

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a light blue ceramic mug filled with dark coffee. The person is sitting on a grey, textured blanket with a pink and white patterned blanket underneath. The background is dark and out of focus.

CAROLE HOLIDAY

I DON'T KNOW WHO  
I AM ANYMORE

RESTORING YOUR IDENTITY  
SHATTERED BY GRIEF AND LOSS

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

*I Don't Know Who I Am Anymore*

© 2023 by Carole Holiday

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# Derek's Boeuf Bourguignon

*Also known as Beef Burgundy*



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I always envision sharing this meal fireside with a crusty French loaf and a little bit of merlot. It's the perfect dish for deep conversation and long lingering.

A provincial dish from the Burgundy region—meaning rustic, country—like what Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* would have made for Gaston if he hadn't been such a raving narcissist.

This dish is not hard, but it is slow. Don't be put off by the steps—just make it on a day that you plan to spend at home. And it's better two to three days later after the flavors in the dish deepen, so it's a perfect do-ahead company meal. Much like grief's resolution, good things take time.

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## **BOUQUET GARNI (OR LITTLE BAG OF HERBS AND VEGGIES)**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 carrot, roughly chopped            | 1 sprig fresh thyme                              |
| 1 medium onion, peeled and quartered | 3 bay leaves                                     |
| 3 cloves garlic, smashed             | Stems from the button mushrooms used in the stew |

## **STEW**

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 6 slices bacon (a thicker cut is always nice) | 2 pounds stewing beef |
|   | 1 teaspoon salt       |

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper	with stems reserved (halve the mushrooms if large)
1 tablespoon vegetable oil, if needed	1 (14- to 16-ounce) bag frozen white pearl onions* (alternatively, use fresh onions)
1 (750 ml) bottle pinot noir (the red wine traditionally used in this dish)	2 tablespoons red or black currant jelly
3 cups beef broth	2 tablespoons softened butter mashed with 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour or 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons water (gluten-free option)
2 tablespoons tomato paste	
6 carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces, preferably cut on the diagonal	
1/2 pound small button mushrooms, stemmed,	Fresh parsley (optional)

## DIRECTIONS

1. Gather all the bouquet garni ingredients together into a piece of cheesecloth and tie with kitchen string.
2. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.
3. Place the bacon in a deep, heavy-bottomed, oven-proof pot (I use a Staub enameled cast-iron pot) over medium heat and cook until crisp. Remove and set aside for breakfast. Reserve the fat in the pan.
4. Spread out the beef cubes on a paper towel-lined baking sheet and pat dry with a paper towel. (Dry meat browns well.)
5. Sprinkle the beef cubes with the salt and pepper, place them in the pot with the hot bacon grease, and cook until brown on all sides. Work in small batches, using tongs to turn the meat, since crowding the pan will braise the beef, not brown it. If you need to add more fat, add 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil. Transfer the beef



cubes to a plate as they are browned. Any juices that collect will be added back to the pot, so don't use a paper towel to line the plate.

6. Add the browned beef back to the pot along with the meat juices, wine, broth, tomato paste, and carrots. Bring to a boil, scraping the bottom of the pan to lift the flavorful residue stuck on the bottom. Once the stew reaches a boil, turn off the heat and add the bouquet garni. Cover the pot and transfer to the oven. Cook for 2 hours. The alcohol will burn off but deepen the flavors. Your house will smell amazing too!
7. After 2 hours, remove the pot from the oven and carefully transfer the bouquet garni to a bowl. When it is cool enough to handle, squeeze the flavorful juices into the bowl, then pour them back into the pot. (I usually press the bouquet garni with the back of a ladle initially, but when it's cool enough to handle, I squeeze the cheesecloth with my hands to extract as much liquid as possible.)
8. Add the mushrooms, pearl onions, and currant jelly and gently stir to combine. Add the butter-flour or cornstarch-water mixture and stir.
9. Return the pot to the oven for another 30 minutes. You can keep the pot in the oven on a lower heat to keep it warm until dinner. If you wish to thicken the sauce more, simmer it on the stovetop uncovered to reduce the liquid.
10. Serve over mashed potatoes and garnish with chopped parsley if desired.
11. If you decide to make the dish ahead of time, just reheat it an hour before guests arrive.

Makes 6 servings.

*\*Cook's note: To easily peel fresh pearl onions, make a small x at the stem end with a sharp paring knife and place in boiling water for 2 minutes. Remove to a plate to cool. When cool enough to handle, push the onion out of the skin, and slice off the other stem end.*

# Turkey Chili



.....

This is a crowd-pleaser and a nice alternative to beef chili. I like to serve it with lots of toppings, like a good, sharp cheese, fresh cherry tomatoes, pickled jalapeños, sour cream or yogurt, corn chips, and mustard. Yes! I love a good yellow mustard on top of chili.

.....

## INGREDIENTS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 tablespoon olive oil   | 4 tablespoons tomato paste                                       |
| 1 pound ground turkey  | 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, including juices                |
| 1 large onion, coarsely chopped  | 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar                                   |
| 2 teaspoons salt   | 2 tablespoons chili powder                                       |
| 1 large green bell pepper, diced   | 1 teaspoon sugar   |
| 1 large red bell pepper, diced   | $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water to thin chili as needed |
| 2 large cloves garlic, finely diced  | 1 (16-ounce) can red kidney beans, drained                       |
| 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and minced (cut with gloves on) or 1 (4-ounce) can of diced green chilies if you prefer less heat | 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained                            |

## DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the turkey and onions and cook, stirring often. When meat is lightly browned, add the salt, bell peppers, garlic, and jalapeños and cook until the vegetables are softened. Add the tomato paste, tomatoes, vinegar, chili powder, and sugar. Add water as needed to thin chili.
2. Simmer over low heat at least 1 hour, stirring and tasting for seasonings as you go. Thirty minutes before serving, add the beans and heat through.

Makes 8 servings.



# Chicken Salad à la Florence



.....

I've made this a zillion times for ladies' luncheons and showers. It's an all-purpose, all-around, always good go-to. Nothing overly fancy but reliably down-to-earth and relatively inexpensive, like the '72 VW bug I drove in college.

Make this the night or day before you plan on serving it. Another plus.

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## SALAD

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 4 chicken breasts, poached or roasted, cut into bite-size pieces                   | 1 cup blanched almonds, slightly toasted*                  |
| 2 cups seedless green or red grapes, halved (I like using half red and half green) | 4 ribs celery, chopped                                     |
| 1 (11-ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained with juice reserved                     | 2 cups dry pasta, cooked al dente (I prefer bow-tie pasta) |
| 1 whole fresh pineapple, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces                      | 10 dried apricots, quartered (optional)                    |
|  | 1 to 2 teaspoons fine salt                                 |

## DRESSING

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| $\frac{2}{3}$ cup high-quality mayonnaise | 1 to 2 tablespoons mandarin orange juice (as reserved above) |
| 1 to 2 tablespoons chicken broth          |  |

## DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the chicken, grapes, mandarin oranges, pineapple, almonds, celery, pasta, and optional apricots in a large serving bowl and gently toss.
2. To prepare the dressing, combine the mayonnaise, chicken broth, and reserved juice from the mandarin oranges. Add the dressing to the salad and toss to coat. Add the salt and toss again. Refrigerate until time to serve. Serve over butter lettuce or as-is on a buffet.

Makes 10 servings.

*\*Cook's note: Put blanched almonds on a baking sheet and into a preheated 350-degree oven for 6 to 8 minutes. Check regularly after 4 minutes, as they can go from golden to burned rather quickly. Let cool before using.*

# Saturday Spaghetti

*Vegan with a gluten-free twist: spaghetti  
squash instead of pasta*



.....

Spaghetti sauce slowly simmering on a Saturday makes you feel like a real cook because of the fragrance wafting through your house. When friends walk through the door, you can grab a wooden spoon and start stirring, spouting Italian phrases like, “*Bene bene, molto bene.*”

When my grandson, Jett, said he wanted to be a chef, this is the first sauce we made together. You can use it in so many ways and it freezes well. It is a vegan recipe, but you can add ground beef, turkey, or sausage to make it your way.

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## INGREDIENTS

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 large spaghetti squash          | 2 teaspoons salt                      |
| 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided  | Freshly ground black pepper to taste  |
| 1 sweet onion, diced              | 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes*    |
| 3 carrots, diced                  | Parmigiano Reggiano cheese (optional) |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced           |                                       |
| 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning |                                       |
| 1 teaspoon sugar                  |                                       |

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Prepare the squash by cutting it in half and removing the seeds with an ice cream scoop. Brush the cut sides of the squash with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and place the halves, cut side up, on a baking sheet. Roast for 40 minutes until easily pierced with a fork. Let cool.
3. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large sauté pan or soup pot over medium heat until the oil shimmers. Add the onions and carrots and cook 10 minutes over medium-low heat until the onions are translucent and the carrots are softened a bit. Lower the heat and add the garlic, stirring so it does not burn. Sauté 2 minutes more, adding the Italian seasoning, sugar, salt, and pepper and stirring to combine. Add the tomatoes with their juices and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. While the sauce is simmering, shred the squash with a fork. It will pull away in spaghetti-like tendrils. Cover the squash with plastic wrap and refrigerate until the sauce is done. To serve, cut the squash halves into 4 to 6 servings, top with the sauce, and sprinkle with grated Parmigiano Reggiano if using.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

*\*Cook's note: San Marzano brand is best. You can also use a can of whole peeled tomatoes and just break them up as you cook them.*



# Tzatziki, Greek Chicken, and the Greek Feast

## Tzatziki



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Think of this as the Greeks' answer to America's ketchup.

It goes on everything.

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### INGREDIENTS

1/2 English cucumber	1 to 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more to taste	Handful fresh dill, chopped
1 cup high-quality Greek yogurt (you can use fat-free but full-fat will be richer)	Sea salt to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. Slice the cucumber in half lengthwise and cut into thin slices. Or grate it using a large-holed grater. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of the salt and wrap in a paper towel. Let sit for 20 minutes. Squeeze out excess moisture through the paper towel.
2. Combine the squeezed cucumber, yogurt, lemon juice, and dill in a small bowl. Season to taste with the sea salt. Refrigerate until time to serve. Serve with pita bread or veggies and olives for a simple appetizer platter. Also accompanies grilled chicken nicely.

# Greek Chicken with Lemon-Garlic Potatoes

*To serve with Tzatziki*



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I serve this with Greek salad (basically tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, and feta tossed with a simple olive oil and vinegar dressing) with piles of pita bread and a small bowl of cool tzatziki. Hurling plates optional (okay, preferable).

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## MARINADE

1/2 cup high-quality olive oil	1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon lemon zest	1 1/2 teaspoons salt
4 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice	1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon honey	Leaves from 2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 tablespoon minced garlic (approximately 2 to 3 cloves)	1/4 teaspoon dried oregano

## CHICKEN AND POTATOES

4 chicken breasts, boneless, skin on* (the butcher can do this for you)	1 pound baby Yukon Gold potatoes
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## DIRECTIONS

1. To prepare the marinade mix together the olive oil, lemon zest and juice, honey, garlic, mustard, salt, pepper, thyme, and oregano. I put the ingredients in a glass jar and shake well.
2. To prepare the chicken, place the chicken breasts in a zip-top plastic bag and add half of the marinade. Reserve the rest of the marinade for the potatoes. Refrigerate the chicken overnight or at least 2 hours.
3. To prepare the potatoes, place them in a big pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and cook until they can be pierced easily with a knife. Do not cook until soft and falling apart. They will finish cooking in the oven. Let cool and refrigerate until ready to roast.
4. When you're ready to cook the meal, remove the potatoes and chicken breasts from the refrigerator and let them sit on the counter for 30 minutes to bring them to room temperature.
5. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
6. Place the chicken on a foil-covered baking sheet, skin-side up. Place the potatoes in a bowl and toss with the remaining marinade. Place the potatoes on the same baking sheet, if room allows, or on their own foil-covered sheet if it's too crowded.
7. Roast for 35 minutes. The skin on the chicken should be golden brown. After removing from the oven, lightly tent the baking sheet(s) with foil and let the chicken rest for 15 to 20 minutes.
8. After the meat rests, cut across the breast in thin slices. Plate next to the lemon-garlic potatoes and a crisp Greek salad.

Makes 4 servings.

*\*Cook's note: Roasting a chicken breast with the skin on gives it a deep golden-brown color that is so much more appetizing to serve.*

# Chicken Soup



.....

This is a quick version using a store-bought roasted chicken, and not one person will know or care that the chicken wasn't roasted in your kitchen. This soup seems to be a universal remedy for feeling low, and it's a lovely gift for a friend who's hurting. It looks so pretty if you deliver it in a large mason jar along with some bakery-bought rolls.

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## INGREDIENTS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 store-bought roast chicken<br>(economical and tasty)                     | 3 carrots, cut into 1/4-inch<br>"coins"*                      |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil  | 2 to 3 sprigs fresh thyme                                     |
| 1 onion, diced (I always use<br>sweet onions)*                             | 2 (32-ounce) cartons chicken<br>stock                         |
| 3 ribs celery, diced (I include<br>some leafy ends, which look<br>pretty)* | Salt, to taste  |
|  | 1 small bunch fresh parsley, cut<br>or torn into small pieces |



## DIRECTIONS

1. Add the olive oil to a deep soup pot and heat over medium heat until simmering. Add the onions, celery, carrots, and thyme. Cook, stirring often, over medium-low heat until translucent, about 5 to 6 minutes.
2. Remove the white meat from the chicken (breasts and thighs), shredding into small pieces and reserving the rest for sandwiches and stock. (Kids love the drumsticks.) I do this with my hands, and it falls apart into nice pieces. Add the white meat and the chicken stock to the pot.
3. Bring the soup to a boil over medium-high heat, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 20 minutes. Add salt to taste. Because the salt content varies between stocks and roast chickens, no salt amount is indicated. You just have to taste it.
4. Garnish the individual bowls of soup with parsley right before serving.

Makes 8 servings.

*\*Cook's note: Some grocery stores offer onion, celery, and carrots already diced (called mirepoix) in their refrigerated vegetable section. Okay to substitute 1 carton.*

# Blueberry Muffin Tops



.....

Am I the only one who buys a muffin just for the “top”? I peel it off and toss the rest. Lovers of that crusty first slice of bread from a French boule or the end cut of the prime rib, take note. Muffin tops may be your new jam. Bake in a muffin-top pan or on a baking sheet lined with parchment or a silicone baking mat. Wrap and freeze individually for quick access!

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## MUFFINS

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted	1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup whole milk or buttermilk	3/4 cup sugar (preferably baking sugar)
1 large egg	1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 large egg yolk	3/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	2 cups (12 ounces) fresh blueberries

## TOPPING

3 tablespoons chilled butter, cut into small pieces	3 1/2 tablespoons sugar (crystallized sugar is nice here)
1/2 cup all-purpose flour	

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
2. Grease the muffin-top tins. If you don't have muffin-top pans, line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
3. Place the melted butter in a medium bowl and gradually whisk in milk, whole egg and yolk, and vanilla until well combined.
4. In a large bowl combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt and whisk to mix.
5. Add the milk mixture to the flour mixture and stir just until combined. Don't overmix. Fold in blueberries gently.
6. Divide the batter evenly between the muffin-top tins. If you are using a baking sheet, spoon out small mounds approximately 4 inches wide and about 2 inches apart. The batter will be thick. I use an ice cream scoop to fill the tins or make the mounds.
7. To make the topping, place the butter, flour, and sugar in a small bowl. Use your cool hands (run them under cold water first, then dry them) to rub the ingredients together until crumbly. Sprinkle on top of the batter.
8. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until golden. Let cool in pans for 15 minutes and then carefully remove.
9. Serve warm. They taste better when shared with a friend.

Makes 12 muffin tops.

# Aunt Dorothy's Date Nut Bread



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I once served this for a cooking class as a side to the main dish that I was teaching. I didn't include the recipe, but instead offered it as an extra accompaniment, sliced and slathered with fluffy cream cheese. I thought I was going to have a revolt. Once everyone tasted it, there was such a hue and cry about not having that recipe, they threatened to hunt down Aunt Dorothy themselves. Sheesh. Don't come between a woman and her date nut bread. Who knew?

.....

## INGREDIENTS

1 cup dates, finely chopped	2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 cup lemon-lime soda	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking soda	1 egg, beaten
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
1 cup sugar	
1/2 teaspoon salt	



## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9-inch loaf pan.
2. In a small saucepan, combine the dates and lemon-lime soda and bring to a boil. Add the baking soda and set aside until cool.
3. In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, and salt. Add the cooled date mixture and stir to combine. Add the butter, vanilla, egg, and nuts if using. Mix well.
4. Scrape into the pan and bake for 1 hour. To check doneness, insert a toothpick in the center of the bread. Toothpick should come out clean.
5. Slice and serve with butter, cream cheese, or just plain.

Makes 1 loaf.

# Grandma Cookies



.....

This was a neighborhood staple on Beland Avenue, the tree-lined street in the suburb of Los Angeles where I grew up. Every important event was attended by a fresh basket of this biscotti (of course, we didn't call it biscotti back then, as we had no clue what that meant).

When my mom passed away at the age of ninety-eight, all her children gathered for a sharing of memories at her home, an hour's drive from that childhood place. There was a knock at the door, and our former next-door neighbors from Beland Avenue stood there with a huge plate of these lovelies. What a fitting tribute to the community that bound us all together back then and to the cookies that reminded us of how lucky we were to grow up in a time and place that recognized what it meant to be a real neighbor.

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## INGREDIENTS

1 cup (2 sticks) butter,  
softened

1 1/4 cups sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 eggs

3 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon fine salt

Ground cinnamon

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a large baking sheet or line it with a silicone baking mat.
2. Place the butter in a large mixing bowl and beat with a mixer until creamy and light in color. Add the sugar and blend. Add the vanilla and eggs and mix well.
3. In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add to the butter mixture, mixing until combined.
4. Divide the dough in half and form two logs on the baking sheet about 2 to 3 inches wide. Pat the logs with your hands to shape. Sprinkle lightly with the cinnamon.
5. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and let the cookie logs cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes.
6. Turn the oven off. Slice the slightly cooled logs at an angle about 1/2-inch thick.
7. Place the cookies flat on the baking sheet and return them to the cooling oven. Remove the cookies from the oven after 10 minutes and let them cool completely. Store in an airtight container.
8. Alternatives: You can change up this basic biscotti recipe by adding toffee chips and chocolate chips, pistachios and dried cherries, or by using almond extract instead of vanilla extract and adding slivered almonds.

Makes about 2 dozen cookies.

# Snickerdoodles



.....

I never met a snickerdoodle I didn't like. Neither has anyone else. These got me through some scary days, like scene study in an LA acting class. It can get you through some tough times, too, since it's hard to be sad while savoring a snickerdoodle. Win some friends with these.

.....

## INGREDIENTS

2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> cups all-purpose flour	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> cups sugar (I like baker's sugar), divided
1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> teaspoons cream of tartar	2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking soda	2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon salt	2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened	

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt.
2. In another medium mixing bowl, beat the butter with a mixer until creamy and light in color. Gradually add 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cups of the sugar until well-combined. Beat in the eggs one at a time and when mixed well, add the vanilla extract.
3. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and blend well.
4. Cover the dough bowl and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
5. When ready to bake the cookies, preheat the oven to 375

degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment or a silicone baking mat. In a small bowl mix the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sugar with the cinnamon. Adjust the cinnamon-sugar ratio according to your preference if desired.

6. Drop mounded tablespoonfuls of the chilled dough onto the baking sheet about 2 inches apart and sprinkle generously with the cinnamon-sugar mixture. I use a medium-size ice cream scoop for placing the dough onto the baking sheet.
7. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Makes 2 dozen cookies.

# Molasses Cookies



.....

Originally inspired by my friend Debra, I have come to consider molasses and all the goodies that spring from it to be deep, dark comfort food. The kind of comfort food that seems necessary to sit beside me on an equally dark day when I need to feel some reliable goodness on the saucer next to my tea.

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## INGREDIENTS

8 tablespoons butter, softened	1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup granulated sugar	2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar	1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 egg	1/4 teaspoon ground cloves*
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1/4 teaspoon ground allspice*
1/2 cup dark molasses	1/2 teaspoon ground ginger*
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	1/4 cup crystallized sugar
1 teaspoon salt	

## DIRECTIONS

1. Place the butter in a large mixing bowl and beat with a mixer until light and fluffy. Add the granulated and brown sugars, vanilla, and egg. Beat until combined.
2. In a medium bowl combine the flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon, black pepper, cloves, allspice, and ginger. Whisk to combine.
3. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture 1 cup at a time, mixing well after each addition. Refrigerate the dough for at least 1 hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Using an ice cream scoop, scoop out the dough and form balls, then roll them in the crystallized sugar. Place the dough balls on the baking sheet 2 inches apart.
5. Bake for 9 minutes. Remove the cookies from the oven and let them cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer them to a rack to cool completely. The cookies will be soft when you remove them from the oven but will crisp up as they cool. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Makes 2 dozen cookies.

*\*Cook's note: Substitute 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice for these individual spices.*

# Not-Over-It-Yet Meatloaf



.....

I used to think that meatloaf was boring and unappealing because of how ordinary it was. But when I took a leftover meatloaf sandwich to my histology class, stacked on nubby wheat bread with a layer of crisp lettuce and drizzled with chipotle mayo and honey mustard, I could've sold it for at least a day's worth of tuition. Of course, I said no. I savored every bite. And I got an A on my test that day. It's amazing what confidence a little "classmate envy" will produce.

For a variation, make mini-meatloaves in muffin tins. Sliced in half, the "muffin meatloaves" make dandy sandwiches on a bun. Freeze before or after baking.

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## INGREDIENTS

1 pound ground beef	1 tablespoon seasoned salt
1 pound ground pork	1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 sweet onion, quartered	1 cup ketchup, divided
3 carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces	2 tablespoons brown sugar
1/2 red or orange bell pepper, quartered	1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 cup breadcrumbs	1/2 onion, cut into rings and separated
1 egg, beaten	



## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place a sheet of parchment paper over a wire rack and set the rack on top of a foil-lined jelly roll pan.
2. Place the beef and pork in a large mixing bowl.
3. Place the onion, carrots, and bell pepper in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. (Or chop the vegetables by hand.) Add the vegetables to the meat. Add the breadcrumbs, egg, salt, pepper, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the ketchup. Mix well. (I use gloved hands to mix.)
4. Shape the meat mixture into one large loaf or two smaller loaves\* and place on the rack. You can also bake them directly in a baking pan without the rack. Alternately, use a loaf pan or fill muffin tins.
5. In a small bowl combine the remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ketchup, brown sugar, and dry mustard. Lay the separated onion rings on top of the loaves. Spoon the ketchup mixture on top.
6. Bake for 60 minutes if in muffin tins or 90 minutes if in a single loaf pan or on a rack.

Makes 8 servings.

*\*Cook's note: I prefer to make 2 (8-inch) loaves—one for dinner and one to stick in the fridge for sandwiches.*

# Crazy Spinach Salad



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So pretty on an Easter buffet table. The strawberries are often at their early peak in their season, and the mix of the buttery avocado is a marriage made in heaven.

I include two recipes in this chapter because this duo just pairs together so beautifully. I always make them for the same meal.

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## DRESSING

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup canola oil

1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire  
sauce

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

1/2 teaspoon paprika

1 tablespoon poppy seeds

1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh  
mint

1/2 cup sugar

1 1/2 tablespoons minced onion

## SALAD

2 (8-ounce) bags spinach  
leaves, washed

2 to 4 medium to large  
avocados, sliced

10 to 12 ounces strawberries,  
sliced

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl whisk together the vinegar, oil, sesame and poppy seeds, sugar, onion, salt, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, and mint, or put the ingredients in a large glass jar and shake. Refrigerate until ready to use.
2. In a large salad bowl, just before serving, combine the spinach, strawberries, and avocados. Toss. Add the dressing lightly and toss to combine. Taste and add more dressing as per personal preference.

Makes 8 servings.

# Mushroom Crust Quiche



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A perfect pairing with the tangy and sweet Crazy Spinach Salad. I serve them side by side at Eastertime.

I first made this quiche when I was a new cook, and it's remained a favorite and flavorful twist on the regular quiche Lorraine. I've made it for so long I'm not sure where the dog-eared recipe card originated, but quiche is one of those dishes you can easily make your own. Try substituting crumbled sausage for the ham, spinach for the parsley, or caramelized onions for the green onions.

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## INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, divided	1 cup full-fat cottage cheese
3/4 pound baby bella mushrooms, coarsely chopped	3 eggs
1 cup crushed saltine crackers	1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
3/4 cup chopped green onions	4 ounces minced ham (mince by hand or in a food processor)
3 cups shredded jack cheese, divided	1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch pie pan.
2. Melt 6 tablespoons of the butter in a medium to large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and cook until soft. Stir in the crushed crackers. Spoon the mixture into the pie pan and pat to cover the bottom and halfway up the sides.
3. Wipe out the sauté pan and then melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Add the onions and cook until tender. Sprinkle the onions onto the crust, followed by 2 cups of the cheese. You can cover with plastic wrap and finish the next day at this point.
4. To proceed, in a blender or mixer, whirl the cottage cheese, eggs, and cayenne until smooth. Pour into the crust and sprinkle with paprika.
5. Bake 20 to 25 minutes until set and not wobbly in the center.
6. After removing from the oven and while still warm, top with the minced ham, the remaining 1 cup cheese, and the parsley.
7. Serve warmish or at room temperature.

Makes 8 servings.

# Dump Cake



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It's so emotionally satisfying to “dump” all these ingredients into a pan without having to measure a thing. My roommate and I made this in college (I thought we were geniuses). And humble, too, especially because I couldn't cook a lick unless it involved chocolate chips. This warm, fruity “cake” served with a scoop of vanilla ice cream doubled both my culinary repertoire and my love of cobbler-type desserts.

This recipe, and iterations of it, has been around so long it's kinda like classical music that belongs to the public domain. Spread your wings and try other substitutions in the pie-filling category.

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## INGREDIENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 (21-ounce) can cherry pie filling           | 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, melted           |
| 1 (20-ounce) can crushed pineapple with juice | 1 cup chopped walnuts or slivered almonds |
| 1 (15-ounce) box yellow cake mix              | 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut          |

## **DIRECTIONS**

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.
2. Layer the cherry pie filling and the pineapple in an ungreased 9 x 11-inch baking pan. Sprinkle the cake mix over the fruit and follow with the melted butter, nuts, and coconut.
3. Bake for 1 hour.

Makes 24 servings.