for the crew when they came off watch. We'd put one bowl for each crew member on the counter and ladle food into it, so they would simply come into the galley, take a plate, and bring it to the table. Somebody always had to be on watch, so we couldn't all eat at once. Rather, people came in in shifts and drips and drabs, and we would know that everyone had been fed if there were no bowls left over. It was always a kick to be told it was time ring the big brass ship's bell that hung above the galley door to signal that the food was ready. (I take a weird delight in the ordinary; I'm like a little kid that way.) In the old days that the ship represents, the bell was used to mark the passage of time, to signal other ships, to sound an alarm. But for us, modern-day people on a reproduction boat, the bell was just ceremonial, a tidbit for the tourists ... and our signal for suppertime.

### **The Fridge At The Bottom**

David spoke Spanish with a little English; I spoke English with a little Spanish. The language barrier occasionally caused problems, especially early on before we'd had much chance to

improve our vocabularies and to get used to each other's patterns. (Famously, once I was chatting with another English-speaking crew member and complaining that if I didn't get a chance to do laundry soon I'd be going commando; and David blushed vividly; apparently in a false cognate to Spanish I'd referred to a preferred sexual position!) This particular day we were making cod stew, and David asked me to get a red bell pepper from the "refrigerator at the bottom." I knew from my whirlwind ship's tour during orientation that there was a pantry and several freezers deep in the hold two decks below, called the *gambuza*.

Slightly excited to be given this task and a moment to familiarize myself with a different part of the ship, I grabbed a tote bag to put over my shoulder (to have hands free for climbing when carrying the food back up) and made my way down two ladders. There in the lonely, echoing, but still brightly-lit *gambuza* I found a freezer filled with stacks of chicken breasts and sliced ham, wonderfully organized, and on the other wall, rows and rows of canned tomatoes and bags of rice and boxes of tea ... and not a single fresh vegetable anywhere. I checked everywhere, then checked again, then defeated and confused climbed back up to the main deck, where David, slightly exasperated, asked me what had taken so long. He'd been referring to getting the pepper from bottom of the refrigerator on the main deck, in the utility area just off of the kitchen. However, language barrier and all that, "bottom of the refrigerator" became "refrigerator at the bottom."

## INGREDIENTS

*2 Tbsp olive oil*

*4-5 cloves garlic, peeled and halved*

*1 small onion, coarsely chopped*  
*½ red bell pepper, coarsely chopped*  
*½ green bell pepper, coarsely chopped*  
*1 small tomato*  
*½ tsp smoked paprika*  
*½ tsp cumin*  
*700 ml (3 cups) chicken or vegetable broth*  
*4 small red potatoes, cut in chunks\**  
*2 carrots, cut in thick disks*  
*1 small zucchini, cut in bite size pieces*  
*1-14 oz can garbanzo beans*  
*225 ml (1 cup) green peas (½ of a 14-oz can)*  
*550 gm (20 oz) frozen cod loins, cut in large bite size pieces*  
*1 Tbsp sherry vinegar*  
*salt and pepper*

## METHOD

Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot and fry the garlic for a few minutes, then add the onion, bell peppers, and tomato, gently fry for a few minutes more until onion is translucent. Add the paprika, cumin, and saute another minute. Carefully add the broth and cook until tender. Puree. (Immersion blender is great for this.)

Bring soup to a boil, add the carrots and potatoes and cook for 20 minutes. Add the zucchini and garbanzos and cook 10 minutes more. Turn off the heat, add the cod and peas and allow to steep until the fish is cooked through, another 10 minutes or so. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and a splash of sherry vinegar. (Note, this is more an outline than a recipe. Cooking times will need to be adjusted depending on the size of your vegetable pieces.) Serves 6 – 8.





## Pasta Poco Vesto

by gr



*The tomatoes are not yours, you did not grow them. If they even are tomatoes, odd as they look. Likewise the basil and other things in the garden. And the cottage, which you found unlocked and vacant — also not yours. But there is oil and cheese in the half-cellar and that's when you start thinking about making the pasta, if only there was pasta.*

*By now there is nothing in the world you want to do more than make this dish. Conditions are not ideal — nothing like you ever imagined — but the time is now. Not just for you, but for her, too.*

She is not something you ever imagined either. Because, well, for obvious reasons. She would say it wasn't obvious at all. Call it your lack of imagination then. Whatever it was that made her such a surprise did not stop her from quickly taking up residence in your thoughts. You try to conjure some description, perhaps you will type it out, but everything sounds trite — her irrepressible laughter, the smile in her eyes, her knowing wit. No, her mercurial spirit is not to be pinned down. And still you do know her in your bones.

Once when you were both at a good friend's house you admired the lively greenery around the room and asked if it was new. Your friend just chuckled because, of course, nothing was new at all. But she laughed because she already knew you had fallen in love with her. It seems extraordinary. Of all things, you'd think you'd be the first to know that you loved someone.

*A standing piece of unfinished plywood had been made into an unconvincing pantry wall. It revealed a cache of dry goods and canned foods. And here there were stores of long- and short-cut pasta. You found yourself wondering whether mozzarella could be made from powdered milk. Unlikely. And idle, since you knew nothing about cheesemaking and there was nowhere to find out. Startling the number of things you do not know — very familiar things that, when once gone from you, become utterly foreign, because you don't know the least thing about them really. A world that once seemed to be yours, slipped from your grasp.*



The prep time on a recipe is always wrong. Most of our real preparation time is spent in good intentions. How many years has it taken to get you standing there at the cutting board slipping the skins off those misshapen volunteer tomatoes?

That would be from the time the two of you decided to make impromptu dinner at her place. She kept basically nothing in her kitchen. One wasted tomato the only fresh item on record. Unusable. But there was long-cut pasta in the cupboard and some questionable-looking Parmigiano, close to the rind, in the fridge. With these and some olive oil, a touch of vinegar and plenty of black pepper, you made a meal. You said it was the best thing you had ever tasted, and, sitting across the table from her, you meant it. She dubbed it Pasta Poco Vesto and laughed.

Later you made love. Probably it was then that you first talked about making this other dish. Almost certainly it was then.

*The cottage has a wood stove, but inside the cupboard for storing wood, nothing but an old manual typewriter holding down a small stack of blank paper. A single sheet rolled onto the platen read 'you to this'. Some unfinished thought from a previous page, no doubt, but also, you like to think, some kind of blessing from the previous occupant.*

But you didn't make that next dish for her. How could you? Laughable now the way you talked about how hard it was to get really good tomatoes, your disquisition on how the Roma tomato was a bastardization of the San Marzano, your disdaining spaghetti in favor of bucatini — bronze-extruded, naturally. You had your reasons, you were committed to all these things. How else to assure it would be the best thing she

ever tasted? "We should have a little garden of our own," you said. Then you could do it right.

§

*There is also red wine in the cellar and this is the time for that. There will not be mozzarella, of course, but the essential ingredients — oil and basil, salt, tomato and garlic — have been macerating all day. Eight hours, perhaps, though it is hard to tell in this light. You are sitting out on the porch, glass in hand. Against all logic, the porch swing doesn't swing, but the wine is good and the temperature is moderate.*

*Looking out from the cottage there is not, technically speaking, anything to see. Not in the ordinary sense. Not since yesterday. By now it should be sundown, but the light is bright and the sun, larger than life, does not set. A bright red corona circles out from the sun disc — bigger, closer than before — an angry rainbow marking only the time it takes to make the pasta.*

*And there is a great sea swell that does not break or fall — the long curve of it burgeoning with things, sea wrack and anything that might be torn from the ground. For this cottage is far from the coast, and that is not the shore — it is but a single moment hung between the drowned earth and the undrowned earth.*

*You are not really seeing these things, though you can look on them all the same. This is just what the end of the world looks like. More specifically, it is what the end of the world looked like yesterday at 3:06 PM Pacific Time.*

That first night together, wonder and worry could coexist. She put a finger to your lips. "There is only now." And that still seems right somehow, even if the only now you have is past.

*"I made it," you say. "It is the best thing I ever tasted." When all is said and everything is done, you need not grieve. There was not really some other dish you could have made for her. For this too was Pasta Poco Vesto.*

## INGREDIENTS

*2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil*

*1/4 cup fresh basil, in pieces*

*1 clove garlic*

*1 dash salt (aka 1/8 tsp)*

*3-4 fresh tomatoes*

*1/8 lb Italian-style fresh mozzarella, cut in smallish cubes*

*Parmigiano reggiano, grated fine*

*Bucatini or other long-cut pasta (120-150 g)*

## METHOD

1) In a non-metal bowl, combine olive oil, salt, and basil. With a mallet, whack-to-crack a clove of garlic, remove peel and turn clove into the mixture.

2) Peel tomatoes,\* and set aside one for the *salsa minuscuro*. Seed the remainder, reserving pulp. Chop tomatoes & add to oil mixture. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and let macerate at room temp at least 2 hours, but the longer the better (up to 10 hours). Also cover and keep at room temp the reserved pulp and last tomato.

3) An hour before time: a) Turn the relish. b) If making the tiny sauce: pour off and reserve any puddling accumulated juices. c) Remove and toss out the garlic clove. d) Gently fold mozzarella into the relish, reseal.

4) Prepare pasta when the time is nigh. If making tiny sauce do this while pasta cooks. [See tiny sauce step 4.1]

4.1) Hold back the 3rd tomato wholly for the sauce. While

pasta cooks, prepare sauce: Chop and seed 3rd tomato, reserving all. Heat this and all reserved pulp & juices in a saucepan with a touch of olive oil. (A small splash of dry white wine can go here.) Cook down and smush until easily pressed through fine-mesh sieve to extract liquid, discard chaff. Return liquid to cleaned saucepan and cook down until saucy. This will produce only a tiny amount — go as far as you dare. Test for acidity, add a very little sugar if needed.

5) Toss just a bit of the Parmigiano with the hot drained pasta. Flounce pasta into the relish and turn to warm all. [See tiny sauce step 5.1] Add fresh ground pepper, red pepper flakes to taste. A splash of lemon juice for sparkle. Top with Parmigiano, of course.

5.1) Plate individual servings, and drizzle micro sauce only in the central area of each serving. Top with Parmigiano to hide the secret sauce! If your tomatoes are flavorful, this is going to add a profound and clandestine zing to the dish.

Serve immediately.

Makes 2 servings. (If doubling use just 3 Tbs oil.)

## TIPS

A) Peeling tomatoes two ways! 1) Blanching (preferred): Cut an X in the bottom of the tomatoes and, one at a time, plunk them into rapidly boiling water for a count of 20 chimpanzees, then drop immediately into ice water. Skin of tomato now slips off easily. 2) By Peeler: You can just peel them like a delicate apple with a vegetable peeler. If your peeler is sharp and your tomatoes not too delicate, this works.

B) Warm a mixing bowl by colandering finished pasta over it. Ladle some pasta water into wide serving bowls to warm. Empty warmed mixing bowl and use this to toss the pasta, relish and some parm together. Empty the warmed serving

bowls, and plate the meal.

C) For a creamier quality, if you have very good-quality pasta, you can prepare "low water" pasta: cooking in little enough water it cooks down and is never drained. This requires steady attention and adds to cooking time.

# **Mediterranean Bake with Burrata Cheese**

*by Homeport*



The Story behind the recipe goes back three years to a regular blood test and the surprise finding that I was pre diabetic. After much research and advice I started eating a more mediterranean style diet. This recipe developed from

simple aubergine, courgettes and tomatoes baked in the oven, I experimented, added and tasted until I arrived at the recipe above. It has become one of my favourite meals, simple to make and delicious to eat. That is the beauty of cookery you can add and change anything until it fits your taste buds. I hope that you will do this with mine, use it as a base to create your own favourite.

The good news is that my sugar levels dropped back down to a normal level.

## INGREDIENTS

*Burrata Cheese*

*2 Aubergines*

*2 Courgettes*

*8 Tomatoes*

*Handful Baby Tomatoes*

*2 Red Romano Peppers*

*1 Yellow Pepper*

*1 Orange Pepper*

*2 Red Onions*

*Olives mixed*

*Sun-dried tomatoes*

*2 Cloves garlic chopped small*

*Herbs Provence 2 teaspoons*

*Sea Salt*

*Olive Oil*

*Apple Balsamic Vinegar*

*Fresh Basil*

## METHOD

Heat oven to 180 degrees celsius or 360 Fahrenheit.

Wash vegetables and dry gently. Slice aubergines long ways

then into small chunks add to large baking pan. The courgettes slice longways and into small chunks add to pan. Prepare peppers by cutting in half deseeding and then slicing add to pan. Cut tomatoes into small chunks add along with halved baby tomatoes to pan. Peel and chop red onions into small chunks and add to pan. Add handful of olives and some sun-dried tomatoes along with the chopped garlic, sea salt and herbs Provence.



Mix the ingredients and then add generous glug of olive oil and a small amount of apple balsamic vinegar. Pop the pan in the oven and after half an hour remove stir and put back in, at this time lower oven temperature to 160 degrees celsius or 320 Fahrenheit, and just leave for another hour. At this point the vegetables will have softened stir again and add more olive oil if needed.

I usually leave the dish in the oven until it softens right down it is personal choice but normally allow two hours for this dish to cook at low heat. Its really worth it.

I then remove from baking dish to a serving dish very carefully drain the Burrata cheese and place in the centre of



serving dish on top of the bake. Sprinkle lightly with a few of the Herbs Provence and then finish with fresh Basil.



I serve this with Olive or Sourdough bread. Its delicious. Enjoy.

# Drunken Greens

*by Jaysen*



I've always wanted to be a southerner. Not a "Stars and Bars" separatist nor a "Battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia" turned "Second Confederate Navy Jack" (what we damn yankees lump together as "the confederate flag") waving-pickup-truck-driving-country-music-listening- tobacco-

juice-spitting redneck nor a black/Mexican/Cuban/name-your-minority hating white supremacists. No, I wanted to be Colonel Sanders. A business man with an air of respectability, a mischievous eye smile, and a taste for ... well ... a taste for fried chicken.

But now that I say that out loud, I think of Andy and Opie and Aunt May in Mayberry. We can't forget Gomer Pile, Barney Fife, Sheriff Roscoe P. Coletrain, Boss Hogg and the Duke family, Bo, Luke, Daisy - who set the idea of sex for many of the boys of my generation - and Uncle Jesse. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn were there in the background. Idealized entities perfected by my imaginings of Samuel Clemens' world as described between the words "Chapter One" and "The End". As unreal to me as a space travel would be to Galileo. Possible but unattainable.

I want to be a southerner of mint juleps, sweet tea, and wrap around porches. A man of basket picnics, home made wooden boats, and cane pole fishing. A shade tree mechanic, amateur electrician, and expert 'skeeter killer all in one skin. A member of a community that visits the sick, feeds the newest "damn yankee" key lime pie, and stops for the pedestrian in the cross walk not for religious points or to avoid a ticket, but because, and here's what a real fear of God looks like, "my grandmother will rise from her grave and beat me with a stick if I don't".

There is a south that has been forgotten and, thanks largely to sensational media, replaced with the same tyrants that were supposed to have existed in the time of the U.S. civil war. As a "damn yankee" I can tell you that the racism prevalent in the places "not the South" far exceeds what I have experienced as a citizen the first state to secede from the Union. Here the idiots are clear. They have "white only" clubs and say "I'm a

racist and I don't like <insert groups>.” They clump together and you can keep an eye on them. Yet, when the storm hits and a member of <hated group> is hired to do work you inevitably hear “Yeah, he's ok, I like that one.”

Meanwhile, as a yankee, I'd sit in a meeting where everyone would talk about how much they liked all races and were not like those “evil southerners” until the last of the non-whites were out of the room. Then... oh boy. My grandmother will rise from her grave beat me with a stick if I tell you what they said.

And there you have it. I've always been a southerner.

My family history is pretty simple. Hardworking, West Virginia laborers who add no adjectives to “American” when describing themselves. Well that's not true. Loyal. God fearing. Tax paying (most of the time). Voting. They dug coal from under the mountains. Built bridges over the valleys. Laid pipe. Worked in factories. Worked in offices. Built things that were solid using materials ripped from the earth leaving their blood, sweat and tears as the only evidence they were ever there.

So why don't I see myself as a southerner?

Because I'm not one of them.

Ambition drives people to do things. People change who they are to reach an ideal. Most of the time that ideal is a noble thing. Sometimes people turn their back on the past because the brightness of the future makes the shadows of the past a nightmare to be avoided.

I grew up knowing I was “from” a place entirely unlike like the home my parents provided. Frequent visits to the West Virginia homesteads showed the contrast between growing up poor in the hills and mountains of West Virginia to the luxury of a middle class life. Of the uncles, aunts and cousins in my family, all the ambitious have left. Of the few who remained,

most have worked harder, brutally physical jobs to become successful. Work I was educated to see as beneath “those of intelligence”.

I understand why I wasn’t, why I didn’t consider myself, a southerner.

Understanding didn’t make family reunions easy though. My sister and I were “those ones”. We acted different. We talked different. We did nearly everything different. Yet, deep inside, I was not different. I’m not talking about the silliness of “blood is thicker than water” but some core southernness that pulls the soul of a person to get south of the Mason-Dixon line as quickly and as frequently as possible.

As long as I can remember I longed to be outside, running through forests, looking for things to catch. Fishing and wood lore constantly tumbling into my thoughts in middle of discussions about Plato, Machiavelli, London and Clemens. A new idea for a tree stand while calculating the 2<sup>nd</sup> derivative or a plan to dam a creek while determining the molar mass of precipitate compounds formed in a chemical reaction. Physics is a dangerous class for the closet southerner ... I’m not sure about the statute of limitations in a few states. We won’t talk about physics.

I was a northern book worm with pale skin and pencil arms until the age of 15 when my parents made a fateful mistake. They moved us further north and into the country. Oh the glory of splitting wood in flannel and boots. Muscle building and skin darkening. Hours spent wandering the woods of the NY Finger Lakes region hunting bass and trout and spring salmon. Neighbors who preferred that you “shoot the squirrels and rabbits dead or hang them in a snare for soup and a hat, just make ‘em gone”

Prior to that time the only outlet I had for my

southernness was really an “inlet”. I read. Everything. Clemens was an early favorite, two boys running their world left to their own devices in a fabled land. London met me in a period of self-doubt, his dark humanist approach to life as a thing that only slightly staved off emptiness of death. Thoreau made me feel important knowing that loneliness is sought after by some even though my loneliness was forced on me by others. Even Machiavelli placated my conscious when I dated the sister of the person I would marry. The wandering of the mind to make up for the lack of a wandering body.

The “Encyclopedia World Book” is harder to explain. It was there. Someone took the time to write it why not take the time to read it? Then there were the school books. The school board paid good tax dollars for all these text books, I should do the tax payers, like my father, the service of getting their monies worth. Public library? Heck yeah!

It is easy to see why I was alone so much...

There is one thing that the yankee north has done right, and I'd willing give up my southernness for... I saw her when I was 15 and spent the next 26 years living with the Yanks as a result. She believed in me and I believed her and we made life and kids and family and love ... as yankees. As I got old and she stayed young we visited places where coal was dug from beneath mountains and places where “ma'am” and “sir” were used because it was right. Places where tea was sweet and places where snow was not a thing seen outside of pictures. We talked about a time with no kids. A time that could have grandchildren running around our feet. A time of life passing by while we watched from a porch sipping sweet tea and remembering a thing called snow.

Then it happened. Business decisions have a way of making people second guess things. We figured “now is the

time” and on April 27, 2014 we drove and drove and drove. April 28 we bought a house. June 28 I spent my first night as a resident of South Carolina.

After 41 years, 2 months and 5 days I was a southerner again. Finally. This time I’m not alone. She is here. The eldest comes to visit. The youngest is still spreading his wings. The locals laugh over their sweet tea, mint julep and American beer at the southerner who calls himself a “damn yankee” long after they’ve accepted him as native son. The gators and I have staring contests. The herons, storks, Carolina wrens and all manner of feathered creatures look at me sideways reminding me that I’m the earthbound one.

Which is fine by me. I’ll just grab my basket of fried chicken and my cane pole and ...

### INGREDIENTS

*1 bunch of greens (collards, turnip, whatever)*

*4 full strips bacon (not heavily smoked but salty)*

*1 cooking onion*

*1 cup white wine (not cooking wine, that stuff is awful) 1 quart vegetable stock*

*1/2 cup sugar*

### METHOD

This would be a “traditional low country” side/meal if you replace the wine with beer or distilled liquor. This is a recipe I’ve worked out based on several documented camping trips and observations of local “indigenous population” post Civil War (freed slaves and the Gullah who inhabited the barrier islands and marshes of the south east coast). There is some humor with the “drink wine” part but the sequence is critical as it is all by feel, not clock, to make it right.

These are sequential steps. Helps with timing so don't do prep in advance. Start heating pot on medium high heat. Cut bacon into 3/4 wide strips. Once ALL bacon is cut put in pot. Open wine bottle. Drink from bottle. If it is good, get a different bottle and save this one for drinking. Stir bacon. One more swallow of wine. Chunk up onion. You want CHUNKS. Seriously. No dicing or slicing, big, ugly chunks. Swallow of wine. Stir bacon. Stem your greens. Swallow wine. Put onions in pot and stir. Swallow more wine. Chop greens. Again, chop. NOT diced, pureed, julienned. You want big pieces. Wine. Stir bacon and onions. Wine. Contemplate life while stirring bacon and onions. Once bacon is a bit crisp, put greens in pot. Stir to coat greens with ... bacon juice ... and start them to wilt. Once wilted, swallow some wine, then pour about one glass full into the pot. If there isn't a glassful, congratulations, you are doing it right, but open another bottle and add a bit to the pot. Let simmer for a few minutes and add a bit more wine ... you AND the pot. Add stock. If the greens are not covered, drink wine and add water till they are covered. If they ARE covered just drink wine. Let come to simmer and reduce heat to fast simmer/slow boil. Drink wine for 30-40-50 minutes. Add sugar and stir.

Serve over firm rice (wild or brown not white), hard tack biscuits, crusty bread, or other traditional earthy starch as a side. Add some poached shrimp or salmon, roasted chicken breast, shredded pork loin/shoulder, or thin sliced peppered beef to make the main course for most folks. If you really want to try a unique dish try one of the traditional proteins from the south east coast ... Red fish, flounder, whiting, black sea bass, spotted sea trout, squirrel, rabbit, marsh hen, or oysters.



## **Cheese Spread Sandwiches**

*by MsRestless*



The plane landed with a couple of thuds onto the runway at Gatwick airport. I wanted to unfold myself out of the seat since my legs felt sore and stiff from the eight-hour flight. Molly shifted in her seat and began to unbuckle the seatbelt. The guy sitting beside us gave us a little smile and started to

leave his seat. The flight attendants walked down the isles and began giving instructions for navigating out of the plane.

My sister and I decided to visit London, England for our annual trip. We booked our tickets, researched our Airbnb, and decided on a studio in Zone 2. We looked at the touristy London things. I wanted to see the Borough Market and the Tate Britain and spend an evening at a dance club. Molly wanted to take a ride on the London Eye and see Stonehenge.

We completed the customs paperwork, picked up our over-packed suitcases and walked into the Marks and Spencer's store on the concourse. My stomach grumbled and the mini cheese tray that I bought on the flight didn't cut it. We walked towards the sandwiches and drinks. I read online how the British people love these 5-pound deals which include a sandwich, drink, and a bag of chips. I looked at a chicken sandwich and Molly looked at a salad. Then an employee with a Middle Eastern accent said, "Sister, Sister" and motioned us to look at more sandwiches. I picked up a sandwich made with cheese spread on dark, malted bread. It reminded me of the sandwiches that my late grandmother would make for family events. I remember watching her grate the cheese, mix it with mayonnaise and mustard and spread the orange mixture on lightly toasted white bread. I picked up the cheese spread sandwich, pressed apple juice and a bag of chips. Molly got a combo with a roast beef sandwich, orange juice and a bag of chips.

Our route to the Airbnb included two trains with a 30-minute wait time between the two trains. During the 30-minute wait, we stood on the exposed platform with our suitcases and backpacks with the damp air cutting through our clothes. I hoped that we were getting on the right train since I desperately wanted to get out of these stale clothes and take a

shower. I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes and my mouth felt sticky and warm. Molly's eyes looked dark and red. Our connecting train finally came after a ten-minute delay, and it took us to Vauxhall station.

We stood outside of Vauxhall with our suitcases and backpacks. I could feel the rain through my sweatshirt. We kept looking at the address for the Airbnb and wanted to catch a cab to get there. We looked for a taxi stand but realized that it was on the other side of the station, and I felt too tired to navigate the crowds and turnstiles to get there. Molly tried to put in a request from Uber, but the driver was on the other side of the road and missed us completely. My eyes felt sore, and I said, "We should just walk to the place since we can't get a ride." Molly nodded in agreement, and we walked in the rain to the Airbnb. Then an angel with a French accent called out from a car and said, "Are you lost?" I said yes. She said, "If it's not too far, I can take you to your place." Molly and I put our suitcases in the trunk and got into the woman's car. Normally, I don't get into cars with strangers, but this was a fellow black woman, and we were soaking wet, tired, and dirty. I couldn't turn this down. She looked at the address and introduced herself as Nadia. We talked about our flight from Toronto, and she talked about her teaching role in the neighbourhood. I offered Nadia some money, but she politely declined. We got out of the car and thanked her for the help. We looked at the building and continued walking toward the lobby.

We met the host of our Airbnb, and she gave us a tour of our studio apartment with a small kitchen that lacked a stove but had a fridge and microwave, a large main room that held the bed, a small couch, television and desk and the standard bathroom with bathtub, shower head, sink and toilet. The host left the apartment and I peeled off my wet clothes. I took a

hot shower and changed into dry clothes. I took out the sandwich from my backpack, bit a large mouthful of bread and cheese spread and looked out the window to see the skyscrapers, castles and other buildings of the London skyline.

### INGREDIENTS

*1 cup of grated cheddar cheese*

*3 or more tablespoons of mayonnaise*

*1 teaspoon of mustard (preferably dijon)*

*2 tablespoons of grated onion*

*A pinch of salt and pepper*

*1/2 teaspoon of paprika/Old Bay Seasoning/Seasoning Salt*

*6 to 8 slices of lightly toasted bread*

### METHOD

Mix the grated cheese, mayonnaise, mustard, and grated onion in a medium-sized bowl until combined.

Add the salt, pepper and paprika and mix until incorporated into the cheese mixture.

Taste the spread to add additional seasonings or more mayonnaise/mustard. Old bay seasoning or seasoning salt are good options to add as well.

Chill the mixture for a couple of hours for the flavours to combine but the mixture must still be spreadable.



To assemble the sandwich:

Take the cheese mixture out of the fridge

Toast the bread lightly

After the bread is toasted, spread the cheese mixture on one side and add the other slice of bread to complete the sandwich.

If you like to spread it thicker, this makes three sandwiches. If you like to spread it thinner, this makes four sandwiches.

## Sautéed Beet Greens Appetiser

*by thegirlclaudia*



Thursday, 17 March 2022, was unforgettable, and not in the way one would remember a journey or theme park adventure. That day, I sautéed beet greens for breakfast while juggling a Zoom meeting and two conversations, one on WhatsApp and another on Skype.

The Zoom was expected; the two work conversations were not, but were scheduled at the last minute. In my line of work, I need to be on-call for ad-hoc assignments. I prefer to be given advance notice and ample alone time, but there are choiceless choices when you're not the only person in the world.

I work for a social enterprise in which robots teach autistic children social skills. Because of the global public health emergency, our tutors were made to stay home and teach from the comfort of their homes. However, transporting robots has its own set of challenges, and I was tasked to install the virtual reality counterpart of these bots, a “virtual robot” program our industry partner in Melbourne developed.

I had four tutors, three of whom attended the virtual robot training tutorial, lined up for the installation by 13 March, leaving 17th alone, a much-needed free slot. I needed that slot to be free for the Zoom meeting, where I met fellow like-minded souls and discussed timely ideas on pushing back against the worldwide crisis engulfing the whole world. That meeting would not be recorded and so it was imperative that I be attentive and dedicated. I want to end this hell on earth chop-chop. Also, Deborah, the administrator and leader of the tutors, said she would tell the sole absentee what I said during that tutorial, so I didn't need to spend additional time.

On 14 March, a fifth tutor, Bridget “Biddy” registered herself on the installation roll-call, and I was cross that I didn't block that day out. I'm not using the real names of my coworkers in this story. For an idea of what Biddy looks like, imagine actress Biddy Hodson with dark hair and spectacles. But like Mission Impossible's self-destructing messages, “your mission, should you choose to accept it, ...” means nothing but “There's no way to back out, and you have to do ...” fill-

in-the-blank.

On 16 March, after I'd finished the third virtual robot installation, I found a new beet waiting for me in a corner. Dad does the groceries. Whilst I could store the beetroots in the fridge for a week or so, I could only cook the unfrozen greens on the day of purchase — maybe longer if I kept them alive in a jug of water or somewhere in the fridge — or else they would wither. But I was so occupied that the 17th became the only date left for me to process them greens. Mum refrigerated the greens in hopes that she would be hands-free.

Many times in my life, I had my share of being double-, triple- or even quadruple-booked. When I had my Twitter account, I recall distinctly one of my tweets began with “Everything happens on my birthday...” and I proceeded to name four or five events that I had to attend to. That was me in my early twenties and I had exams to sit and places to go. The computer makes multitasking appear easy — I mean, who doesn't listen to music, podcasts or YouTube in the background while tapping away on the keyboard? Another time, I signed up for a day camp on the same day as a volunteer mathematics tutoring session. Since I couldn't find anyone to replace me as a tutor, but my mum had also signed up for the day camp, she went there alone while I handled the kids.

But no amount of technology could make any single entity pay full attention to multiple tasks, not even computers or robots themselves. That could only be done with task distribution across multiple parties and nobody steps on another's figurative toes. I'm saying this as an engineer: when a computer multitasks, what it does is it sets aside regular, discrete chunks of time devoted to a certain task, and the other chunks go to other running processes with the same



degree of scattered dedication. Unlike computers, humans don't have the programmatic ability to make those regular time chunks, well, regular. Stuff happens, upsetting the best-laid plans and any fine balance one has in mind. Inevitably, dread loomed as the 17th edged closer and closer.

I woke up to my phone alarm on 17 March 2022. At 7:30 AM, I joined the Zoom meeting on my laptop, took it to the kitchen and fetched the beet greens from the fridge. For everyone else, it was the evening of 16 March 2022, but that was not my timeline. I had my timeline to attend to, and that meant being ready to install the virtual robot on Biddy's computer at 10 AM local time. A man living in New York lamented over what he could be growing at home. I took a small dish of beet greens suspended in water from a windowsill and showed it to him, adding, "Growing beet greens from cuttings is super easy," and I set my dish of growing greens back in its place.

The large beetroot lay across the middle shelf in the fridge. I broke off the beet greens from the root, the latter of which I returned to the fridge, and rinsed the greens in a rectangular basin. After the first rinse, I soaked them in coarse salt to remove finer impurities.

"Accidents." That word caught me by surprise. Unbeknownst to me, Mum had crept up from behind me. She usually wakes up late because if she is up any earlier, she becomes on-call for Dad's ad-hoc assignments, which, unlike those at work, are ill-defined and requires Mum to exert herself to understand even the words coming out of his mouth. She would rather stay tucked under her duvet than face the (literal) music, such as Dad playing Ernie Ford on YouTube from the living room TV. I so wanted to be left alone. As if me tackling multiple things at once wasn't a heavy-

enough burden for me. Busyness loves company.

At the time, I was shuttling between Zoom on the laptop and following the beet greens recipe from memory, and that word by Mum meant that disaster was bound to happen when I'm not focused. Before I could respond to her, Biddy's cheery WhatsApp message arrived.

Bridget: *Good morning Claudia, thanks for arranging the installation* 😊

That smiley really got to me.

Bridget: *I got two tablets in my hand would you like me to send you both remote control if at once?*

Reminds me of that late afternoon a year ago when I pulled Biddy aside. I told her that her profile picture on the company website seemed a bit too racy. Before any sensible mother enrolls her autism-afflicted son at our institution, she would get an idea of what the tutors are like by looking at their pictures. First impressions mattered. But in Biddy's shot, the camera was obliquely overhead, and the photo showed too much of her cleavage. (Good that she took my advice and replaced the photo overnight.)

Biddy sent me her TeamViewer credentials. With the TeamViewer application, I remotely installed the virtual robot on both her tablets, known as #5 and #6. The last step was to activate them with licenses from our industry partner. I'd given advance notice to Artur to stand by for my requests for license files from 10 AM to noon on each installation day, as only he could generate them. Thus the Skype conversation; that was his only means of instant communication. Note that I was using just my laptop for everything except the beet greens.

The beet greens still soaking in coarse salt, I chopped up the garlic, onion and chilli, and gathered the *mise en place* of olive oil and seasonings, gingerly fetching the Chinese-style

rosé wine and setting it in a cozy location among the preps. I also checked in to Zoom to see if new things were posted in the chat, as I'd missed almost everything my online tribe was saying, and I was tasked with sending out the chat history as soon as the Zoom meeting ended.

As soon as I'd activated the virtual robots with Artur's licenses, I WhatsApped Biddy. I was desperate to move on and focus on my beet greens.

*Claudia: Hi Biddy, try following the tutorial I gave and see if the two virtual robots work?*

*Bridget: Sure, where can I see the tutorial again?*

Cor blimey. Biddy was also absent at the tutorial I gave a week ago. Deb said she would inform the (one) absentee of the details of the tutorial, but I didn't realise there were two such people. Good grief, I have to juggle the Zoom meeting and the beet greens — I was just about to add the olive oil to the pan, and I needed to pay full attention — and now an ad-hoc tutorial. I'd expected home office to be a comfortable boredom. Anyway, life gives you lemons. Life is meant to give you lemons. Take that.

My chopped garlic and shallots were still sitting on the chopping board. It's said that it's good to leave them aside "as is" for at least twenty minutes because freshly cut garlic and onion produce an antioxidant called allicin which fights inflammation, and cooking them too early destroys such allicin production. I fished out the beet greens and laid them in a sieve. If they're not properly dried, olive oil droplets and other oil-coated hot ingredients in the pan would leap out of the pan and burn me.

In my conversation with Biddy, "Avatar" and "VBot" are two specific files pertaining to the virtual robot program.

*Claudia: Open Avatar and then VBot, when you exit first close*

*VBot and then Avatar. A note about virtual robot on tablet: be careful never to let it go "full screen" because it's impossible to snap out of it (using the known key combination Alt+Enter). The last time that happened, I had to TeamViewer into the tablet to get rid of the full screen.*

Bridget: *could you try to open it on one tablet and I follow? LOL*  
I accessed tablet #5 and clicked on Avatar.

Claudia: *Yes, you may follow now. Avatar first*

Bridget: *on tablet 6, after I tap on Avatar, the program appeared only for 1 sec.*

I accessed tablet #6 via TeamViewer without any problems.

Claudia: *Oh, now it works. Maybe I need to open again.*

Bridget: *Do I need to reopen it?*

Claudia: *I suggest you reboot that tablet. In the meantime, I'll give you a quick tutorial on the other tablet*

I switched back to tablet #5.

Claudia: *So on this other tablet, you can see Avatar is running. I just opened VBot.*

Bridget: *Okay* 🙌

Claudia: *We only need to use the functions Robot, Music and Messages. The others are not necessary.*

The button labelled "Robot" with a capital "R" delivers the lessons for autistic children, "Music" plays music files, and "Messages" is the robot's text-to-speech faculty: type "I love you" and one of the virtual robots on the screen will say it in its typical monotone. I clicked on the button labelled "Robot".

Claudia: *Do you hear the prompt?*

Bridget: *Yes*

Claudia: *Note that the interface is a little different from what you're used to. You can choose the lesson.*

I said "what you're used to" because for earlier versions of

the virtual robot, I delivered two in-person sessions to our team. Both sessions involved Biddy. I didn't expect that she would need a refresher on such a day as this.

By now it was 11:04 AM — eons since I washed the beet greens. I wish I could say I had finished cooking them by now, but Mum had taken over the kitchen and she was now adding the chopped leaves to the skillet. I had been typing from the breakfast table since who knows when.

Back to Biddy's tablet #5.

Claudia: *We keep the lessons here in the /lessons folder. There should be 4 subfolders. You can copy and paste this Lesson 1 folder as many times as you like. Make sure the audio files fit into 1 of the 3 /robot{1,2,3} folders.*

Bridget: *Noted*

I showed her the workings of the Robot interface. The four subfolders referred to /background, where background image files were kept, and /robot1, /robot2 and /robot3 collectively known as /robot{1,2,3}. The reference to screenshots was so that she could keep her own record of the tutorial.

Claudia: *You can take screenshots as many as needed*

Claudia: *And you can change the background*

Claudia: *And you can show/hide each robot*

Claudia: *And you can move and rotate the robots*

Claudia: *"Reset" puts a robot back in its original position*

Claudia: *"Message" is also found inside Robot. The message history - let me show you where to find it. Must close the Message window before the history shows up*

Bridget: *Abhh cool*

VBot has a folder attached to it and I opened that folder.

Claudia: *see: VBot > messages.txt*

Claudia: *wait, this is weird, the Avatar should speak*

Claudia: *let me close VBot and Avatar and [the Windows command line console] and then try again*

Claudia: *does VBot work now?*

Bridget: Yes 😊

Claudia: *“Custom” changes the colours of the robots*

Claudia: *Music has pretty much the same functions as Robot but there are no “robot{1,2,3}” subfolders and here is where you find the music folder: C:/Program Files/VBot/avatar/data/music*

Bridget: *Sounds good*

Claudia: *and then you can stop the music*

Claudia: *until I get an update from Artur, you'll need to resize the Message window yourself, but Message can be used in VBot and in Robot & Music as well.*

Bridget: *This is great!*

Claudia: *just before I go, when you prepare the lesson folders, be careful to have the MP3/WAV files directly under the “robot{1,2,3}” folders, no subfolders, because... you will see...*

Bridget: *Ohhhh*

Claudia: *the audio file inside the “monkey” folder doesn't play. So, when you separate out different robot characters, be sure to empty/dump the contents of the entire folder into /robot{1,2,3}.*

Bridget: *Sounds good! I restarted the other tablet and tried to open Avatar*

Bridget: *But the same thing happened*

Claudia: *Let me have a look*

Yikes. Artur's licenses should be error-free. I Skyped him.

Claudia: *Hi Artur, this machine has the following error: I open Avatar, the window opens but then closes. This is the error message...*

I sent him the error message which spanned hundreds of lines.

Artur: *the license may be not correct. can you please send me the hardware id again?*

Sure enough, I'd forgotten to regenerate the hardware ID file, which differs in every machine the virtual robot is installed on. I had sent Artur a hardware ID from the first laptop where the virtual robot was installed, not the one of tablet #6.

Claudia: *yep you're right. The correct hardware ID is 895dd7412026c9010b3c00e3ca64360d4 I found.*

Meanwhile, Biddy provided her updated TeamViewer credentials on WhatsApp.

Claudia: *Hi Biddy, turns out the hardware ID wasn't correct. I just sent the new hardware ID to Artur to generate a new license*

Bridget: *Abh icic [I see, I see]*

Claudia: *Try going through my ad hoc tutorial here in WhatsApp?*

Bridget: *it is very thorough, thanks*

I didn't think she understood me.

Claudia: *I'd like you to try it out yourself on the now-fixed tablet*  
Over to Skype.

Artur: *[attached file: license.lic] License for 895dd7412026c9010b3c00e3ca64360d4. Thanks Claudia.*

I replaced the hardware ID file on tablet #6 and returned to Skype.

Claudia: *thanks Artur, it works.*

Back to WhatsApp.

Bridget: *is it ready already? tablet 6?*

Claudia: *I think so. So I'd like you to try out what I just taught you*

Bridget: *sure*

Claudia: *practice makes perfect*

In the virtual robot "Avatar" subprogram, there were three robots: yellow, purple and blue from left to right. Biddy got it to play a lesson clip, and in Messages she put: "Hello Claudia!

Thanks for showing me how it works”. That was heartwarming. And then she changed the colour of the purple robot to pink.

Claudia: *I was expecting an orange robot ><*

Bridget: 🤔

Claudia: *If you hide a robot and then make that invisible robot play a podcast, you get radio*

Bridget: *Right! Or maybe it's talking far away*

Bridget: *I think it is fine*

Claudia: *Thanks for your cooperation today* 🥰

Bridget: *Not at all! Thanks for your help!*

Claudia: *You're very welcome!*

It was already 11:40 AM. Neither Bridget nor Artur nor my folks on Zoom had any idea of what I endured that morning. To make matters worse, my mum brought out the cooked beet greens with a most uncomely sullen face. “And you left your poor mother to tidy up after you.” I don’t mean to be a bad girl, I never wanted to be irresponsible, and I’d have loved to be left alone to go through the full experience, but some people just can’t be pleased, and I can’t always take their passive aggressive remarks to heart without hurting myself, especially when they voluntarily take on duties meant to be mine. But I was disappointed that I didn’t get to finish cooking beet greens by myself. The best things in life tend to be missed, don’t they?

The next day was an installation featuring a different tutor. I told her, “I only just gave Biddy the tutorial on the fly yesterday, like I was juggling breakfast and another Zoom meeting and the installation.”

She replied, “So busy!”

“She has absolutely no idea I was like a swan on a lake.



Very serene on top, but the feet...”

“Do we need to arrange another time slot?”

“I made sure today’s all yours,” I said. “Yesterday was a bit of a pickle.” In lieu of “pickle”, I could’ve said “beet”.

## INGREDIENTS

*Freshly harvested beet greens with stems*

*1-2 garlic cloves*

*1-2 onions (shallots)*

*1 chilli pepper (Capsicum annuum)*

*1 tsp salt (sea salt, finely granulated)*

*1 tsp pepper (white pepper)*

*1 tsp sugar (cane sugar)*

*½ tsp apple cider vinegar*

*½ tsp rosé wine*

*1 tbsp tomato ketchup*

*2 tbsp olive oil*

## Prep notes

- *Beet greens may be replaced with Swiss chard.*
- *Tomato ketchup may be replaced with other thick sauces that are sweet or umami. I used sweet Thai chilli sauce to avoid the high fructose corn syrup in the ketchup.*
- *Rosé wine is optional. It may be replaced with other liquors suitable for cooking.*
- *The items in brackets are for sticklers for precision. They were the exact ingredients I used.*

## METHOD

### Preparation time

15 minutes

## Cooking time

10 minutes or less

## Directions

- 1) Wash the beet greens thoroughly. Remove all soil and slime.
- 2) Detach the stems of the beet greens from the leaves, and dry them well. Both will be used in cooking.



- 3) Chop garlic, onions and chilli.
- 4) Heat a (non-stick) frying pan at medium heat. When the air above the pan feels sufficiently hot, add olive oil and swirl it so that the oil covers the base of the pan.
- 5) Add a small piece of garlic or onion to the oil. Once bubbles rapidly emerge from it, add chilli and the remaining garlic and onion. Stir-fry until the garlic and onion are soft and golden.
- 6) Add stems of beet greens. Stir-fry until soft.
- 7) Add leaves of beet greens. Stir-fry until soft.

8) Add salt and pepper, then tomato ketchup and apple cider vinegar. Mix well.

9) Add sugar, and then rosé wine. Immediately afterwards, cover the pan with a lid and put on low heat.

10) Take off the lid after 2 minutes. The dish is now ready to serve.







# **Sugar-Free Chocolate Brownies**

*by Alobear*



I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes at the age of 30 (doctors continually say, “But you’re so young!” Yes, thank you, that’s a very helpful observation...) and have spent the last 15 years trying to find tasty alternatives to sugary desserts.

When I was first diagnosed, the only sugar-free chocolate

was made with maltitol – which not only tastes disgusting, but also affects my blood glucose levels nearly as much as real sugar! So, no thanks!

And there wasn't really a sugar alternative that worked for baking – most of them just dissolved away when subjected to high heat, leaving a tasteless stodge.

But, a few years ago, Stevia came onto the scene – not only providing me with really good chocolate, but also giving me something I could use in baking!

My mum started me off on my sugar-free baking journey, but doing some experiments of her own in the field. The cheesecake is best relegated to the void, but the discovery that it was possible to make sugar-free crumble topping was a revelation! And her fruit fools are to die-for, even when she freezes them and then can't remember what type of fruit they contain.

My own experiments are generally rather hit-and-miss, because I don't tend to measure anything, so batches of cookies from the same recipe often turn out quite differently. But I can do peanut butter, chocolate chip, oat and raisin, to varying degrees of success.

My most recent discovery is that I can easily make large batches of sugar-free chocolate cheesecake filling (it's quicker than making a proper cheesecake with a biscuit base), though it has its dangers. The first time I made it, it took me three attempts, across two days, to eat one portion, so it's best approached with caution.

This particular recipe is the culmination of a lot of trial and error, and a lot of help from good friends.

I have a wonderful friend, Charlie, who runs amazing writing retreats and goes way above and beyond to make her writers feel welcome, loved and well-provided-for. She and I

regularly exchange ideas and recipes for sugar-free treats, and I introduced her to Stevia as a good baking ingredient.

I most recently attended one of her retreats in March 2022, during which she prepared individual sugar-free desserts for me, every single day of the week. She really is a marvel. And one of those desserts was the best sugar-free chocolate brownie I've ever tasted.

She sent me the recipe afterwards, and I've tweaked it a bit to make it my own.

The final touch comes from my wonderful friend, Juliet. I was talking with her, one day, about my sugar-free baking experiments and lamenting that my waistline was still in danger because of all the double cream I was consuming with my sugar-free crumble. She suggested I try oat cream – and it's marvellous! So, if you're looking for a lower-fat, but still really tasty, alternative to proper cream, that's my recommendation, and it goes really, really well with the brownies, especially when they're still warm.

## INGREDIENTS

*120g ground almond*

*60g rolled oats*

*45g unsweetened cocoa powder*

*2 tsp baking powder*

*2 tsp salt*

*60g melted butter*

*5 tbs water*

*3 eggs*

*120g stevia*

*2 tsp pure vanilla/ raspberry/ almond/ coconut extract, as preferred*

## METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees c

Prepare a muffin tray with 12 paper muffin cases

Mix all ingredients well

Spoon evenly into the 12 cases

Bake for 15 minutes (for gooey consistency) or 20 minutes  
(for firm texture)

Best served warm, with oat cream



## Banana Bread

*by Camy*



“You’re frittering,” the cat says as she sits on top of the kitchen cupboard nearest the sink, washing her face.

“I’m not. I’m panicking,” I say as I rummage through the fridge. “Frittering and panicking are not even in the same ballpark.”

“You should have done omelettes.”

“Possibly. Too late now though.” I say, gritting my teeth that the wee bundle of fur might have the right of it. A couple of eggs, a splash of milk some salt and pepper and a knob of

butter, and voila! An omelette. Add a bit of cheese and a slice of buttered toast and... I find myself drooling.

“You should employ me to run your life,” the cat says, and winks at me before jumping down and going out into the garden.

“Thanks,” I mutter at her tail as it disappears behind the wall by the rhubarb patch.

The phone rings. Loudly. It’s the landline; a rare occurrence in this age of mobiles and VOIP.

I ponder letting it go to answerphone, then pick up.

“Allo?!”

It turns out it is a company who want to build me a website for a domain I haven’t owned for the last two years. Every time they call I tell them to remove me from their database, and yet they still keep phoning. I let him get to the end of his spiel and just as he takes a breath to outline the cost of the various plans they have available, I ask:

“If I were to make a Banana loaf would you rather it had vanilla extract or cinnamon?”

A distinct pause follows.

“I am sorry sir?”

“It’s simple. Would you prefer cinnamon or vanilla in a banana loaf?”

“I am sorry sir, I don’t understand.”

This time the pause is longer and I can hear a muffled and somewhat irate confab before the line goes dead.

“C’est la vie!” I murmur, hanging up.

I grab a sheet of paper from the printer and find a pencil in the cutlery drawer. I’m always better with a list to follow, and as I don’t have a lot of time remaining before I have to submit to Cookbook-in-a-Day, I get to work.

List complete I cross out the first five lines which relate to

cleaning the kitchen before cooking in case of food poisoning. No time. The list of ingredients follows. Most I have, except that the ‘egg’ (the natural assumption being chicken) is a duck’s. Does it matter? Na. Duck eggs are rather scrumptious, if a little bigger.

Sadly, I screech to a halt at item eight: sugar. I had a bag of sugar up until a week ago when I discovered tiny little black insects happily living in it. I have friends who would say ‘yum! all the more protein.’ But I really don’t concur. The very bottom, bottom line is that if you live in a house you’re living with a lot of things you don’t necessarily know are living with you. Better than having noisy neighbours? Undoubtedly. But the upshot regarding item eight is I am sugarless... or am I? Somewhere about are a stack of sugar sachets from McDonalds. Now, where are they?

## INGREDIENTS

*125g butter*

*150g sugar*

*1 teaspoon of Vanilla extract or cinnamon powder – or both!\**

*1 beaten egg*

*2 bananas (ripe is better) mashed.*

*190g self raising flour*

*60ml milk*

*Pan (a thick bottom pan is best, but whatever you have is okay).*

*Loaf tin*

*Baking foil*

*\*Vanilla extract is yummy but, as it costs an arm and a leg, if you don’t have any then don’t worry. Cinnamon is equally as good, or add whatever you fancy. You can put in a lot of other*

*stuff like chopped nuts, desiccated coconut, or raisins. The basic recipe is good for any of them.*

*Serves as many as can grab a bit before it has all gone.*

## METHOD

Line the loaf tin with silver foil. You *can* grease it, but foil makes getting the loaf/bread/cake out at the end, a doddle. And, if you are careful, you don't have to wash-up the tin: always a boon!

Pre-heat the oven to 170C (150C for fan oven).

Put the pan on a medium heat and melt the butter and sugar.

Add the vanilla extract/cinnamon.

Remove from the heat and add in the mashed bananas, followed by the egg.

Fold in the flour.

Finally mix in the milk and then pour the whole lot into the foil lined loaf tin.

Put the loaf tin into the pre-heated oven for approximately 30-35 minutes. It's cooked when a skewer come out clean. Leave it to cool: more time to drool!

## Pistachio Pie

*by Katlovergilpin*



My grandmother loved to try different recipes. She found them in newspapers and on television, jotting them down in her damn near perfect cursive handwriting. She found her recipes through magazines while waiting at the doctor offices,

carefully clipping them, hoping no one caught her, tucking it into her handbag. Sometimes she got caught, giving the receptionist a little smile, making the comment, “my grandchildren would love this.” Sometimes we did, other times, we smile and nod our heads. I wasn’t a fan of her spaghetti with chili ensemble. I thought it was a little too much. The first time she made her Pistachio Pie, it was our family Christmas get-together. I was twelve, maybe thirteen years old. I remember how pretty it looked sitting on the table with white clouds of whipping cream and finely chopped pistachios. Me and my siblings (I have three) asked her repeatedly what is it, since we were used to the typical sugar cookies in shapes of Santa, Christmas trees, reindeer, and every once in a while, a shape we could never really identify. Grandma’s response, “you will see.” The anticipation was just too much for us kids. Not only did we have to wait to open presents, but now Grandma has a special secret treat. I think we were more excited to see what it is than we were about the presents. Okay, maybe not, but we were pretty stoked about it. We even took bets. My vote was chocolate cream. Roxanne, my middle sister, said it was just a boring pie. Heidi, the youngest of us girls, said lemon meringue. My little brother, Larry, he didn’t care. He’d eat just about anything. My father... Pistachios didn’t belong on a pie. If it’s not coconut cream or cherry, he’s not interested.

I will admit. We tried to find out the big secret. While I kept a lookout, Roxanne tried to scoop some of the whipped cream out of the way to get a look at the inside. Then we’d know and it would cure our curiosity. It didn’t work. Grandma layered that whipping cream so heavily, I thought maybe that’s all it is. A whipped cream pie. Not the most horrible thing in the world, I do love whipped cream, but there’s got to be more

to it, right?

There was. Dinner was served, and we devoured our main dishes in no time at all. We immediately started in, “can we have pie” only to get the response, “let your dinners settle. We don’t need you kids throwing up.” Settle? How much settling does food really take? And point taken. There was one Christmas where Roxanne ate everything she got her hands on. Christmas with the family is a feast of all sorts of yummy food. Most of the time we loaded up on so much junk, we never really ate much of the main course. Dad told her to stop, my aunt telling him she can eat as much as she wants. Roxanne did and then threw up all over the living room. They never did get the stain out completely from the carpet.

When it came time to cutting the pie, all of us kids gathered around the counter, watching my tiny grandmother (she says 5 foot, but I’m pretty sure she was only 4 feet 8 inches), pull a large knife from the wooden block on her counter. She made the first cut, the second, grabbing the pie spatula to remove the first piece. I was in awe, staring at the pretty colors of golden brown, white, the bright green filling, topped with the white clouds of yumminess. Roxanne wrinkled her nose and exclaimed, “what the hell is that?” Grandma held out the first piece, but neither one of us took it. Who’s brave enough to try the bright green pie? Who wants to be the guinea pig?

“I dare you.” Roxanne said, looking me dead in the eye.

I was not about to let my middle sister call me a chickenshit.

I took the first piece, giving my grandma a smile, and with fork in hand, I pushed it through. All eyes were on me when I brought that bite to my mouth, pleading it’s not lime or something. The bite went in, the flavors hit my tastebuds, and I

was hooked.

My siblings weren't fans of it. In fact, no one really was. I don't know why. It's the best pie in the world. I looked forward to when I would see that beautiful masterpiece on the dessert table. Grandma only made it for Christmas. Every Christmas, only a couple of slices would get eaten, Grandma covering it with the lid and shoving it into the refrigerator. When I became an adult, I would ask if I could take a piece home for later. Even though I would eat two slices sometimes because I would save room by eating less of the main course. Next thing I know, I was taking the leftover pie home. Carrying that pie to the car when it was time to leave, holding it on my lap because no way it's going to end up on the floorboard of my car. When I was planning my wedding, we decided on an outdoor venue and instead of catering, the family created their specialty food item, and had a buffet style dinner. My grandmother didn't get to pick her dish. The first thing out of my mouth, "I want pistachio pie." She laughed, nodding her head. She made it all right. In a large rectangular pan and it was beautiful.

Grandma passed away in September of 2003 from colon cancer. She fought hard, wanting to meet her first great grandson, and that first Christmas without her, I remember looking at the dessert table with so much sadness. She was vivacious and beautiful, with the sweetest smile, her eyes always happy when they rested on us. I remember thinking, not only will I miss her hugs, her smiles, her laughs, I will miss that damn pie. And no one had the recipe. It never occurred to me how easy it might be to make or that it was a recipe she found in a magazine. I never even thought about searching it up on the internet. I just came to grips it was gone for good. Like my grandma.



My husband was the one who cracked the code. There were some trial and errors to get the cream cheese part right and sometimes he cheated with a store-bought graham cracker crust, but the moment he got it, it was like she had made it herself. I don't want a cake for my birthday, I want Pistachio Pie. I make it for Christmas, displaying it proudly in the center of the table, knowing I will be the one taking it home. Roxanne's tastes have changed since and we now fight over the leftovers until we agree to split it 50/50. I make it now for my kids and they love it as much as I do.

I miss my grandmother. She supported me wholeheartedly when it came to my writing. Whenever I would stay with her for the weekend, she would break out her old clunky typewriter, some typing paper, and set it up on her dining room table. It didn't bother her I was making so much noise during her favorite show. She kept every stupid story I wrote, every little idea I jotted down on napkins. I have them now. Tucked in a little box I keep in my closet now.

My mother is the one who showed it to me. When she was going through some of her things, pulling the Reader's Digest from her trunk, turning to the crumpled, well soiled page. In my grandmother's immaculate cursive scrawl on the edge of the page, she had written, "Heather's favorite."

It sure was, Grandma, and it still is.

## *INGREDIENTS*

### **For the Graham Cracker Crust...**

*6 tablespoons melted butter*

*1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs*

*¼ cup sugar*

### **For the Cream Cheese Filling...**

*1 cup of cream cheese*  
*3 tablespoons of sugar*

### **For the Pistachio Pudding...**

*1 package of instant pistachio pudding*  
*1 1/2 cups cold Milk*

## **METHOD**

### **For the Graham Cracker Crust...**

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Using a fork, mix well until all ingredients are moistened. Pour into a 9" pie plate and press evenly on the bottom and sides. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before filling.

### **For the Cream Cheese Filling...**

Mix softened cream cheese with the sugar. You can use less or more sugar depending how sweet you like the cream cheese to taste.

### **For the Pistachio Pudding...**

Beat pudding mix and milk with whisk for 2 min.

### **Assembling the pie...**

Once everything had time to chill (except the cream cheese, that can be a pain to spread if it's too hard), spread a thin layer of the cream cheese into the pie crust. Once you have the desired amount of cream cheese, fill the rest of the pie crust with the still liquid pistachio pudding. After 10 minutes of cooling, spread a layer of whipping cream over the top, and sprinkle the top with crushed pistachios (optional).

Serve and enjoy!



## Dutch Babies

*by sameagleusa*



A Dutch baby is a very simple recipe for a baked puff pancake. It is easy and simple, and requires few ingredients. It may have roots in German baking, thus the misnomer Dutch (rather than Deutsche), but it became a popular breakfast in the American Northwest, and a small restaurant in Seattle

claims to have invented the dish in the first half of the 20th century. Naturally, I did not have any of this context for what I was about to eat.

I had decided to make a thorough quick-stop tour of extended family along the Pacific coast. By Week Two I found myself in Portland staying with a cousin and visiting an old friend.

This particular morning I had slept badly and woken early, and the stereotypical patter of rain on the windows gave the weird city a rhythm that matched the feeling of living in a raincloud.

It was just as well that I was awake, since the devils-bargain of technology had allowed my work to follow me, even through the long drives in the pouring rain thousands of miles from home. Eventually, as I clicked away on my phone, my cousin also stirred and graciously began breakfast. Coffee was quickly brewed, turning the rain from dreary to cozy, which is the second miracle of the bean-juice, after wakefulness. She asked me if I had ever had Dutch babies, and when I said I hadn't, she was excited to make it for me, as though she were letting me in on common and happy delicacy. I was reassured to find that I was not being invited into cannibalism, and I was amazed how quickly it flew together.

And indeed, what could be easier? Cast iron and butter; Eggs, flour, milk; salt and vanilla. In the oven it grew like it wanted to escape from the pan, but as it emerged to see the butter, powdered sugar, and lemon juice merrily heating on the stove, it calmed back down again into a more uniformly fluffy egg-layer.

Cut into triangles and drizzled with lemon-sugar, on a small ornate plate, the popover had a surprisingly cafe-like elegance, especially for something that was apparently so

simple. It was the perfect dish to begin a day of reconnecting. At other parts of my journey I learned to make some other food as well, including some simple scones prepared by my grandfather, and it got me thinking about the cultural transmission that occurs when we prepare food for guests, and even more especially when we teach others how to make it. Food is such an integral part of the mystery and joy of our lives, and is a practical and effective way to show care, and create connections with both the past and the future.

With both of these dishes, the Dutch baby and the scones, the recipes were both so simple as to invite development and character. Should you just sprinkle the lemon and sugar on, or make a sauce? Blueberries in the scones, or candied ginger? The variations can each tell a story for whomever you are making them, and add a little mile-marker on the culinary journey to go along with the physical one. Today I made Dutch Babies in a 12 inch cast-iron pan, so they were a little thinner, and I made a sauce with strawberry preserves, since I was out of lemons. It was delicious. I hope you enjoy them too, and anyone for whom you make them!

### *INGREDIENTS*

*2/3 cup milk*

*1/2 cup flour*

*1/2 tsp vanilla*

*1/4 tsp salt*

*3Tb butter*

*Lemon*

*Powdered Sugar*

### *METHOD*

Oven: 425 degrees Fahrenheit

Time:20-25min

10-inch cast-iron pan

- melt butter into pan
- mix ingredients and pour into buttered pan
- bake 20-25 min
- top w/ butter, lemon, powdered sugar