

Southern Living

# Best Holiday Recipes



Mom's Pecan Pie, page 31

Southern Living<sup>®</sup>  
Best Holiday  
Recipes



Edited by Julie Gunter

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Gorgonzola Butter
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*editor's favorite*

## CLASSIC ROAST TURKEY AND GRAVY

*For an evenly browned bird, turn the turkey's direction in the oven halfway through roasting, and baste often with pan drippings during the last 45 minutes. Make the gravy right in the roasting pan or transfer drippings to a saucepan.*

- 1 (12-pound) turkey
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 celery ribs with leaves
- 1 small onion, quartered
- Salt and pepper
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- Salt and pepper to taste

Garnishes: bay leaves, Lady apples, Cornbread Dressing Croquettes (page 11)

Remove giblets and neck from turkey; place in a large saucepan, adding bay leaf, 1 celery rib, and half the onion. Add 6 cups water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, 1 hour. Pour through a strainer. (You should yield 3 cups; add water if necessary to measure 3 cups.) Set aside.

Rinse turkey with cold water. Drain; pat dry. Sprinkle body cavity with salt and pepper; place remaining celery rib and onion inside cavity. Close cavity; tie ends of legs together with heavy string. Tuck wingtips under bird. Place turkey in a lightly greased roasting pan, breast side up. Rub turkey all over with 2 tablespoons softened butter; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper.

Roast, uncovered, at 325° until a meat thermometer reaches 180° in the thigh (about 3 hours), basting after 1 and 2 hours with remaining softened butter; turn turkey halfway through roasting. Baste frequently during last 45 minutes of cooking. Add 1 cup reserved turkey broth to roasting pan during last half hour of roasting. If turkey starts to brown too much, cover loosely with aluminum foil.

Let turkey rest in pan 5 minutes; carefully remove to a serving platter or carving board. Cover with foil, and let rest up to 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare gravy. Skim excess fat from pan drippings, if desired. Working over medium heat on the stovetop, whisk flour into pan drippings until smooth. Whisking constantly, gradually add remaining 2 cups turkey broth; simmer 5 to 10 minutes or until gravy is thickened. Season with salt and pepper. Serve gravy with turkey. Garnish turkey, if desired. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.



*editor's favorite*

## ROASTED TURKEY WITH WHITE WINE-SAGE SAUCE

*This turkey is butterflied so that it will roast quickly at a high temperature. It browns beautifully and still produces enough drippings for a delectable sauce. Brining is an extra step in this succulent recipe—well worth it when you taste the juicy results. Read about brining on page 7.*

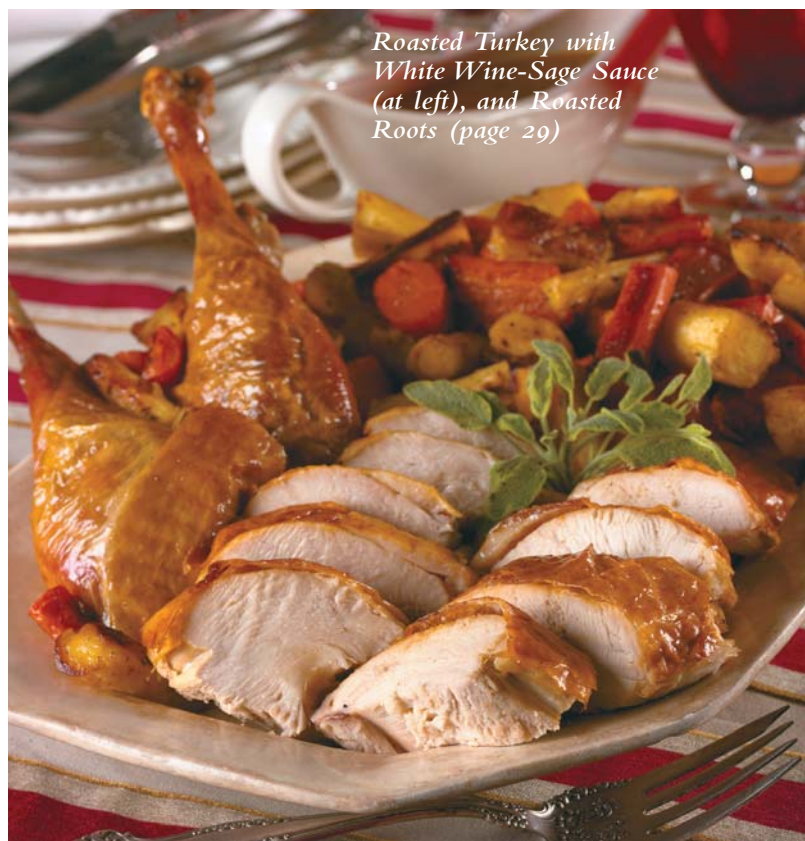
- 1 cup kosher salt
  - 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
  - ½ cup whole black peppercorns
  - 1 (13-pound) fresh turkey
  - 2 gallons water
  - 1 (10-pound) bag crushed ice
  - 2 tablespoons olive oil
  - 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
  - 1½ cups pinot grigio wine
  - ¼ cup fresh sage leaves, thinly sliced
  - ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
  - ¼ cup whipping cream
- Garnishes: fresh sage sprigs, Roasted Roots (page 29)

Combine first 3 ingredients in a bowl. Remove giblets and neck from turkey; reserve for other uses. Rinse turkey thoroughly with cold water. Drain body cavity well; pat dry. Rub 1 cup salt mixture over turkey and inside body and neck cavities.

Pour 1 gallon of water into a clean 28-quart cooler. Stir remaining salt mixture into water until dissolved. Place turkey, breast side down, in water. Add crushed ice. Pour remaining water over ice. Close cooler and soak turkey 12 hours.

Remove turkey from brine, discarding brine and unmelted ice. Rinse turkey for several minutes or until all traces of salt are gone; drain and pat dry with paper towels. Place turkey, breast side down, on a cutting board. Using heavy-duty kitchen shears, remove backbone, cutting down each side of bone. Open back of turkey; cut through breast bone with a sharp knife, splitting breast bone completely in half, but leaving breast skin and flesh intact. Turn turkey, breast side up, and press down firmly with heels of hands to flatten.

Place turkey, breast side up, on a rack in a large roasting pan. Tuck wings under, and press down on turkey breast to flatten as much as possible. Turn legs inward, placing knees against breasts. Brush or rub turkey with olive oil.



*Roasted Turkey with White Wine-Sage Sauce (at left), and Roasted Roots (page 29)*

Roast, uncovered, at 450° for 1 hour and 40 minutes or until a meat thermometer inserted in breast reaches 170°. Remove turkey to a carving board, reserving drippings in roasting pan. Cover turkey with aluminum foil; let rest 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare sauce. Place roasting pan over 2 burners of stovetop. Whisk flour into drippings until smooth. Gradually whisk wine into drippings. Bring to a simmer over medium heat; cook, whisking constantly, 5 minutes or until sauce thickens. Stir in sage, pepper, and whipping cream; simmer 2 minutes or to desired consistency.

Carve legs and thighs from turkey, and place on a serving platter. Carve each turkey breast half from turkey in 1 whole piece. Cut breast halves crosswise into slices. Arrange breast slices on serving platter. Garnish, if desired. Serve turkey with sauce. Yield: 12 servings.

**Note:** Using a cooler to brine your bird frees up the refrigerator for all the other holiday foods.

### . . . brining a turkey . . .

*Brining means to soak in a strong salt water solution. The benefits of brining are manifold.*

- The salty soak provides a tenderness cushion for the breast meat, so even if it overcooks by 10 degrees or so, it remains moist.
- The meat of a brined bird tastes pleasantly seasoned, which eliminates the need to season before and after roasting.
- Because the turkey sits overnight in a tub of salted water, brining also ensures that all parts of the turkey are at the same temperature. This is good insurance if you're roasting a previously frozen bird.
- The turkey meat absorbs water during the brining process. Water is a heat conductor and therefore expedites cooking. We tested this theory and found that indeed, a brined bird cooks faster than an unbrined one by about 30 minutes.

## BLUE CHEESE-STUFFED TURKEY BREAST

*Blue cheese lovers will indulge in this heady version of a holiday favorite. The dark brown, rich sauce highlights beer, and is the perfect complement to the turkey roll.*

- 6 ounces blue cheese, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped dried apples
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon dried sage, divided
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 (3-pound) boneless turkey breast
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt, divided
- 8 large shallots, peeled and quartered
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 (12-ounce) bottle Amber Draft Cider, divided  
(we tested with Woodchuck Amber Draft Cider)\*
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons water

Combine blue cheese, apples,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon pepper,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon sage, and garlic in a small bowl. Set aside.

Remove and discard skin from turkey breast. Lay breast flat on heavy-duty plastic wrap (with what would have been skin side down). Starting from center, slice horizontally through thickest portion of each side of breast almost to, but not through, outer edges. Flip cut pieces over to enlarge breast. Place heavy-duty plastic wrap over turkey, and pound breast to flatten to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thickness, using a meat mallet or rolling pin.

Spread blue cheese mixture evenly over turkey breast to within 1" of edges; roll up turkey breast, jellyroll fashion, starting with short side. Tie securely at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " intervals with heavy string. Place turkey roll, seam side down, in a lightly greased shallow roasting pan.

Combine  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper, remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sage, butter, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt in a small bowl. Rub evenly over turkey breast.

Toss shallots in olive oil. Arrange around turkey in pan.

Bake, uncovered, at  $350^{\circ}$  for 30 minutes. Baste turkey with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cider (pouring remaining amount from basting into pan). Bake 35 to 40 more minutes or until a thermometer registers  $170^{\circ}$ . Remove turkey, and cover with aluminum foil; let stand 10 minutes. Remove shallots, and set aside.

Add remaining cider to roasting pan, stirring to loosen any browned bits from bottom of pan. Pour mixture into a small saucepan. Add remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper, remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, and chicken broth. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium, and simmer 5 minutes. Combine cornstarch and water; add to cider mixture.

Return mixture to a boil, and cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute or until slightly thickened. Add shallots to sauce.

Remove string from turkey, and slice. Serve turkey with sauce. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

\* Single bottles of cider can often be purchased from a specialty beer and wine shop.





## MINTED PORK LOIN

- 3 medium-size sweet onions, chopped
  - 3 garlic cloves, minced
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil
  - ½ cup tightly packed fresh mint, chopped
  - ½ cup orange juice
  - 2½ teaspoons salt, divided
  - 2½ teaspoons freshly ground pepper, divided
  - 1 (4-pound) boneless pork loin roast
  - 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
  - ½ medium-size sweet onion, minced
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Garnishes: fresh rosemary, fresh mint, orange slices

Sauté chopped onion and garlic in 1 tablespoon hot oil in a large skillet 8 minutes. Stir in mint, orange juice, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring often, 5 minutes or until orange juice evaporates.

Butterfly roast by making a lengthwise and horizontal cut down center of roast, cutting to within ½" of other side. Open roast, and place between 2 sheets of heavy-duty plastic wrap; flatten to ½" thickness, using a meat mallet or rolling pin.

Spread onion filling over roast, leaving a 1" margin around edges. Roll up roast; tie at 1" intervals with string.

Combine remaining 2 teaspoons salt, 2 teaspoons pepper, rosemary, minced onion, and 1 tablespoon oil. Spread over roast. Place on a rack in a roasting pan.

Bake, uncovered, at 450° for 15 minutes. Reduce to 350°; bake 1 hour and 15 minutes or until a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 160°.

Remove string. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing. Garnish, if desired. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

## BAKED BURGUNDY HAM

- 1 (8-pound) smoked fully cooked ham half
  - 6 cups water
  - 2 cups cranberry-apple juice drink, divided
  - 2 cups Burgundy or other dry red wine, divided
  - 3 cups firmly packed dark brown sugar, divided
  - 2 (3") cinnamon sticks
  - 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- Garnishes: Seckle pears, fresh bay leaves

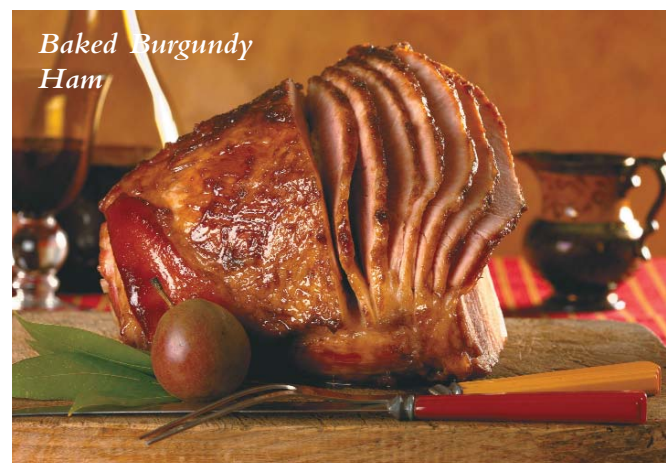
Place ham in a large Dutch oven. Add water, 1 cup cranberry-apple juice drink, 1 cup wine, 1 cup brown sugar, cinnamon sticks, and cloves.

Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes. Remove from heat; cool. Remove ham and marinade from Dutch oven, and place in a large nonmetallic bowl. Cover and chill 8 hours, turning once after 4 hours.

Remove ham from marinade; reserve 2 cups marinade, and add 1 cup brown sugar. (Discard remaining marinade.) Place ham in a lightly greased shallow roasting pan.

Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 1½ hours, basting ham occasionally with reserved marinade mixture. Bake 20 minutes more or until meat thermometer registers 140°, basting ham occasionally with pan juices. Remove ham to a carving board, reserving pan juices.

Combine pan juices, remaining 1 cup cranberry-apple juice, 1 cup wine, and 1 cup brown sugar in a saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, until sauce thickens slightly and coats the back of a metal spoon (about 40 minutes). Serve sauce with ham. Garnish, if desired. Yield: 12 servings.





## BEEF TENDERLOIN WITH CRANBERRY-PORT REDUCTION AND GORGONZOLA BUTTER

- 1 (3½-pound) beef tenderloin
- 3 cups port or other sweet red wine
- ½ cup beef broth
- 4 shallots, peeled and halved
- 4 garlic cloves
- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram
- ½ cup whole-berry cranberry sauce
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- Gorgonzola Butter
- Garnishes: roasted baby carrots, roasted pearl onions

Secure tenderloin at 2" intervals with heavy string. Place tenderloin in a large zip-top freezer bag.

Combine port and next 4 ingredients; stir well. Pour marinade over tenderloin; seal. Marinate in refrigerator 2 hours, turning bag occasionally.

Remove tenderloin from marinade, reserving marinade. Pour liquid through a wire-mesh strainer into a bowl; reserve garlic and discard solids. Set 1 cup marinade aside.

Place tenderloin on a lightly greased broiler pan. Insert a meat thermometer into thickest portion of tenderloin. Place tenderloin in a preheated 425° oven. Immediately reduce heat to 350°; bake, uncovered, for 1 hour or until thermometer registers 145° (medium rare) to 160° (medium) or to desired degree of doneness. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing. Remove string.

Combine reserved garlic and 1 cup reserved marinade in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 8 minutes or until reduced by half. Remove and discard garlic. Stir in cranberry sauce, salt, and pepper.

Bring to a boil; cover and simmer 1 minute. Garnish, if desired. Serve with Cranberry-Port Reduction and Gorgonzola Butter. Yield: 12 servings.

### GORGONZOLA BUTTER

- 4 ounces Gorgonzola or blue cheese
- ¼ cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh chives

Beat cheese and butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until blended. Stir in chives. Spoon into a crock, or if desired, spoon butter mixture onto plastic wrap. Shape butter into a 1" diameter log by folding wrap over mixture and rolling. (Work quickly to keep butter from melting.) Seal plastic wrap, and chill 4 hours or until firm. Yield: about ¾ cup.

**Note:** To roast the vegetables for garnish, drizzle lightly with olive oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast at 450° for 15 minutes, stirring once.

## PECAN CHICKEN WITH HONEY-MUSTARD SAUCE

- 3 tablespoons stone-ground mustard
- 4 skinned and boned chicken breasts
- 1 cup pecan pieces, coarsely ground
- ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1½ tablespoons butter
- 1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1½ cups whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons stone-ground mustard
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Spread 3 tablespoons mustard on each side of chicken. Combine ground pecans and red pepper in a shallow bowl. Gently coat chicken with pecan mixture.

Heat butter and oil in a large skillet until hot. Add chicken; cook over medium-high heat 2 minutes on each side or just until browned. Place in a greased 11" x 7" baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 15 minutes or until done.

Heat whipping cream in large skillet over medium-high heat until reduced by half (about 12 minutes). Stir in honey, 2 tablespoons mustard, and salt. Serve sauce with chicken. Yield: 4 servings.

# THE DRESSING

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- 11 Cornbread Dressing Croquettes
- 11 Cornbread Dressing Loaf
- 12 Dressing Croutons
- 13 Herb and Garlic Dressing Soufflé
- 13 Apple-Cabbage Dressing
- 14 Sourdough-Oyster Dressing
- 14 Fruited Wild Rice Dressing
- 15 Green Chile-Cheddar-Pecan Dressing
- 15 Andouille Dressing

This dressing recipe looks a little soupy when you mix it, but the end result is wonderfully moist. If you like yours a little drier, cut down on the chicken broth. And if you are "antisage" (some folks prefer poultry seasoning), you can reduce it, omit it, or substitute 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning. However, if you've based your judgment on the dried variety, try fresh sage before omitting it. It gives the dressing a more delicate flavor.

*editor's favorite*

## CORNBREAD DRESSING

- 1 cup butter or margarine, divided
- 3 cups white cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 7 large eggs
- 3 cups buttermilk
- 3 cups soft breadcrumbs (we tested with 6 slices Pepperidge Farm white sandwich bread)
- 2 medium onions, diced (2 cups)
- 1 large bunch celery, diced (3 cups)
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh sage
- 6 (10½-ounce) cans condensed chicken broth, undiluted
- 1 tablespoon pepper

Place ½ cup butter in a 13" x 9" pan; heat in oven at 425° for 4 minutes.

Combine cornmeal and next 5 ingredients; whisk in 3 eggs and buttermilk.

Pour hot butter into batter, stirring until blended. Pour batter into pan.

Bake, uncovered, at 425° for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool. Crumble cornbread into a large bowl; stir in breadcrumbs, and set aside.

Melt remaining ½ cup butter in a skillet over medium heat; add onion and celery, and sauté until tender. Stir in sage; sauté 1 minute. Stir vegetables, remaining 4 eggs, chicken broth, and pepper into cornbread mixture; pour into 1 lightly greased 13" x 9" baking dish and 1 lightly greased 8" square baking dish. Cover and chill 8 hours.

Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 1 hour and 5 minutes or until golden brown. Yield: 16 to 18 servings.

## ... dressing variations ...

**Cornbread Dressing Croquettes:** (photo on page 5) Use only 2 cans of chicken broth for this recipe. Shape unbaked dressing into croquettes, using a ¼ cup ice cream scoop. Place croquettes on lightly greased baking sheets, making sure not to crowd them on the sheets. Bake at 400° for 30 minutes or until well browned (and internal temperature reaches 160°). Cool on baking sheets 10 minutes. Yield: 4 dozen.

**Cornbread Dressing Loaf:** Use only 2 cans of chicken broth for this recipe. Fill a lightly greased 9" x 5" loafpan with 8 cups unbaked cornbread dressing. (Prepare Cornbread Dressing Croquettes with remaining dressing.) Press into pan firmly; invert dressing loaf onto a baking sheet, and remove pan. Bake at 375° for 1½ hours (or until internal temperature reaches 160°). Cool overnight. Slice into ½" slices. Place on lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 30 minutes. Cool completely on baking sheet. Top toasted cornbread slices with turkey and cranberry sauce and your favorite sandwich fixin's.



## DRESSING CROUTONS

*Serve these herby croutons with cranberry sauce or Ranch dressing as an appetizer or snack.*

- ¼ cup butter
- 2 celery ribs, chopped
- ½ large onion, chopped
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 5 cups crumbled cornbread
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 (8-ounce) package herb-seasoned stuffing mix
- 3 cups chicken broth

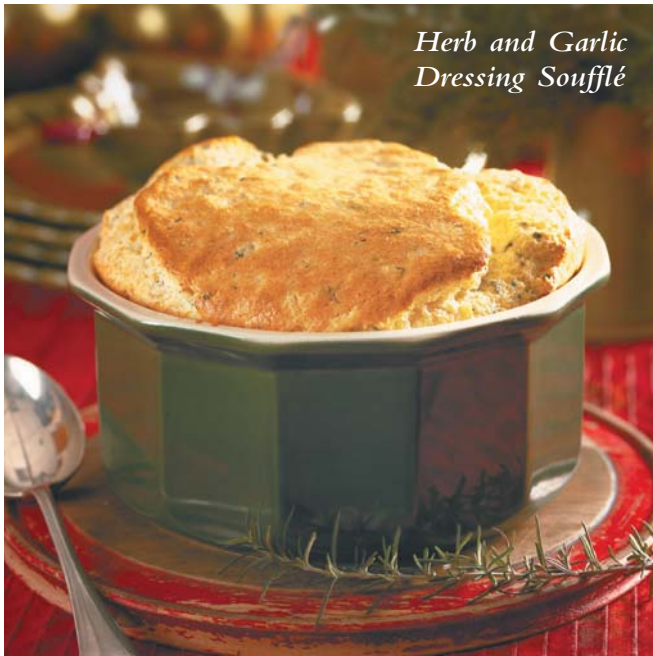
Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add celery and onions; cook 5 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat. Combine onion mixture, cornbread, and next 3 ingredients in a large bowl; mix well. Spread cornbread mixture into a lightly greased jellyroll pan.

Bake at 350° for 30 to 33 minutes or until set. Cool on a wire rack 30 minutes. Refrigerate 1 to 2 hours or until chilled.

Loosen edges of cornbread dressing with a sharp knife. Turn out onto a large cutting board. Cut into ¾" cubes. Place in a single layer on greased large baking sheets. Bake at 450° for 35 to 40 minutes, turning occasionally, or until well browned and crisp. Yield: 10 cups.



*Dressing Croutons*



## HERB AND GARLIC DRESSING SOUFFLÉ

To “heighten” the effect of this soufflé, use a 1½-quart soufflé dish, allowing the soufflé to puff for presentation.

- 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 2½ cups soft breadcrumbs, divided
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 large shallots, minced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ cup chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 6 large eggs, separated
- 1 cup milk

Brush a 1½- or 2-quart soufflé dish with 2 tablespoons butter; dust with ½ cup breadcrumbs.

Melt remaining 1 tablespoon butter in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and shallots; cook 2 minutes or until tender. Stir in parsley and next 6 ingredients.

Beat cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Add yolks, beating well. Add garlic mixture; beat well.

Heat milk in a large heavy saucepan over medium heat until tiny bubbles begin to appear around edges of pan. Gradually whisk about one-fourth of hot milk into yolk mixture; add to remaining hot milk. Cook over medium heat 4 minutes or until thickened and thermometer registers 160°, whisking constantly.

Transfer yolk mixture to a large bowl; gently fold in remaining 2 cups breadcrumbs.

Beat egg whites at high speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form; gently fold into yolk mixture.

Pour egg mixture into prepared dish. Bake at 350° for 30 to 35 minutes or until puffed and golden. Serve immediately. Yield: 8 servings.

## APPLE-CABBAGE DRESSING

- 1½ (16-ounce) loaves sliced rye bread (we tested with Pepperidge Farm)
- ¾ pound coarsely chopped cabbage (about ½ small)
- 2 medium cooking apples, diced (about 2¼ cups)
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 celery ribs, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup butter or margarine, melted and divided
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup apple cider or apple juice
- 1 cup chicken broth

Place bread slices in single layers on 2 baking sheets. Bake at 325° for 25 minutes or until almost crisp, using both racks in oven. Tear bread into small pieces, and place in a 4-quart bowl.

Bring 8 cups water to a boil in a Dutch oven; add cabbage, and cook, uncovered, 3 minutes. Drain and immediately run cold water over cabbage; pat dry with paper towels. Add to bread in bowl, and set aside.

Cook apple, onion, celery, and garlic in ¼ cup butter in a large skillet over medium heat 10 minutes or until tender, stirring often. Add apple mixture to cabbage; stir in salt and pepper.

Pour cider and broth over bread mixture, tossing gently. Spoon mixture into a buttered 13" x 9" baking dish; drizzle with remaining ¼ cup melted butter. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 40 minutes or until lightly browned. Yield: 12 servings.

## SOURDOUGH-OYSTER DRESSING

- 8 cups cubed sourdough bread (about 8 slices)
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 4 celery ribs, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 (8-ounce) container shucked oysters, drained and coarsely chopped (about 2 dozen oysters)
- ½ cup whipping cream
- 8 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 (6-ounce) jar marinated artichoke hearts, drained and chopped

Arrange bread cubes on 2 baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until dry and golden.

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat, add onion, celery, and garlic. Sauté 6 to 8 minutes or until tender. Add salt and next 3 ingredients; cook 1 minute. Remove from heat.

Combine bread cubes, oyster mixture, bacon, parsley, and artichoke hearts in a large bowl, tossing well. Spoon dressing into a greased 11" x 7" baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 45 minutes. Yield: 8 servings.

## FRUITED WILD RICE DRESSING

*Dried fruits add sweetness and color to this dressing that's equally at home with turkey, chicken, or pork.*

- 1 (6-ounce) package long-grain and wild rice mix
- 6 cups (½" cubes) country-style bread (we tested with Italian ciabatta)
- 1 pound ground pork sausage
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 4 celery ribs, chopped
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 cup dried apricots, coarsely chopped
- ¾ cup dried cherries
- ½ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup chicken broth



*Fruited Wild Rice Dressing*

Prepare rice mix according to package directions. Transfer to a large bowl, and fluff with a fork. Set aside.

Place bread cubes on a large-rimmed pan and toast at 325° for 20 minutes or until dry. Set aside.

Cook sausage in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring until it crumbles and is well browned; drain.

Sauté onion and celery in butter in a large skillet over medium heat until tender.

Combine rice, bread, sausage, sautéed vegetables, dried fruit, parsley, salt, and pepper in a large bowl; toss well. Drizzle broth evenly over dressing. Toss well. Transfer dressing to a lightly greased 3-quart baking dish.

Bake, covered, at 375° for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 25 to 30 more minutes or until browned. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

*editor's favorite*

## GREEN CHILE-CHEDDAR-PECAN DRESSING

*This dressing sports favorite Southern flavors from pecans and cornbread, and gets a kick from green chiles.*

- 1 cup pecan pieces
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1 (8-ounce) package shredded sharp Cheddar cheese, divided
- 7 cups cornbread crumbs\*
- 6 cups biscuit crumbs (we tested with Pillsbury Frozen Buttermilk Biscuits)
- 1 (15.25-ounce) can sweet whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 (4.5-ounce) can chopped green chiles, drained
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3½ cups chicken broth
- Garnish: fresh cilantro

Combine first 6 ingredients in a small bowl, tossing well. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until toasted; set aside.

Combine ½ cup cheese and next 9 ingredients in a large bowl. Add broth, stirring just until moistened. Spoon dressing into a lightly greased 13" x 9" baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup cheese and reserved pecans.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 50 to 55 minutes or until set and lightly browned. Garnish, if desired. Yield: 12 servings.

\* 1 (28-ounce) package of frozen Sister Schubert's Southern Cornbread is equivalent to the 7 cups of cornbread crumbs needed in this recipe. Otherwise, look for baked cornbread in your supermarket deli.

*editor's favorite*

## ANDOUILLE DRESSING

*An andouille-laced dressing highlights the Cajun trinity of celery, onion, and green pepper.*

- ½ cup butter
- 1 (1-pound) package Cajun-style cooked andouille sausage, diced
- 3 cups diced onion
- 2 cups diced celery
- 2 cups diced green bell pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons rubbed sage
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 (16-ounce) package cornbread stuffing mix
- 4 cups chicken broth

Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage; cook 4 minutes or until browned. Transfer sausage to a large bowl, reserving drippings in skillet.

Add onion and next 7 ingredients to skillet; cook 8 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add vegetables and stuffing mix to sausage. Add broth, stirring just until moistened.

Spoon dressing into a greased 15" x 10" roasting pan.

Bake, covered, at 350° for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake 20 more minutes. Yield: 12 servings.



*Green Chile-Cheddar-Pecan Dressing*



# THE CRANBERRIES

- 17 Cranberry-Orange Sauce
- 17 Iced Cranberry Sauce
- 17 Brie Balls with Spicy Cranberry Dipping Sauce
- 18 Broccoli Slaw with Cranberries
- 18 Cranberry and Apple Relish
- 18 Cranberry-Raspberry Conserve
- 20 Mesclun Salad with Cranberries and Avocado
- 21 Cranberry Waldorf Salad
- 21 Cranberry Mini Muffins
- 21 Cranberry Ice

**W**e call for fresh cranberries, dried cranberries, and sweetened dried cranberries in these recipes. For the sweetened version, we tested with Craisins. Each one serves a distinct flavor purpose in each dish.

*make ahead*

### CRANBERRY-ORANGE SAUCE

*This cranberry sauce recipe makes a lot, so you'll have plenty to serve alongside turkey, on sandwiches, or as a sauce drizzled over cheesecake or ice cream.*

- 2 (12-ounce) packages fresh cranberries
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons grated orange rind
- ⅓ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 (3") cinnamon sticks
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 large navel oranges, peeled, sectioned, and chopped
- ¼ cup port wine

Stir together first 8 ingredients in a large saucepan, bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring often. Reduce heat, simmer 15 minutes or until cranberries pop and mixture starts to thicken, stirring often. Remove from heat. Discard cinnamon sticks. Stir in wine. Cool. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Yield: 6¼ cups.

*make ahead*

### ICED CRANBERRY SAUCE

*For a refreshing twist on the classic cranberry condiment, try this slushy cranberry sauce. Serve it in little stemmed cordials or other tiny glasses.*

- 2 cups water
- 1 (12-ounce) package fresh cranberries
- 1½ cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

Combine water and cranberries in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, boil 8 to 10 minutes or until skins pop. Remove from heat. Process cranberries, in

batches, in a food processor until coarsely pureed. Press pureed cranberries through a wire-mesh strainer into a bowl, discarding solids. Add sugar and remaining 4 ingredients to cranberry puree, stirring until sugar dissolves.

Divide cranberry sauce evenly among 6 (6-ounce) custard cups or ramekins. Cover and freeze until firm. Remove from freezer 10 to 15 minutes before serving. Yield: 6 servings.

**Cranberry Spritzer:** For a festive drink, thaw any unused portions of Iced Cranberry Sauce and mix with ginger ale or seltzer.

*editor's favorite*

### BRIE BALLS WITH SPICY CRANBERRY DIPPING SAUCE

*Serve these Parmesan-crusting fried cheese balls right after frying so the centers are warm and oozy.*

- 2 (8-ounce) rounds Brie
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1½ teaspoons minced garlic
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups Italian-seasoned breadcrumbs
- Vegetable oil
- Spicy Cranberry Dipping Sauce

Trim rind from Brie. Combine Brie and next 3 ingredients in a large bowl; mix well with hands until combined. Shape cheese mixture into 1" balls. Dip balls in egg; dredge in flour. Dip again in egg; roll in breadcrumbs, pressing firmly so crumbs adhere. Place brie balls on wax paper; chill at least 1 hour.

Pour oil to a depth of 2" in a Dutch oven; heat to 350°. Fry cheese balls, in batches, until golden, about 1 minute; drain on paper towels. Serve immediately with Spicy Cranberry Dipping Sauce. Yield: 32 balls.

### SPICY CRANBERRY DIPPING SAUCE

- 1 (16-ounce) can whole-berry cranberry sauce
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- 1 tablespoon orange juice

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl; stir well. Yield: 1¾ cups.



*Broccoli Slaw  
with Cranberries*

*editor's favorite • make ahead*

### **BROCCOLI SLAW WITH CRANBERRIES**

*Serve this pretty slaw as a side dish for turkey or ham or with a turkey sandwich or rollup.*

- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon mustard seeds
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 (12- or 16-ounce) package broccoli slaw mix
- 2 Gala apples, chopped
- 1 cup dried cranberries

Combine first 4 ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil; boil 1 minute or until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, and cool; whisk in oil. Combine slaw mix, apples, and cranberries in a large bowl. Pour vinaigrette over broccoli slaw, and toss well. Cover and chill. Serve with a slotted spoon. Yield: 8 cups.

*make ahead • quick & easy*

### **CRANBERRY AND APPLE RELISH**

*Spoon this tart relish over roast turkey or grilled pork tenderloin.*

- 2 Granny Smith apples, chopped
- 4 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- 2 cups dried cranberries
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and chopped
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar

Combine apple and lime juice in a medium bowl, tossing well; drain.

Combine apples, cranberries, and remaining ingredients in a food processor, and pulse 6 to 8 times or until finely chopped. Cover and chill at least 1 hour. Yield: 4½ cups.

*editor's favorite • quick & easy*

### **CRANBERRY-RASPBERRY CONSERVE**

*Hazelnuts are a flavor surprise in this gift-worthy topping.*

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen raspberries in syrup, thawed and undrained
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 1¾ cups sugar
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ cup finely chopped hazelnuts
- 1½ tablespoons grated orange rind

Process thawed raspberries in a blender or food processor 10 seconds or until pureed, stopping to scrape down sides. Pour berries through a wire-mesh strainer into a medium saucepan; press with the back of a spoon against sides of strainer to squeeze out juice, discarding solids.

Stir in cranberries; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 6 minutes or until skins pop.

Stir in sugar and remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 2 minutes or until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Spoon conserve into 3 (½-pint) jars, filling to ¼" from top. Cover with metal lids, and screw on bands. Store in refrigerator. Yield: 3 half-pints.

The Cranberries



*Cranberry and Apple  
Relish over grilled  
pork tenderloin*



*Mesclun Salad with  
Cranberries and  
Avocado*

*editor's favorite • quick & easy*

### MESCLUN SALAD WITH CRANBERRIES AND AVOCADO

- 2 (5-ounce) bags gourmet mixed salad greens with herbs (we tested with Dole)
- 2 ripe avocados, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup walnut halves, toasted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup blush wine vinaigrette (we tested with Briannas)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Toss salad greens, avocado, walnuts, and cranberries in a serving bowl. Lightly dress salad with desired amount of vinaigrette; toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with pepper; toss again before serving. Yield: 6 servings.

*make ahead • quick & easy*

### CRANBERRY WALDORF SALAD

*This tangy, lightly dressed salad is a great accompaniment with a casual holiday meal.*

- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1½ tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon grated lime rind
- 1½ tablespoons lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 3 medium Granny Smith apples, chopped
- 1 ripe red pear, chopped
- 1 cup sweetened dried cranberries (we tested with Craisins)
- 1½ cups coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts, toasted
- 1½ cups chopped celery
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows

Whisk together first 5 ingredients in a large bowl. Add apple and next 4 ingredients to sour cream mixture; toss well. Cover and chill salad at least 1 hour. Stir in marshmallows just before serving. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

### CRANBERRY MINI MUFFINS

*These petite not-so-sweet muffins are perfect for Christmas morning. Leftovers freeze well for up to a month.*

- 2 cups self-rising flour
- 1 (8-ounce) container sour cream
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 1 (5-ounce) package sweetened dried cranberries (we tested with Craisins)
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Combine first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; stir well. Stir in cranberries.

Spoon batter into lightly greased miniature (1¾") muffin pans, filling full.

Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle on muffins.

Bake at 400° for 19 to 20 minutes or until golden. Serve warm. Yield: 32 muffins.

*editor's favorite • make ahead*

### CRANBERRY ICE

*Here's a very easy, sweet, and light make-ahead dessert. Serve shavings of the rosy combo in stemmed glasses.*

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup sugar
- 2½ cups cranberry juice cocktail or cranberry-apple juice drink

Stir together water and sugar in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Cool.

Stir in cranberry juice. Pour mixture into an 8" square pan. Cover and freeze 4 hours or until frozen. Remove from freezer; let stand 10 to 15 minutes. Shave ice by scraping with a fork. Scoop ice into glasses, and serve immediately, or store in an airtight container in freezer until ready to serve. Yield: 7 cups.

*Cranberry Ice*



# THE SIDE DISHES

- 23 Parmesan-Rosemary Potatoes
- 23 Homestyle Mashed Potatoes
- 24 Garlic-Gruyère Mashed Potatoes
- 24 Mashed Potatoes with Fennel
- 24 Cider Mashed Sweet Potatoes
- 25 Sweet Potato Gratin with Chipotle Sauce
- 25 Sweet Potato Casserole
- 25 Sweet Potato Hash Browns
- 26 Roasted Broccoli with Buttered Walnuts
- 26 Brussels Sprouts and Wild Rice
- 26 Honey-Glazed Cranberry Carrots
- 27 Peas with Browned Butter, Caramelized Onions, and Prosciutto
- 27 Creamed Onion Gratin
- 29 Roasted Roots
- 29 Fontina Grits and Collards
- 29 Four-Cheese Spinach Macaroni

## PARMESAN-ROSEMARY POTATOES

*The cheese and herb coating makes these potatoes addictive. Use the coating for chicken breasts or pork chops, too.*

- 3 pounds baking potatoes
- 3 cups cold water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter, melted
- Parmesan-Rosemary Coating
- Salt
- Garnish: fresh rosemary

Wash potatoes. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise; slice potato halves crosswise into half moon-shaped wedges.

Combine water and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl; add potatoes, and let stand 5 minutes. Drain well; spread potatoes on paper towels to absorb water. Pat dry.

Dip potato wedges in butter; roll in Parmesan-Rosemary Coating. Place in a single layer on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 400° for 40 minutes or until potatoes are tender and golden brown. Sprinkle lightly with salt before serving. Garnish, if desired. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

### PARMESAN-ROSEMARY COATING

- 1 cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup fine, dry breadcrumbs
- 2½ tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Yield: 1¾ cups.

### . . . solid gold . . .

*If you're unfamiliar with Yukon gold potatoes, there's a reason. Yukon golds are relatively new to North America; they were first introduced in 1980 . . . lucky for us!*

Yukon gold potatoes are a yellow-fleshed potato, known for their buttery flavor and creamy texture. Quite versatile, they can be used for baking, broiling, or frying—but we particularly like them mashed.



*Parmesan-Rosemary Potatoes*

## HOMESTYLE MASHED POTATOES

*One of the keys to fluffy spuds is returning the cooked potatoes to the warm, dry pan you cooked them in for mashing.*

- 2 pounds medium potatoes, peeled and quartered (we tested with Yukon gold)
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- ½ cup whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Cook potato in boiling water to cover 20 to 25 minutes or until very tender. Drain well, and return potato to pan. Add butter, and mash until butter melts, using a potato masher. Add cream, salt, and pepper; mash to desired texture. Yield: 6 servings.





## GARLIC-GRUYÈRE MASHED POTATOES

*Gruyère cheese makes these mashed potatoes rich. Sour cream, garlic, and green onions give them unforgettable status.*

- 3 pounds Yukon gold potatoes (about 7 large)
- ¼ cup butter or margarine, softened
- ¾ cup hot milk
- ½ cup sour cream
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Gruyère cheese or other Swiss cheese
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced

Garnishes: additional diagonally sliced green onions, shredded Gruyère cheese

Peel potatoes, if desired; cut into chunks. Cook in boiling water to cover 15 to 20 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Return potatoes to pan. Add butter.

Mash with a potato masher; stir in hot milk and next 4 ingredients. Mash again to desired texture.

Stir in 1 cup cheese and 2 thinly sliced green onions. Garnish, if desired. Yield: 8 servings.

## MASHED POTATOES WITH FENNEL

*Cooked fennel takes on a slightly sweet note that adds a sublime flavor to these creamy potatoes.*

- 3 pounds fennel
- 1½ cups half-and-half
- 1½ pounds Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cubed (about 4 medium)
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Trim bases from fennel bulbs; reserve fronds for garnish. Cut each bulb in half through base. Cut out core from each half. Slice fennel lengthwise into ¼" slices; cut slices in half crosswise.

Combine fennel and half-and-half in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer 25 to 30 minutes or until fennel is very soft. Drain fennel, reserving cooking liquid. Place fennel and 2 tablespoons cooking liquid in a blender or food processor; process 30 to 45 seconds or until smooth.

Meanwhile, bring potato and water to cover to a boil in a large saucepan; cook 15 to 20 minutes or until tender. Drain potatoes, and return to saucepan. Add butter, fennel puree, salt, and pepper; mash well with a potato masher or hand mixer until smooth. For creamier potatoes, add reserved cooking liquid, 1 tablespoon at a time, to desired texture. Garnish with chopped fennel fronds, if desired. Yield: 4 cups.

## CIDER MASHED SWEET POTATOES

*Apple cider enhances this simple sweet potato side dish.*

- 2 pounds sweet potatoes (about 3 large)
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 large Braeburn apple, peeled and coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Dash of nutmeg

Pierce potatoes several times with a fork. Bake at 375° for 1 hour or until very soft; cool slightly.

Meanwhile, bring apple cider and chopped apple to a boil in a small saucepan; reduce heat, and simmer 12 to 15 minutes or until apple is very soft (apple may begin to lose its shape). Drain apple, reserving cooking liquid. Return liquid to saucepan; simmer over medium heat for 6 to 8 more minutes or until thickened to the consistency of syrup.

Cut potatoes in half lengthwise; scoop out pulp, and place in a large bowl. Discard shells. Add cooked apple to potatoes; mash with a potato masher until blended. Add butter and next 4 ingredients; continue mashing, adding reserved cooking liquid, until potatoes are desired texture. Serve hot. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

## SWEET POTATO GRATIN WITH CHIPOTLE SAUCE

*Smoky chipotle peppers make this scalloped potato casserole memorable.*

- 3½ pounds sweet potatoes
- ¼ cup butter
- ¾ cup chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups half-and-half
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups (12 ounces) shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1½ tablespoons finely chopped chipotle peppers in adobo sauce (about 3 chiles)

Cook sweet potatoes in boiling water to cover 20 minutes or until barely tender. Drain and let cool slightly. Peel potatoes, and cut crosswise into ½" slices. Layer potatoes in a lightly greased 13" x 9" baking dish or oval gratin dish.

Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat; add onion and garlic, and sauté until tender. Sprinkle flour over onion mixture; cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Gradually add half-and-half, stirring constantly until thickened and bubbly. Stir in salt, cumin, and pepper. Add cheese and chipotle peppers, stirring until cheese melts.

Pour cheese sauce over potatoes. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 45 minutes or until lightly browned and bubbly. Let stand 15 minutes before serving. Yield: 12 servings.

 *editor's favorite*

## SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

*Blending this sweet potato filling in a food processor is the key to creamy results. This simple, classic Southern side dish earned our highest rating.*

- 3½ cups cooked mashed sweet potatoes\*
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3½ cups miniature marshmallows

Process first 3 ingredients in a food processor until very smooth, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, sugar, and vanilla; process until blended. Pour into a greased 13" x 9" baking dish.

Cover and bake at 350° for 15 minutes; uncover and sprinkle with marshmallows. Bake, uncovered, 20 more minutes or until marshmallows are toasted. Serve hot. Yield: 8 servings.

\* For best results, we recommend buying and cooking 3 large, deep orange sweet potatoes. Cut them in half crosswise; boil them in their skins 35 to 37 minutes or until very tender. Cool and slip potatoes out of their skins. Mash with a potato masher to equal 3½ cups. In a pinch, use 2 (29-ounce) cans candied yams as a substitute. Each (29-ounce) can yields 2 cups mashed.

## SWEET POTATO HASH BROWNS

*To save a little time, substitute precooked bacon for the bacon slices, if desired.*

- 1 teaspoon butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 1 medium-size baking potato, peeled and shredded
- 1 medium-size sweet potato, peeled and shredded
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 4 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled

Melt butter and 1 tablespoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion; sauté 15 minutes or until golden. Add brown sugar, and cook 5 minutes, stirring often.

Stir together onion, potatoes, and next 5 ingredients in a large bowl.

Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Drop ¼ cupfuls potato mixture into skillet for each pancake. Cook pancakes, in batches, 5 minutes on each side or until golden, pressing down with a spatula to flatten. Serve warm. Yield: 8 pancakes.



## ROASTED BROCCOLI WITH BUTTERED WALNUTS

- 3 pounds fresh broccoli
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup walnut halves
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 lemon, halved

Cut broccoli into 3" lengths; cut thick pieces in half lengthwise. Place in a roasting pan, and drizzle with olive oil; toss to coat well. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast at 500° for 14 minutes, stirring once after 8 minutes.

Meanwhile, toast walnuts in melted butter in a skillet over medium-high heat 5 minutes or until fragrant.

Spoon broccoli into a serving bowl. Squeeze cut lemon over broccoli, tossing well. Stir in walnuts and butter. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

## BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND WILD RICE

*Quick-cooking wild rice is a real time-saver. You'll need about 3 cups cooked rice for this recipe.*

- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1 (1/2-ounce) package dried morel mushrooms
- 2 (16-ounce) packages fresh Brussels sprouts
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 (6-ounce) package uncooked wild rice
- 1/4 cup butter, divided
- 1/2 cup chopped leeks
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Combine water and mushrooms in a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 2 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand 30 minutes. Drain mushrooms, reserving 1 cup liquid. Coarsely chop mushrooms.

Wash Brussels sprouts thoroughly, and remove discolored leaves. Trim stem ends, and cut in half; set aside.

Combine chicken broth and 1 cup reserved liquid in same saucepan; bring to a boil. Add rice and mushrooms. Cover and simmer 50 minutes. Remove from heat; drain.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat; add leeks. Sauté 3 minutes or until tender. Remove from skillet; set aside. Melt remaining butter in skillet over medium-high heat; add Brussels sprouts, and sauté 5 minutes or until browned. Add 3 tablespoons water; cover and cook 5 to 6 minutes or until Brussels sprouts are fork-tender, adding more water as necessary.

Add cooked rice, leeks, salt, and pepper; stir gently. Cook over medium-low heat just until thoroughly heated. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

## HONEY-GLAZED CRANBERRY CARROTS

*A simple carrot dish like this is a bonus for the busy holiday cook.*

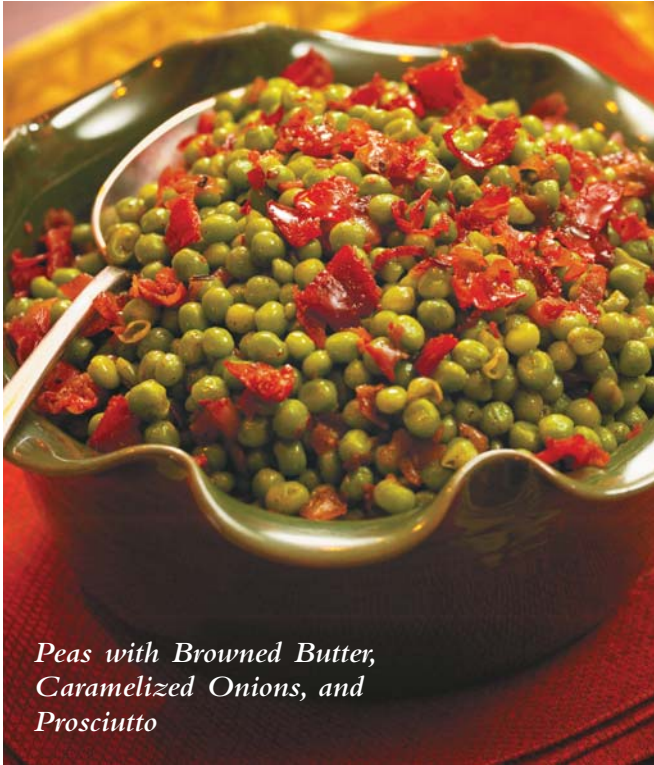
- 1/2 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 2 pounds carrots

Combine first 5 ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Boil 15 to 20 minutes or until glaze is thickened and coats the back of a spoon.

Meanwhile, peel carrots, and slice into 1/4" diagonal slices. Place carrot in a large saucepan with water to cover. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook 12 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Add carrot to honey-cranberry mixture; toss well. Yield: 4 cups.



*Honey-Glazed  
Cranberry  
Carrots*



*Peas with Browned Butter, Caramelized Onions, and Prosciutto*

## PEAS WITH BROWNED BUTTER, CAMELIZED ONIONS, AND PROSCIUTTO

*Peas get dressed up here with browned butter and Italian ham.*

- 1 (16-ounce) package frozen sweet peas
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 3 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto
- ¼ cup butter, divided
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1½ cups chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Cook peas according to package directions, substituting ½ cup broth for water. Drain; set aside in a serving bowl, and keep warm.

Cook prosciutto in a large skillet over medium-high heat until crisp. Remove prosciutto from pan; cool and coarsely crumble.

Melt 1 tablespoon butter with oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook 28 minutes or until golden, stirring occasionally.

While onions cook, melt remaining 3 tablespoons butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Cook 5 minutes or until butter is browned, stirring occasionally. Stir sugar, vinegar, thyme, and pepper into onion; cook 2 more minutes. Remove from heat. Stir caramelized onion and crumbled prosciutto into peas. Pour browned butter over peas. Serve warm. Yield: 4 servings.

## CREAMED ONION GRATIN

*These are some of the best creamed onions ever to pass through our Test Kitchens. With a crusty top and white Cheddar sauce—what's not to love?*

- 2 (10-ounce) packages fresh pearl onions, peeled
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups half-and-half
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground mustard
- Dash of ground nutmeg
- 1½ cups (6 ounces) shredded white Cheddar cheese, divided
- 1¼ cups fresh breadcrumbs\*
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

Place onions in a large saucepan; add water to cover. Bring to boil; reduce heat, and simmer 6 to 8 minutes or until onions are just tender. Drain well. Set aside.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a heavy saucepan over low heat; add flour, stirring until smooth. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Gradually add half-and-half; cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thickened. Add salt and next 3 ingredients. Add 1 cup shredded cheese; stir until cheese melts. Gently stir in drained onions. Pour onion mixture into a lightly greased 1-quart baking dish. Sprinkle evenly with remaining ½ cup shredded cheese.

Toss breadcrumbs with melted butter and thyme until crumbs are well coated. Sprinkle evenly over cheese.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes or until thoroughly heated and top is golden. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

\* Pulse 3 bread slices in a mini food chopper or food processor. It should yield 1¼ cups breadcrumbs.

*Roasted Roots*



## ROASTED ROOTS

*If your parsnips are wide at the root end, cut chunks in half lengthwise for even cooking. Be careful not to crowd veggies in the pan—it will hinder their browning. Use two pans, if necessary, to prevent crowding.*

- 1½ pounds carrots, peeled and cut into 1½" chunks
- 1½ pounds parsnips, peeled and cut into 1½" chunks
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients in a shallow roasting pan or broiler pan; toss well, and spread in a single layer. Roast at 475° for 30 minutes, stirring after 25 minutes. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

 *editor's favorite • quick & easy*

## FONTINA GRITS AND COLLARDS

*This recipe reflects a New South twist on collards.*

- ¾ pound collard greens
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup finely chopped sweet onion
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1½ cups chicken broth
- 1¼ cups heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup uncooked quick-cooking grits
- ½ pound fontina cheese, cut into small cubes

Wash collard greens thoroughly, and cut off stems. Stack leaves; roll up lengthwise. Cut 2 lengthwise slits down leaves; cut crosswise into ¼" strips, and set aside.

Melt butter over medium heat in a saucepan. Add onion; sauté 3 minutes or until tender. Add collard greens; sprinkle with water, and cook, covered, 4 to 5 minutes or until greens are tender.

Combine broth and cream in a large saucepan; bring to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to low; stir in grits, and cook, uncovered, 10 minutes. Add cheese; stir until melted. Stir in cooked collard greens. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

## FOUR-CHEESE SPINACH MACARONI

*You may never crave traditional mac-and-cheese again after tasting this creamy, cheesy garlic-and-spinach version with penne pasta.*

- 12 ounces penne pasta
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 garlic cloves, pressed
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (8-ounce) container mascarpone cheese
- 1 (4-ounce) package crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground white pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- 1 cup soft breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

Cook pasta according to package directions, and drain. Meanwhile, melt 2 tablespoons butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat; add garlic, and sauté 1 minute. Add milk, and cook until thoroughly heated. Gradually stir in ½ cup Parmesan cheese and next 6 ingredients; whisk until smooth. Stir in spinach. Add cooked pasta, tossing to coat. Spoon into a lightly greased 13" x 9" baking dish.

Combine breadcrumbs, remaining ½ cup Parmesan cheese, and 2 tablespoons melted butter in a small bowl. Sprinkle breadcrumb topping over macaroni. Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 20 minutes or until golden. Yield: 8 servings.

**Fresh Spinach Substitution:** You can substitute a 10-ounce package of fresh spinach instead of using frozen spinach, if desired. Just wash the spinach, trim stems, and coarsely chop the leaves. Then wilt the leaves for 1 to 2 minutes in hot water in a pan.

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*editor's favorite • make ahead*

## MOM'S PECAN PIE

*We liked the double thick crust on this classic Southern pie. Substitute chopped pecans, a less expensive choice, for pecan halves, if desired. (See photo on cover.)*

- 1 (15-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups pecan halves

Unfold and stack 2 piecrusts; gently roll or press together. Fit into a 9" pieplate according to package directions; fold edges under, and crimp.

Stir together eggs and next 5 ingredients; stir in pecans.

Pour filling into piecrust. Bake at 350° for 50 to 55 minutes or until set. Serve warm, or cool completely on a wire rack. Yield: 1 (9") pie.

*editor's favorite • make ahead*

## PUMPKIN PIE WITH MAPLE CREAM AND SUGARED PECANS

- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$  cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup shortening
- 4 to 5 tablespoons ice water
- 2 cups canned pumpkin
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons grated orange rind
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups half-and-half
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup powdered sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup maple syrup

Combine flour and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt; cut in shortening with a pastry blender until mixture resembles the size of peas. Sprinkle ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time, evenly over surface; stir with a fork until dry ingredients are moistened. Shape dough into a ball; cover and chill 30 minutes.

Roll dough to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness on a lightly floured surface. Fit into a 9" deep-dish pieplate; trim off excess pastry along edges. Fold edges under, and crimp. Line pastry with aluminum foil, and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake at 450° for 8 minutes. Remove weights and foil; bake pastry 4 more minutes. Remove pastry crust to a wire rack to cool; reduce oven temperature to 375°.

Whisk together pumpkin and next 10 ingredients in a large bowl until combined. Pour filling into crust.

Bake at 375° for 50 to 55 minutes or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean, shielding crust after 20 minutes. Cool on a wire rack. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Combine 2 tablespoons granulated sugar and pecans in a small skillet. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, 5 minutes or until sugar melts and pecans are toasted. Spoon onto wax paper to cool. Crumble sugared pecans into pieces.

Beat whipping cream at high speed with an electric mixer until foamy; gradually add powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, until soft peaks form. Slowly fold maple syrup into whipped cream. Cover and chill 1 hour.

To serve, spoon maple cream onto each serving. Sprinkle sugared pecans over cream. Yield: 1 (9") deep-dish pie.

**Butternut Squash Pie:** You can make this pie using butternut squash in place of the pumpkin. Two cups pureed butternut squash is about 1 (2-pound) squash.



*Pumpkin Pie with Maple Cream and Sugared Pecans*



## BROWN SUGAR MERINGUE PIE

*Here's a mile-high showstopper meringue dessert. Pies like this are meant to be served the day they're made.*

- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup butter, cut into pieces
- 3/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 6 tablespoons water
- 5 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 baked 9" pastry shell

Combine first 3 ingredients in a 4-quart heavy saucepan. Stir in half and-half. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium heat 9 minutes or until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Boil 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

Lightly beat egg yolks with a wire whisk. Gradually stir about one-fourth of hot mixture into yolks; add to remaining hot mixture, stirring constantly. Cook, stirring constantly, 3 minutes over medium heat. Remove from heat, and stir in vanilla and butter. Cover and set aside while preparing meringue.

Stir together 3/4 cup brown sugar, 2/3 cup granulated sugar, and water in a 1-quart heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves. Wash down crystals with a small pastry brush dipped in hot water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, and cook, stirring often, until a candy thermometer registers 246° (firm ball stage).

While syrup cooks, beat egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl at high speed with a heavy-duty stand mixer until soft peaks form. Pour hot syrup mixture in a heavy stream over beaten egg whites, beating constantly at high speed until stiff peaks form (about 2 to 3 minutes). (Do not overbeat.)

Pour hot filling into pastry shell. Spoon one-third of meringue over hot filling in about 5 large dollops. Using back of a large spoon, spread meringue, sealing to edge of pastry and forming decorative swirls. Spread another

third of meringue over pie, using same procedure. Spread remaining third of meringue over pie, and spread to edge.

Bake at 375° for 9 minutes or until meringue is lightly browned. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Yield: 1 (9") pie.

**Note:** Be sure to use a heavy-duty stand mixer with at least a 4-quart bowl to accommodate the large volume of meringue. Don't be tempted to spread on all the meringue at once. It's necessary to apply it in 3 batches in order to fit it all on the pie and ensure maximum volume.

## TRIPLE NUT CRANBERRY-APPLE CRISP

*A chunky, nutty streusel meets tart apple filling in this fruit crisp. The key to the streusel topping is pinching large lumps together with your fingers.*

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 3/4 cup cold butter, cut into pieces
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 8 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and sliced
- 1 (12-ounce) container cranberry-orange crushed fruit
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Vanilla ice cream or lightly sweetened whipped cream

Combine first 5 ingredients in a medium bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender until mixture is the size of peas. Stir in pecans, almonds, and walnuts; pinch mixture with fingers to form large lumps of streusel.

Stir together apple and next 5 ingredients. Spoon filling into a greased 13" x 9" baking dish. Sprinkle streusel topping evenly over filling.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 1 hour or until apples are tender and topping is golden. Remove from oven; let stand 10 to 15 minutes. Serve with vanilla ice cream or lightly sweetened whipped cream, if desired. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

*Cranberry Meringue Pie*



### CRANBERRY MERINGUE PIE

- ½ (15-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
- 2 (12-ounce) packages fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup sugar
- ⅓ cup cranberry-apple juice drink
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- ⅓ cup water
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 egg whites
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon grated lime rind

Fit piecrust into a 9" pieplate according to package directions; fold edges under, and crimp. Prick crust.

Bake at 450° for 8 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven, and cool completely. Reduce oven temperature to 325°.

Combine cranberries, 1 cup sugar, cranberry-apple juice drink, and salt in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, over medium heat, stirring often, 5 to 7 minutes or until cranberry skins pop. Pour cranberries through a wire-mesh strainer into a bowl; discard solids.

Return cranberry mixture to saucepan. Combine cornstarch and water; stir into cranberry mixture. Add ginger. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in butter and vanilla.

Beat egg whites and cream of tartar at high speed with an electric mixer until foamy. Add ⅓ cup sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until stiff peaks form and sugar dissolves (2 to 4 minutes). Add lime rind, beating just until blended.

Pour hot cranberry filling into prepared crust. Spread meringue over hot filling, sealing to edge of pastry.

Bake at 325° for 25 to 27 minutes or until meringue is golden. Cool completely on a wire rack. Yield: 1 (9") pie.

*editor's favorite • make ahead*

## MARBLED BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE-COFFEE CHEESECAKE

- 2 cups coffee and cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookie crumbs, about 20 cookies (we tested with Oreos)
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- 4 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1½ cups sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons instant coffee granules
- 3 tablespoons coffee liqueur
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 (1-ounce) bittersweet chocolate baking squares, melted and cooled

Stir together cookie crumbs and butter; press firmly into bottom of a 10" springform pan.

Bake at 325° for 12 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, beat cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy; gradually add sugar, beating well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until blended after each addition. Stir coffee, liqueur, and vanilla into batter.

Reserve 2½ cups batter; pour remaining batter into crust.

Stir melted chocolate into reserved batter. Spoon dollops of chocolate batter over coffee batter. Swirl batter gently with a knife.

Place springform pan in a large round shallow pan, and add hot water to shallow pan to a depth of 2".

Bake at 325° for 55 minutes or until cheesecake is almost set. Turn off oven, and let cheesecake stand in closed oven 30 minutes. Remove from oven; gently run a knife around edges to loosen sides. Cool on a wire rack; cover and chill 8 hours. Yield: 10 to 12 servings.

*editor's favorite*

## RED VELVET CUPCAKES

*Tender little cakes are lathered with buttery cream cheese icing and snowy coconut.*

- 1½ cups sugar
- 2 cups vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 2 (1-ounce) bottles red liquid food coloring
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Cream Cheese Frosting

Sweetened flaked coconut (optional)

Beat sugar and oil at medium speed with an electric mixer until blended. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until blended after each addition. Add food coloring and vinegar, beating until blended.

Combine flour and next 3 ingredients; add to sugar mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until blended. Stir in vanilla. Pour batter into muffin pans lined with paper liners, filling two-thirds full.

Bake at 350° for 18 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from pans, and cool completely on a wire rack. Spread generously with Cream Cheese Frosting. Sprinkle with coconut, if desired. Yield: 26 cupcakes.

## CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (1-pound) package powdered sugar, sifted (4½ cups)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Beat butter and cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating at low speed until light and fluffy. Stir in vanilla. Yield: 2¼ cups.



*Red Velvet Cupcakes*

*Chocolate Meringue Cake*



*editor's favorite • make ahead*  
**CHOCOLATE MERINGUE CAKE**

*This showstopper cake has several make-ahead steps to make your work easier than it looks. Give the extra meringues away in Christmas gift bags.*

- 5 large eggs, separated
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup Dutch-process cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- ⅔ cup finely chopped pecans

Cream Cheese Filling

Ganache

Meringues

Beat egg whites at high speed with an electric mixer until stiff peaks form; set aside.

Beat butter at medium speed until creamy; gradually add sugar, beating well. Add egg yolks, 1 at a time, beating until blended after each addition.

Combine buttermilk and vanilla. Combine flour, cocoa, and baking soda; add to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat at low speed until blended after each addition. Stir in coconut and pecans. Fold in beaten egg whites. Pour batter into 3 greased and floured 9" round cakepans.

Bake at 350° for 19 to 20 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Remove cake layers to wire racks, and cool completely.

Spread Cream Cheese Filling between layers. Spread Ganache on top and sides of cake, reserving ½ cup ganache. Mound Meringues on top of cake. Drizzle meringues with reserved ganache. To serve cake, remove meringues with small tongs, and serve a few meringues as a garnish with each serving. Yield: 1 (3-layer) cake.

**8" Cake Variation:** For 8" cake layers, bake layers 22 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean.

**Storage Tip:** Refrigerate leftover cake without meringues. Store meringues in an airtight container at room temperature.

**CREAM CHEESE FILLING**

- 2 (3-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 2¾ cups sifted powdered sugar

Beat first 4 ingredients at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Yield: 2½ cups.

**GANACHE**

- ¾ cup whipping cream
- 6 (4-ounce) packages semisweet chocolate baking bars, finely chopped (we tested with Ghirardelli)

Bring whipping cream to a simmer in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat; add chocolate, stirring until melted. Cool until spreading consistency, stirring often. Yield: 2½ cups.

**MERINGUES**

- 2 egg whites
- 1½ teaspoons white vinegar
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 (4-ounce) package semisweet chocolate baking bar, finely chopped (we tested with Ghirardelli)

Beat egg whites, vinegar, and salt at high speed with an electric mixer until foamy; gradually add sugar, beating until stiff peaks form and sugar dissolves. Fold in chocolate. Drop by heaping teaspoonfuls onto parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake at 250° for 35 minutes. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 3 dozen.

**Make-Ahead Elements:** Bake cake layers ahead, and freeze up to 1 month. Bake meringues a day ahead, and store in tins. Prepare Cream Cheese Filling a day ahead, and store in refrigerator. Thaw cake layers at room temperature before assembling cake.



## CHOCOLATE-RASPBERRY TRUFFLE CAKE

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen raspberries, thawed
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 6 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon almond extract
- Sweetened whipped cream
- Fresh berries (optional)

Puree raspberries in a food processor. Press raspberry mixture through a wire-mesh sieve, using the back of a spoon to squeeze out juice. Discard seeds. Bring juice to a boil over high heat; cook over medium heat, stirring often, until mixture is reduced to 1/2 cup. Remove from heat, and cool completely.

Butter an 8" round cakepan, and line bottom with wax paper.

Cook water and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat until sugar dissolves, stirring occasionally. Add butter, and cook, stirring occasionally, until butter melts. Remove from heat, and add chocolate; stir until smooth. Cool.

Whisk together raspberry reduction, eggs, flour, and almond extract in a large bowl. Add chocolate mixture, and beat at medium speed with an electric mixer until blended. Pour into prepared cakepan.

Place cakepan in a larger pan; add hot water to large pan to a depth of 1". Bake at 325° for 42 to 45 minutes. Remove from water bath. Cool cake completely in pan on a wire rack.

Run a thin knife around pan to loosen cake. Invert cake onto a platter; remove wax paper, and invert onto another platter.

Cut cake into wedges, and serve with sweetened whipped cream and fresh berries, if desired. Yield: 8 servings.

**Make-Ahead Plan:** If desired, cake can be made a day ahead. Cover and chill in refrigerator; let stand at room temperature at least 1 hour before serving.

## GINGERBREAD SKILLET CAKE WITH PEARS

*Serve this holiday-inspired cake as a dessert or as an interesting brunch dish in place of French toast or crêpes.*

- 4 large Bosc pears, cored and sliced 1/4" thick
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- 1/4 cup molasses

Toss together pears and 2 tablespoons flour. Set aside.

Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a 9" cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly in skillet. Fan pear slices in skillet over brown sugar.

Combine 1 cup flour and next 6 ingredients in a large bowl. Cut 5 tablespoons butter into flour mixture with a pastry blender until crumbly. Add buttermilk and molasses, stirring just until moistened. Spread batter evenly over pears, leaving a 1" edge.

Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until bubbly and browned. Cool in pan on a wire rack 30 minutes before serving. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream. Yield: 8 servings.



*Chocolate-Raspberry  
Truffle Cake*

*make ahead*

**COFFEE JELLY**

*Try flavored coffee in this old-fashioned dessert. Decorate each dessert plate with melted vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce.*

- 2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Kahlúa
- 3 cups hot brewed coffee
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped
- Chocolate shavings

Sprinkle gelatin over Kahlúa in a small bowl; let stand 5 minutes to soften gelatin. Add hot coffee, sugar, and salt; stir until gelatin dissolves (about 2 minutes).

Pour into 6 or 8 lightly greased 4" ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) brioche molds; cover and chill overnight.

Use fingers to gently pull jelly away from edges of each mold; unmold onto dessert plates. Dollop with whipped cream; sprinkle with chocolate shavings. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

**Unmolding Tip:** If jelly does not unmold easily, very quickly dip bottom of each mold into hot water to loosen; unmold onto dessert plates.

**JAM PIE**

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter or margarine
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 large egg
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup almond paste, crumbled
- $\frac{1}{2}$  (15-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup seedless raspberry or blackberry jam
- Powdered sugar (optional)

Melt butter, and let cool.

Beat egg yolks and egg at medium speed with an electric mixer until thickened. Add sugar and almond paste, and beat well. (Filling will be slightly lumpy.) Add cooled butter, beating just until blended.

Fit piecrust into a 9" pieplate according to package directions; fold edges under, and crimp.

Stir jam well, and spread in bottom of pastry. Stir filling, and pour over jam.

Bake at 325° for 45 minutes or until set and a golden crust has formed on top, shielding edges with aluminum foil after 30 minutes to prevent excessive browning. Cool completely on a wire rack. Serve at room temperature. Dust with powdered sugar before serving, if desired. Store in refrigerator. Yield: 1 (9") pie.

*editor's favorite • make ahead*

**CHOCOLATE TOFFEE BAR CAKE**

*Here's an easy out for a homemade holiday dessert. It gets really moist the second day.*

- 1 (18.25-ounce) package German chocolate cake mix (we tested with Duncan Hines)
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 (12.25-ounce) jar caramel topping
- 1 (8-ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 3 (1.4-ounce) English toffee candy bars, crushed (we tested with Skor bars)

Prepare cake according to package directions in a greased 13" x 9" pan. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack.

Gently poke holes in top of cake, using the end of a wooden spoon (wipe spoon clean after each hole). Combine sweetened condensed milk and caramel topping in a small bowl; slowly pour over cake. Spread whipped topping over cake. Sprinkle with crushed candy. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Yield: 12 servings.



*Coffee Jelly*