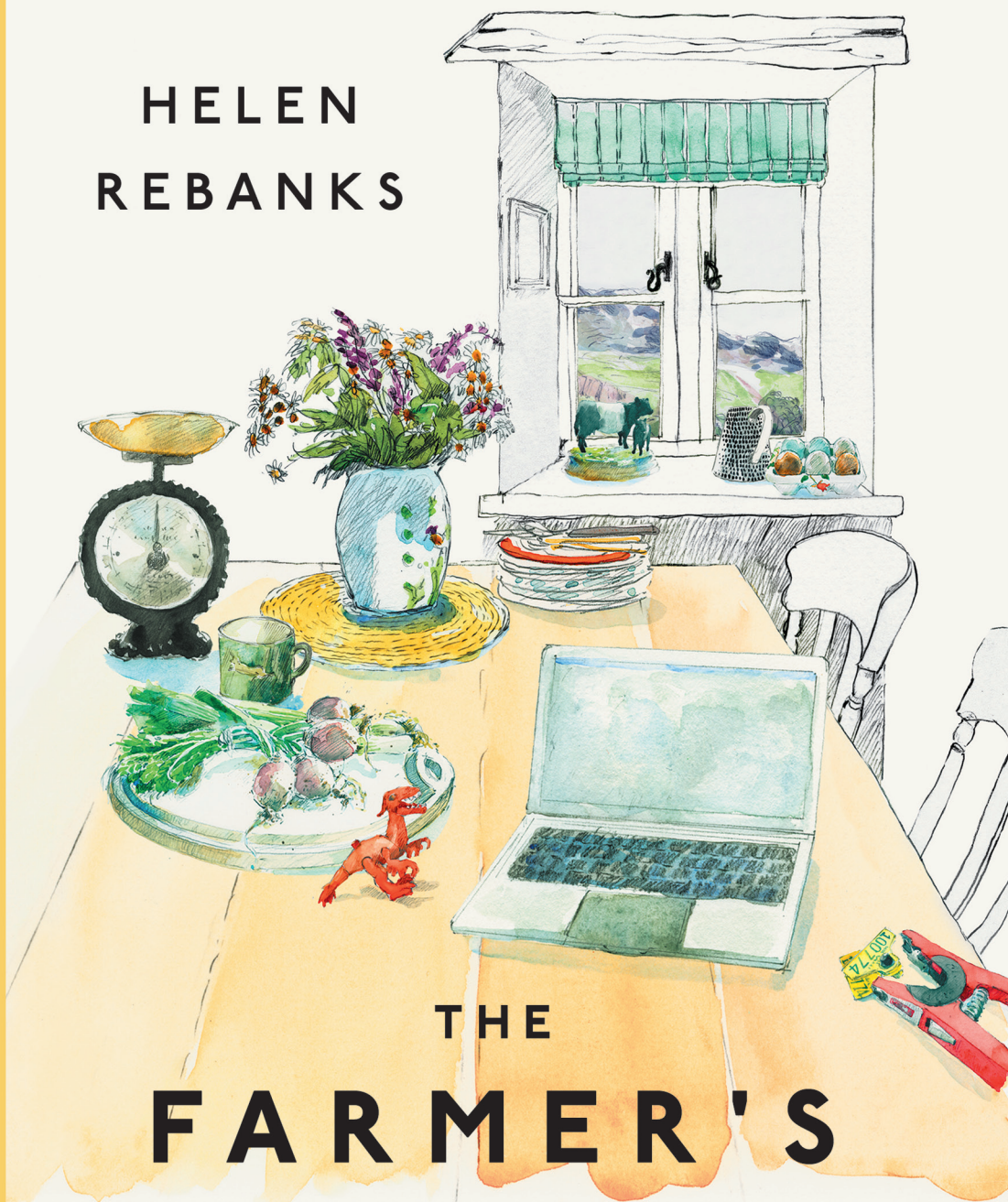


HELEN
REBANKS



THE
**FARMER'S
WIFE**

My Life in Days

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

The Farmer's Wife

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Published by Harper Horizon, an imprint of HarperCollins Focus LLC.

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ISBN: 978-0-7852-9049-0 (Ebook)

ISBN: 978-0-7852-9048-3 (HC)

ISBN: 978-1-4003-4170-2 (ITPE)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023938081

Printed in the United States of America

ScoutAutomatedSourceCode

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GRANNY PYPER'S MARMALADE

If you like even more bits in your marmalade, slice up the lemon rind, too, or another citrus, and mix in with the orange.

Prep 1 hour 30 minutes | Cook 1 hour

Makes twelve 1-pint jars

Ingredients

3 pounds Seville oranges
3 lemons
12 cups cold water
about 15 cups granulated sugar

You will need

a large pan
a selection of 12 glass jars with lids—or a pack of cellophane
lids with wax discs and labels (found in preserving section of
supermarket or online)
cheesecloth, some string
a wooden spoon
a spouted measuring cup
a large bowl
meat grinder (or grinder attachment) or cutting board and knife
a sieve
a small saucer or plate

Method

1. Wash the glass jars in hot, soapy water, rinse well, and warm in a 350°F oven for 10 minutes to kill any bacteria. Warm them up again before you need to fill them; boiling-hot jam may break a cold jar.
2. Peel the oranges with a knife or vegetable peeler and halve them. Halve the lemons, too, but don't peel them.

3. Squeeze the juice out of the oranges and lemons and sieve it into a spouted measuring cup or bowl.
4. Take the seeds and pulp from the sieve and put them into a piece of cheesecloth, then tie it with string.
5. Run the pith and peel from the squeezed orange halves through an old-fashioned meat grinder or slice and chop by hand, cutting it coarse or fine according to your marmalade taste.
6. Put the lemon halves, chopped orange peel, and cheesecloth bag of seeds into a large pan or bowl with the water along with the strained juice. You can let this stand overnight or just carry on to the next stage.
7. Transfer the mixture (including the cheesecloth bag of seeds) to a saucepan and bring to a boil, then simmer for approximately 40 minutes.
8. Allow to cool and remove any rougher pieces, if you want to, with a slotted spoon.
9. When cool enough, squeeze the bag of seeds over the pan to release any pectin (natural thickening agent). Scrape away the pectin with a spoon or knife and stir it back into the mixture.
10. Put a saucer or small plate in the freezer.
11. Pour the mixture into a large measuring cup to see how much there is (make a note) and then return to the pan. For every 2 1/2 cups of liquid, add 3 cups of sugar.
12. Bring the mixture to a boil again and keep stirring for 10 minutes.
13. Put a teaspoon of the marmalade on the cold saucer to test for a set. Let it settle for a minute. You are looking for a wrinkly skin on it as you push it with your finger. If it doesn't wrinkle, put the plate back in the freezer and keep the marmalade boiling for another 5 minutes. Keep going until your marmalade wrinkles on the plate.
14. Pour the marmalade into warm sterilized jars and top with a wax disc to seal, and either a fabric cover or a cellophane one—these are usually included in the pack with the wax discs and elastic bands or a jam jar lid.
15. Label the jars with the date. They will keep for over a year if properly sterilized and sealed and kept in a cool, dry place.

CUSTARD

HOMEMADE CUSTARD

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 25 minutes

Makes about 3 1/2 cups

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups whole milk
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or a vanilla bean
- 4 large egg yolks
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

Method

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the milk, cream, and vanilla. If using a vanilla bean, split the pod with a sharp knife, scrape the seeds into the milk/cream mixture, and add the pod.
2. Warm the milk/cream over medium heat. Bring to a simmer but do not boil.
3. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks, cornstarch, and sugar together.
4. When the milk/cream is nearly boiling, pull it off the heat for 2 minutes. Carefully remove the vanilla pod (if used); this can be washed and reused. When dry, pop it in a jar of sugar to make vanilla sugar.
5. Pour the milk/cream mixture over the egg/cornstarch/sugar paste. Whisk together quickly.
6. Pour into a clean medium saucepan and gently warm, stirring for about 20 minutes until thickened. Serve immediately or drape plastic wrap over the surface of the custard to prevent a skin from forming. Allow to cool, then keep covered in the fridge for up to 3 days.

CUSTARD MADE WITH BIRD'S CUSTARD POWDER

Makes about 2 1/2 cups

Ingredients

- 2 1/3 cups whole milk
- 2 heaping tablespoons Bird's Custard Powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar

Method

1. Pour the milk into a medium saucepan.
2. In a bowl or measuring cup, blend the custard powder and sugar with 2 to 3 tablespoons of the milk from the pan to form a paste.
3. Bring the milk to a boil until it is rising in the pan, then lift off to pour into the paste in the bowl or measuring cup, stirring it fast. It should thicken quickly.
4. Let stand for 2 to 3 minutes before serving.

MACAROONS (TO USE UP YOUR EGG WHITES)

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 10 minutes

Makes 24 macaroons

Ingredients

- 2 egg whites
- 1 cup plus 1 1/2 tablespoons almond flour
- 1 cup plus 6 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon almond (or vanilla) extract

Method

1. Heat the oven to 340°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Whisk the egg whites in a clean, dry bowl until they have formed stiff peaks.
3. Fold in the almonds, sugar, and almond extract with a spoon until combined.
4. Place evenly spaced 1-tablespoon blobs of the mixture onto the lined baking sheet and bake in the oven for 10 minutes or until lightly browned and firm to the touch. The crusts will harden as they cool.
5. Let cool and store in an airtight tin.

COCONUT AND JAM TARTS

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 20 to 25 minutes

Makes 24 small tarts (you will need to make 2 batches unless you have 2 muffin tins)

Ingredients for the pastry:

- 3 1/4 cups (400 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (unless using salted butter)
- 14 tablespoons (7 ounces / 200 grams) cold unsalted butter
(or 4 ounces lard + 3 ounces butter)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 5 to 8 tablespoons cold water

Of course, use store-bought pie dough if you want to, but the joy of making your own is knowing that it doesn't contain a lot of hidden ingredients.

Ingredients for the filling:

- 2 large eggs
- 1/3 cup (125 grams) superfine sugar
- 3 1/2 tablespoons (50 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/4 cups (225 grams) unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1/2 cup raspberry jam (for a quick homemade recipe, see page 45)

Method

1. Make the pastry. In a food processor, whizz up the flour, salt, butter, and sugar until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. (Alternatively, rub the butter into the flour, salt, and sugar lightly with your fingertips in a bowl.)
2. Adding 1 tablespoon of water at a time, pulse the mixture until combined into a ball. (Or stir in with a fork until you are starting to form a ball of dough.)
3. Tip the pastry out of the mixer or the bowl onto a clean, lightly floured surface and combine the rest by hand.

4. Once in a ball, flatten into a disc, cover, and chill for 30 minutes.
5. Heat the oven to 340°F. Grease and flour 12 cups each of two muffin tins (a total of 24).
6. Make the filling. In a bowl, beat the eggs well with a whisk. Add the sugar, melted butter, vanilla, and coconut and mix to combine.
7. Roll the pastry to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick or as thin as possible. Use a 3-inch round cutter to cut into 24 rounds and gently press the rounds of pastry into the muffin cups.
8. Put a scant teaspoon of raspberry jam in the bottom of each tart shell.
9. Cover the jam with 2 tablespoons of the coconut filling. Lightly press the mixture down if you're after neater tarts or leave them with a bit of texture.
10. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until lightly golden brown.
11. Let cool before removing from the pans. (The residual heat from the pan helps to crisp up the bottom of the tart shells.)

COCOA AND HOT CHOCOLATE

Hot chocolate and hot cocoa are two different drinks. Hot chocolate in its simplest form is melted chocolate in hot milk—creamy and delicious. But if you want a lighter drink, cocoa can be sweetened to your taste with sugar and stirred into hot milk. Both drinks can be flavored, too, with a variety of things like orange, mint, caramel, chili, or spices like cinnamon and nutmeg.

LUXURY HOT CHOCOLATE

Ingredients

4 ounces good-quality chocolate (semisweet, 30 to 40 percent cacao; darker chocolate will give a richer, bitter flavor)
1 large mug of whole milk
whipped cream and grated chocolate, for topping

Method

1. Chop or grate a small bar of chocolate into a small saucepan of hot milk until it is all melted, then pour into a mug.
2. Top with whipped cream and grated chocolate.

COCOA

Great for kids since it gets them a warm chocolate drink without all the sugar of the store-bought powders.

Ingredients

1 mug of whole milk
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, plus more for sprinkling
1/2 teaspoon sugar (more or less, according to taste)
a pinch of salt (again, to taste)

Method

1. Pour the milk into a small saucepan and set over medium heat.
2. Whisk in the cocoa powder and add the sugar and salt, if using, and any flavorings. Heat long enough to dissolve the sugar, but don't boil.
3. Serve in a mug with a sprinkling of cocoa.

DAUPHINOISE POTATOES

This is an easy dish to make in advance of your meal. You can either keep it warm or put it together, leave to cool, store in the fridge, and bake when you need it. It provides a change from mashed or roasted potatoes and goes well with most roast meats. We have dauphinoise potatoes with roast lamb, lamb leg steaks, ham or shredded ham hock, sirloin or strip steak, and roast pork.

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 55 minutes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

- 2 ¼ cups heavy cream
- 2 ⅓ cups whole milk
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed whole
- 8 to 10 large potatoes (russet or other baking potato)
- salt and pepper, to taste
- butter for the baking dish
- a handful (about ½ cup) of grated cheese (optional)

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F.
2. Put the cream, milk, and garlic cloves in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat to warm through.
3. Peel and slice the potatoes into ⅛-inch slices.
4. Put the potatoes into the pot of warm milk and cream and heat until simmering for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent them from sticking together. Season well with salt and pepper.
5. With a slotted spoon, gently scoop the potatoes into a buttered 2-quart baking dish and carefully pour in the milk/cream mixture from the pot. Sprinkle with the cheese, if using.
6. Place the baking dish in the oven to bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until golden brown.

SPANISH CHICKEN STEW

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 1 hour 10 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

- olive oil for frying
- 1 pound chicken thighs/breasts (I prefer bone-in, skin-on pieces)
- 2 ounces Spanish chorizo, cut into chunks
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 onions, sliced
- 1 red, green, or yellow bell pepper, sliced (or a mix)
- 1 head of fennel, trimmed, or 1 zucchini, chopped (or both)
- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups canned tomato puree or 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- a few sprigs of fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 (15-ounce) can of cannellini or butter beans, drained
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups chicken stock
- 8 pitted green or black olives, whole or halved (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste
- balsamic or sherry vinegar to serve
- fresh herbs to serve

Note: If you don't have fresh bell pepper, use some roasted red peppers from a jar. Also, if you have some white wine on hand, halve the stock and add a large glass at step 4.

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F, unless using a slow cooker or cooking on the stovetop.
2. In a large, heavy ovenproof skillet with a lid or a Dutch oven, heat a little olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the chicken pieces and fry until

golden. Don't overload the pan; do it in two batches if necessary. Add the chorizo at the end to release the flavor.

3. Remove the browned chicken and chorizo and set on a plate while you cook the vegetables.
4. Add the minced garlic, onion, bell pepper, and fennel/zucchini and cook for 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened.
5. Add the tomato puree (or canned diced tomatoes), tomato paste, thyme, beans, paprika, chicken stock, and olives (if using). Season well with salt and pepper.
6. Return the chicken pieces and chorizo to the pan and put the lid on. Cook in the oven or over low heat on the stovetop for 40 to 50 minutes. If using a slow cooker, cook for 2 hours on low.
7. Finish the whole dish with a little drizzle of balsamic or sherry vinegar and a scattering of whatever fresh herb you have on hand; parsley, cilantro, or more thyme work well.

OATMEAL

CLASSIC OATMEAL

Serve your oatmeal with whatever toppings you prefer. I like maple syrup and blueberries. Dried fruits like raisins, stewed plums, or apples and cinnamon go well with oatmeal too.

Cook 10 minutes

Serves 1

Ingredients

1/2 cup rolled oats
3/4 to 1 cup water or milk (or half water and half milk)
a pinch of salt if you like

Method

1. Put the oats in a small saucepan with the water/milk (and salt, if using). Cook over medium-low heat, stirring for 10 minutes until thickened.
2. Spoon into a bowl to serve. If you like your oatmeal looser, stir in more liquid over heat.

OVERNIGHT OATS

This summer alternative is a basic recipe that can be adapted to suit your taste.

Prep 10 minutes

Serves 1 (generously)

Ingredients

3/4 cup rolled oats
2 teaspoons chia seeds
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon maple syrup

1 tablespoon Greek yogurt

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ apple, grated

Method

1. Stir all the ingredients together in a large jar with a lid, or Tupperware; cover and leave overnight before adding any additional fruits, spices, or seeds you like on your oats. Homegrown blueberries and raspberries are my favorites.

BASIC PIZZA DOUGH

Prep 20 minutes, plus 30 minutes for proofing | Cook 10 to 12 minutes per pizza

Makes 4 large or 8 small pizzas

Ingredients for the dough

- 3 1/4 cups (400 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 (1/4-ounce) envelope instant (fast-acting) yeast
- 1 cup (225 grams) warm water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Ingredients for the pizza

- 1 to 2 tablespoons tomato puree or tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup grated mozzarella or any cheese you like
- additional toppings, 1/2 cup each (optional): chopped ham, prosciutto, peppers, onion, tomato, mushrooms, spinach

Method

1. Weigh out or measure the flour into a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and add the sugar, salt, and yeast. Pour in the warm water and olive oil and bring together by hand or in a mixer with a dough hook. Knead for a few minutes until you have a smooth ball.
2. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes in a clean bowl or on a lightly floured surface. Heat the oven as high as it will go, or fire up the pizza oven if you have one. Put a pizza stone or baking sheet into the oven to preheat.
3. Once rested, cut and shape the dough into 4 large or 8 small balls. Lightly flour the work surface and roll the dough into pizza rounds, stretching out by hand to your desired thickness. Use a pizza peel to place each round onto the hot pizza stone or baking sheet.
4. Top with 1 or 2 tablespoons of tomato puree or tomato sauce, depending on the size of pizza, leaving about a 1-inch border. Add good-quality

mozzarella or a grated cheese that you like. Add up to 3 toppings, but don't overload the pizza since this will make it soggy.

5. Slide the pizza, or more at once if you have space, into the hot oven. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the edges are starting to brown and the top is bubbling.

Note: These work really well started off in a greased skillet—the bottom crisps and bubbles, ready to slide into the oven.

MINTED “LAMB” STEAKS WITH ROASTED NEW POTATOES

MINTED LAMB STEAKS

We rarely eat “lamb,” and certainly never imported lamb. Our temperate climate and hilly ground is ideal for grazing sheep. Britain has a proud shepherding culture and history. As a family we regularly eat Herdwick hogget (a sheep of around eighteen months old) and mutton (an adult sheep)—these sheep have lived outdoors all their lives. This means the meat has been more slowly grown from herbs and grasses from the hills and is tastier than the pale, flavorless lamb found in most supermarkets that has been fattened on grain. Buying direct from a farmer or local butcher means you know where your meat has come from. Most butchers and some farmers now offer an online delivery service.

This recipe can be made with dried mint, but it’s much better with fresh.

Prep 15 minutes, plus resting time | Cook 10 to 15 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients for the mint sauce:

- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 bunch fresh mint, leaves picked
- a pinch of sugar (optional)
- salt and pepper

Or: 2 teaspoons good-quality, store-bought mint sauce, such as Colman’s, loosened with a dash of olive oil and salt and pepper

Ingredients for the lamb:

- 4 lamb sirloin steaks (6 ounces each), hogget if you can find it
- salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus a little more if frying

Method

1. Make the mint sauce. In a food processor, blitz the garlic, vinegar, and mint (with a pinch of sugar if you like). Season to taste. Set the mint sauce aside.
2. Bring the lamb to room temperature. Season the lamb generously. Cook the steaks, skin side down first, on a grill—the coals should be white—or in a hot pan, lightly oiled, over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, basting with the mint sauce with each turn until browned all over. This will give you steaks that are pink in the middle; cook the steaks a minute more on each side if they are extra-thick or if you like them a little more well-done.
3. Remove the meat from the pan, baste with any remaining mint sauce, and let rest for 10 minutes (or more time if you have it) covered with foil.
4. Serve the steaks as they are, or sliced and spread across a bed of salad greens, sliced red onion, cucumber, and tomatoes, dressed with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

ROASTED NEW POTATOES

Prep 5 minutes | Cook 35 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 pound baby new potatoes
olive oil
sea salt and black pepper

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil and cook the new potatoes for 5 minutes so that they're still firm. Drain well.
3. Spread the potatoes on a sheet pan, drizzle with olive oil, and season with sea salt and black pepper.
4. Roast for 30 minutes, or until golden and soft.

QUICK TZATZIKI

Makes 1 small bowl

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups plain yogurt
- 3-inch piece of cucumber, halved, seeded, and diced
- small handful of fresh mint, leaves picked, very finely chopped
- 1/2 garlic clove, minced
- salt and pepper

Method

1. In a bowl, stir together the yogurt, cucumber, mint, and garlic. Season well with salt and pepper. Store in the fridge until needed.

PEACH HALVES WITH VANILLA BEAN CREAM

These are even better cooked on a grill—make sure the coals are white-hot when you put your peaches on and then grill flesh side down for 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the heat of your fire. You want the peaches to start caramelizing in their own juices—no need for the sugar and butter. If you don't want to make the vanilla bean cream, ice cream works really well too.

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 15 minutes

Serves 4 to 8

Ingredients

- 4 peaches or nectarines, ideally ripe and ready to eat, but firm fruit will work
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Method

1. Heat the oven 400°F.
2. Halve the fruit, remove the pits, and place the fruit cut side up in an ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with the brown sugar and add a small knob of butter to each half.
3. Roast until juicy and soft and hot right through, about 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, to make the vanilla cream, whip the cream by hand or with a mixer until you have soft peaks. Slice the vanilla bean open with a small sharp knife, scrape out the vanilla seeds into the whipped cream, and fold them in.
5. Serve the vanilla cream in a bowl alongside the hot fruit.

BLACKBERRY JELLY

Prep 1 hour | Cook 45 minutes

Makes three or four jam jars. This is dependent on how far your jelly reduces but good to have this many at the ready! Mine made just over 2 1/2 cups.

Ingredients

- 1 pound 5 ounces ripe blackberries (weigh your fruit: you want equal fruit-to-sugar ratio)
- 1 cup water
- 3 cups (600 grams / 1 pound 5 ounces) granulated sugar
- juice of 1 lemon

You will need

- a large pan
- a masher
- a large ovenproof bowl
- a jelly bag or a fine-mesh sieve lined with cheesecloth
- 3 or 4 sterilized jam jars

Method

1. Wash the berries in a sieve or bowl of cold water. Drain.
2. Place the fruit and water in a heavy-bottomed pot. Cover and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes to stew the fruit.
3. Reduce the heat to low. Uncover, mash the fruit well to release the juices, then add the sugar and lemon juice to the pan.
4. Put a large ovenproof bowl in a low oven so it is hot when you need it.
5. Keep the saucepan of fruit cooking over low heat to dissolve all the sugar into the juice. This takes about 10 minutes.
6. Turn the heat up and boil, rapidly stirring to prevent sticking, for 8 minutes.
7. Take the bowl from the oven and place a jelly bag or cheesecloth-lined sieve over it.

8. Pour the hot jam mixture through the jelly bag or lined sieve carefully. You may need an extra pair of hands to help.
9. Press the hot pulp through the jelly bag or sieve quickly with the back of a spoon before the liquid has a chance to set into a jelly. If it does, you can put it into another clean saucepan to reheat it gently. Discard the seeds.
10. Pour the liquid into warm sterilized jars (see Marmalade, page 5). Seal, label, and store. This jelly keeps for about 1 month in the fridge.

ALMOND BAR COOKIES

Prep 25 minutes | Rest 20 to 30 minutes | Cook 25 to 30 minutes

Makes 24 slices

Ingredients for the pastry:

- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups (200 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 7 tablespoons (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces / 100 grams) cold, unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 to 3 tablespoons cold water

Ingredients for the filling and topping:

- 7 tablespoons (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces / 100 grams) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (150 grams) self-rising flour
- 7 tablespoons (50 grams) almond flour
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 7 tablespoons raspberry jam
- 2 tablespoons sliced almonds to top

Method

1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Grease and lightly flour a 9 × 13-inch jelly-roll pan.
2. Make the pastry. In a food processor, whizz up the all-purpose flour, butter, and sugar until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. (If making by hand, rub in the flour and butter with your fingertips and stir in the sugar.)
3. Add the cold water and pulse until the mixture is combined into a ball. (If making by hand, gently combine the water and the flour mixture with a fork, and then use your hands to form it into a ball.)

4. Wrap or cover the ball of dough and put in the fridge to rest for 20 to 30 minutes.
5. Make the filling. In a stand mixer (or in a bowl by hand), beat the butter and sugar well. Beat in the eggs and self-rising flour until completely combined to make a batter.
6. Fold the almond flour and almond extract into the mixture.
7. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface to a rough rectangle $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Roll the dough up over the rolling pin and unroll it over the jelly-roll pan, pressing the dough into the corners with your fingers.
8. Spread the jam over the dough and then spoon the filling mixture carefully over the jam, using a fork to tease it out to the sides of the pan. Scatter on the sliced almonds.
9. Bake in the middle of the oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden.
10. Let cool before cutting into squares.

LEMON MERINGUE PIE

This recipe is for an 8-inch fluted pie plate. If your pie pan is bigger, or you're not confident you can roll the dough thinly enough, double the quantities for the dough and wrap and freeze any leftovers.

Prep 40 minutes | Rest pie dough for 20 to 30 minutes | Cook 45 minutes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients for the pie dough:

¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons (110 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more
for dusting

3 ½ tablespoons (25 grams) powdered sugar

4 tablespoons (55 grams) cold unsalted butter

1 egg yolk

2 tablespoons cold water

Or: 1 store-bought refrigerated pie crust

Ingredients for the lemon curd filling:

juice of 2 lemons

2 egg yolks

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon water

3 tablespoons cornstarch

6 tablespoons granulated sugar

Ingredients for the meringue:

2 egg whites

6 tablespoons granulated sugar

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F.
2. Make the pie dough. In a food processor, whizz the flour, powdered sugar, and butter together to a crumbly, sand-like texture. (Or mix by hand.)

3. Add the egg yolk and water and mix again to form a dough. Bring together into a ball on a lightly floured surface if it hasn't come together already. Wrap the pastry and chill in the fridge for 20 to 30 minutes.
4. Roll out the pastry to a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick between two sheets of parchment paper to prevent it from sticking to your surface, and line an 8-inch fluted pie dish, gently pressing it into the corners of the dish with your knuckles.
5. Cover the pie shell with one of the sheets of parchment (used for rolling the dough) and tip in enough pie weights (or dried beans or rice) to reach the top of the pastry.
6. Bake the pie crust in the middle of the oven for 10 minutes. Remove the paper and weights and cook for 5 minutes longer, or until golden and crisp.
7. Make the lemon curd. In a medium saucepan, whisk together the lemon juice, egg yolks, water, cornstarch, and sugar. Warm over medium-low heat until it starts to thicken, then increase the heat slightly and cook for a minute more, whisking until you have a thick, glossy curd that coats the back of a wooden spoon.
8. Pour the curd into the baked and cooled pie shell and smooth it with a spatula. The pastry and the curd can be prepared and assembled a day ahead and kept in the fridge.
9. Make the meringue. With the oven set to 350°F again, whip the egg whites to stiff peaks in a clean dry bowl—3 to 4 minutes in a stand mixer or with a hand mixer.
10. Add the sugar bit by bit until it is all combined and the sugar has dissolved. Check this by rubbing a little of the meringue between your thumb and index finger; if it feels granular, whip it some more.
11. Gently spoon large clouds of the meringue on top of the pie, spreading out to the edges and adding peaks with a fork or the back of a spoon. Bake for 15 minutes until golden.

CRUMBLY DATE SQUARES

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 30 minutes

Ingredients for the date filling:

- 7 ounces pitted dried dates, chopped
- scant $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed light or dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup boiling water

Ingredients for the oat base and crumble:

- 7 tablespoons (100 grams) unsalted butter
- 6 tablespoons (85 grams) light or dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons Lyle's golden syrup or maple syrup
- 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups (210 grams) rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (85 grams) all-purpose flour

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8-inch square brownie pan and line with parchment paper.
2. Make the date filling. In a medium saucepan, combine the chopped dates, brown sugar, vanilla, lemon zest, and boiling water. Stir over low heat until the dates have absorbed most of the liquid. Allow to cool.
3. Make the oat base and crumble. In a small saucepan, melt the butter, brown sugar, and golden syrup or maple syrup together. Stir in the oats and cinnamon and fold in the flour.
4. Press half of the oat mixture into the lined pan. Spread with the cooled date mixture. Crumble the rest of the oat mix on top and press down gently.
5. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until golden. Allow to cool, then cut into squares.

Alternatives to the date filling: rhubarb with orange zest/juice and a

little sugar to sweeten; blackberries cooked into a jam with orange/lemon juice and sugar, with a few left whole; raspberries and apples cooked in a pan with a little sugar and water.

GRANNY ANNIE'S GINGER COOKIES

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 15 minutes

Makes 22 cookies

Ingredients

- 8 tablespoons (4 ounces / 115 grams) unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon Lyle's golden syrup or light corn syrup
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar (170 grams) or light brown sugar (190 grams)
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (340 grams) self-rising flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a stand mixer or by hand, beat the butter, syrup, and sugar together. Beat in the egg. Add the flour, ginger, and baking soda to form a dough.
3. Scoop into walnut-sized balls with a spoon or your hands, flattening slightly, and bake on the prepared baking sheet for 15 minutes, or until golden.
4. Transfer with a spatula to a cooling rack when they become crunchy. (The cookies crisp up as they cool.)

LAMB EMPANADAS

Prep 25 minutes | Cook 1 hour 15 minutes

Makes 6 large pastries

Ingredients

1 onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup finely chopped mix vegetables: 1/2 red or green bell pepper;
a few mushrooms or green beans; 1/2 zucchini or 1 medium
carrot
7 ounces ground lamb
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
2 green onions or 1/2 onion, finely chopped
scant 1/2 cup frozen green peas
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed in the refrigerator
glaze: 1 egg, beaten, or a little milk in a cup
raita or yogurt and/or Indian pickle or mango chutney to serve

Method

1. In a skillet, heat a little oil and cook the onion and diced vegetables for 10 minutes, or until soft. Scoop them out into a bowl and set aside.
2. In the same pan, fry the ground meat and salt over medium heat, breaking it up until it starts to brown. Return the onion and vegetables to the pan and stir in the cumin seeds, cayenne, coriander, ground cumin, and turmeric. Cover the pan with a lid and cook gently over low heat for 30 minutes to make sure the meat is fully cooked and the vegetables are tender.
3. Once cooked, let cool completely. Stir in the green onions and peas.
4. Heat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

5. Roll out the pastry to 12 × 18 inches. Cut into 6 squares of roughly 6 inches. Fill the squares on one corner with the cooled lamb filling, making sure to leave a border clear. Brush the edges with milk and fold the pastry in half diagonally to make a triangle, pressing and sealing it into a hand pie, crimping the edges if you like. If you're finding it fiddly, remove a little of the filling.
6. Prick the top with a fork or knife and place on the lined baking sheet, brush with the egg or milk, and bake in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown.
7. Serve with raita or yogurt, Indian pickle, and mango chutney.

ROAST BEEF AND YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS

ROAST BEEF

Sourcing your beef is the most important part of this meal—buy the best you can afford and look out for special offers of beef boxes direct from farmers. Cuts to choose from are ribeye (on the bone or boned and rolled), tri-tip, top sirloin, and tenderloin. (Top and bottom round and brisket are best braised low and slow.) Be aware that meat may cook less evenly if bone-in; make sure you allow for good resting times, and if in doubt, use a meat thermometer.

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 2 hours (depending on the size of the cut)

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

4-pound beef roast (as above), brought to room temperature
salt and pepper
2 onions, sliced
2 cups stock (or water from cooking vegetables)
1 teaspoon red currant jelly or blackberry jelly
1/2 cup red wine
2 teaspoons all-purpose flour mixed with 1 tablespoon water

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. Season the meat. Set the sliced onions in the middle of a roasting pan.
3. Place the roast on top of the onions and put in the oven, basting it regularly with the juices as it roasts. Roast the beef according to its weight. Work on a rough calculation of 15 minutes per pound, plus 15 minutes to heat through, and then factor in 20 to 30 minutes of resting time. For a meal at 6:00 p.m., I would start cooking a 4-pound roast at 3:45 p.m. and give it 1 hour 15 minutes in the oven—testing the meat with a skewer toward

the end of cooking to see if the juices are starting to run clear. We like to eat our beef pink, so I would take it out before they are totally clear and leave it to rest under foil. You can also use a meat thermometer for greater accuracy—for medium-rare the thermometer should read 125° to 130°F when inserted into the center of the roast straight out of the oven, for medium 136° to 140°F, and for well-done 150° to 155°F.

4. Remove the meat from the roasting pan, scrape the onion and juices into a small saucepan, and add the stock or reserved vegetable cooking water. (I always use carrot cooking water for my gravy.)
5. Add the jelly and wine, then whisk in the flour/water paste. Stir over medium heat until thickened. Strain through a sieve into a warm pitcher or gravy boat.

YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS

Prep 5 minutes | Rest 30 minutes | Cook 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup (100 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups (290 grams) milk
- 1/2 cup (4 ounces) lard for the pan

You will need

- a 12-cup popover pan or a deep 12-cup muffin tin

Method

1. Heat the oven to 425°F or increase the oven temperature after you've taken the beef out. Position a rack in the top third of the oven.
2. Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and crack the eggs in. With a whisk, start to combine the eggs with the flour, adding the milk a little at a time to make a smooth batter. Pour it into a spouted measuring cup and let sit in the fridge for 30 minutes.
3. Scrape 1 to 3 teaspoons of lard into each cup of the popover pan or

muffin tin, and put in the hot oven for 2 to 3 minutes to preheat.

4. Take the hot pan out of the oven, being mindful not to spill the fat, and carefully fill each cup half-full with the cold batter. It should sizzle and bubble as it hits the oil.
5. Bake on the top rack of the oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until risen, golden, and crisp but not dried out.

BEEF NOODLES WITH GREENS

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 15 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients for the sauce:

- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch piece of fresh ginger, grated
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon ketchup

Ingredients for the main dish:

- 5 ounces egg noodles (wide or thin)
- 1 small head of broccoli, cut into florets, or 10 ounces broccolini
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 14 ounces steak, sliced (sirloin or a thin minute steak or any other cut you can get), or 14 ounces beef cut for stir-fry
- 2 handfuls fresh soybean sprouts or 8 ounces canned water chestnuts (see note)
- 1 head of bok choy, sliced
- 2 green onions, sliced finely

Note: Mushrooms also go well in this dish instead of bean sprouts or water chestnuts; at the end of step 3, remove the fried beef from the pan, fry the mushrooms, then combine the two and add the sauce and bok choy.

Method

1. Make the sauce. In a small bowl, combine the garlic, ginger, soy sauce, oyster sauce, vinegar, and ketchup.
2. Prepare the main dish. In a pot of boiling water, cook the noodles according to the package directions. Add the broccoli 2 minutes before

the end of cooking the noodles and drain. Rinse under cold water and set aside.

3. In a wok or large skillet, heat the sesame oil over high heat. Add the beef and stir-fry for 3 minutes, or until browned but not cooked through.
4. Add the sauce to the pan with the soybean sprouts / water chestnuts and bok choy and cook for 1 minute. Toss in the noodles and broccoli.
5. Serve topped with green onions.

LASAGNA

FANCY VERSION

If you can, make a large quantity (i.e., double the recipe below) of Bolognese sauce and freeze some for another day. This can be made 4 days ahead of when you make the lasagna, stored sealed in the fridge. My béchamel is made by adding all the ingredients in at the same time and whisking until thick—I don't add cheese to my sauce, as I prefer to scatter some on top of the lasagna before cooking.

Prep 45 minutes | Cook 1 hour 30 minutes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients for the Bolognese:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces ground beef
- 8 ounces ground pork
- salt and pepper
- 2 ounces pancetta or bacon, diced and fried (optional)
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 (24-ounce) can tomato puree or 1 (14.5-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 glass red wine
- scant 1 cup beef stock
- 5 button mushrooms, sliced (optional)
- 1/4 cup whole milk or a swirl of light cream

Ingredients for the béchamel sauce and lasagna:

- 3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter

6 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 1/3 cups whole-milk
salt and pepper
1 (17.6-ounce) package dried wide lasagna sheets (you may not
need all of them depending on the dish you use, and some may
need to be broken to fit)
Parmesan or cheddar cheese, grated, for sprinkling

Method

1. Make the Bolognese. In a large heavy-bottomed skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil and cook the ground beef and pork until browned. Season well while it is cooking.
2. Transfer the meat to a slow cooker or Dutch oven.
3. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil to the skillet and add the pancetta, garlic, onion, celery, and carrots. Sauté over medium heat for 15 minutes, or until soft, adding a little water if they start sticking.
4. Transfer the vegetables and pancetta to the slow cooker or Dutch oven with the meat. Add the tomato paste, tomato puree, red wine, and beef stock and stir well. Cook for 3 hours over low heat, adding the mushrooms in the last hour.
5. Stir the milk or cream into the meat mixture 10 minutes before the end of cooking. Remove from the heat and let cool.
6. Make the béchamel. In a saucepan, combine the butter, flour, and milk and whisk over medium heat for 5 to 10 minutes, or until thickened. You want a silky sauce rather than gloopy. Season well with salt and pepper.
7. Heat the oven to 400°F.
8. Assemble the lasagna. In a 12-inch square baking dish, alternate layers of the cooled Bolognese sauce and lasagna sheets and top with the béchamel sauce and grated cheese. You should get three layers with this quantity of sauce.
9. Bake for 40 minutes, or until the top is golden and the sauce is bubbling.

Note: Chefs making béchamel would first heat the butter in a pan, add the flour and whisk to form a “roux,” and then add the cold milk little by little, whisking over heat until the milk is combined into the flour and butter and the sauce has thickened.

CHEAT’S LASAGNA

You can make a faster Bolognese sauce for your lasagna by browning the meat and adding a ready-made jar or two of pasta sauce and simmering for 20 minutes. I would recommend adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of milk or cream toward the end to enrich it. Make the béchamel sauce as in the longer recipe, and layer and bake the same as above.

RICE PUDDING, THREE WAYS

Serve with a quick homemade raspberry jam (see below).

SIMPLE

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 2 hours

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

a knob of butter to grease the dish
1/2 cup short-grain rice
1/2 cup granulated sugar
5 cups whole milk

Method

1. Heat the oven to 325°F.
2. Grease an 8-inch square baking dish with the butter.
3. Rinse the rice in a sieve under cold water.
4. Add the rice, sugar, and milk to the baking dish and stir together.
5. Bake in a low oven for 2 hours—stir a couple of times in the first hour, but then let a brown skin form on top.

SLOW COOKER

This cooking method won't form a browned skin on the rice pudding but is ideal if you don't want the oven on for ages.

Prep 5 minutes | Cook 4 hours

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

As for Simple Rice Pudding

Method

1. Use the butter to grease the bowl of the slow cooker. Add the rice, sugar, and milk. Cover and cook for 4 hours on high (or until the rice has absorbed all the milk), stirring halfway through cooking.

LUXURY CREAMY RICE PUDDING

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 1 hour 35 minutes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

a knob of butter to grease the dish
3 cups whole milk
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups heavy cream
1 vanilla bean, split
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup short-grain rice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
freshly grated nutmeg for the top

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8-inch square baking dish with the butter.
2. Split open the vanilla bean. (Do not scrape out the seeds.) In a large saucepan, combine the milk, heavy cream, and vanilla bean and bring to a boil—be careful not to let it boil over.
3. Remove from the heat and stir in the rice and sugar. Remove the vanilla bean, transfer the hot mixture carefully to the baking dish, and even out the rice with a fork or a spoon.
4. Bake for 20 minutes, then reduce the oven to 325°F and bake for 1 hour, or until the top is browned and bubbling. Allow to cool slightly before serving with a grating of nutmeg.

A QUICK (TEN-MINUTE) RASPBERRY JAM

Makes 1 small jar of jam

Ingredients

1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 tablespoons water

1 1/2 cups (8 ounces) fresh or frozen raspberries

Method

1. In a saucepan, heat the sugar and water until the sugar has dissolved.
2. Add the raspberries, breaking the fruit down with the back of a spoon or fork. Boil for 3 to 4 minutes until it has formed a jam—it will thicken as it cools. Store in the fridge for 3 to 4 days.

FANCY NIBBLES

HONEY MUSTARD SAUSAGES

Prep 5 minutes | Cook 15 minutes

Makes as many as you need for your party

Ingredients

good-quality fresh pork sausage links (2–3 per person)
Dijon or whole-grain mustard
honey

Method

1. Place the sausages either in a skillet on the stove with a little oil over medium heat or in a roasting pan and into a 400°F oven for 10 minutes until browned.
2. For every 12 sausages, add 2 teaspoons mustard and 2 teaspoons honey to the pan and stir to coat.
3. Finish off the sausages in the oven or on the stovetop for 5 minutes longer, or until cooked through. These can be served hot or warm.

BLINIS WITH CRÈME FRAÎCHE AND SMOKED SALMON

If you have some ready-made blinis, simply warm them on a baking sheet, then let cool slightly before adding a scrape of crème fraîche, sour cream, or cream cheese, and a little piece of smoked salmon and a sprig of dill.

Prep 15 minutes, plus resting time | Cook 25 minutes

Makes 45 mini-blinis

Ingredients

1 1/3 cups (170 grams) all-purpose flour (or half whole wheat and half all-purpose)
1 teaspoon instant (fast-acting) yeast

a pinch of salt
1 egg
1 cup (250 grams) lukewarm milk
oil or butter for frying

Method

1. In a bowl, mix the flour, yeast, and salt. Make a well in the center, crack the egg in, and whisk gently, adding the milk bit by bit until it is all combined.
2. Cover the batter and let stand for at least 1 hour. You can make this batter 24 hours ahead and store it in the fridge until ready to cook.
3. In a large skillet, heat a little oil or butter over medium heat and add small spoonfuls—about 1 heaping teaspoon for canapé-size pancakes—of the batter to the pan. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes on each side. (Turn as bubbles start to rise on the surface of the blinis.) Repeat until you have used all the batter.
4. Let cool slightly before topping and serving. Or let cool completely and store in a container for a day or two, or in the freezer, until you need them.

EASY EGGPLANT DIP / BABA GHANOUSH

Prep 5 minutes | Cook 40 minutes

Makes 1 small dish (double up as you need—also freezes well)

Ingredients

- 1 eggplant (about 1 pound)
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed and unpeeled
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and pepper
- juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- pita, crostini, or sliced raw vegetables (such as peppers, celery, carrots, and cucumbers) to serve

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F.
2. Halve the eggplant lengthwise and place cut side up on a baking sheet with the garlic cloves. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and season well with salt and pepper. Roast until tender, 30 to 40 minutes.
3. Allow the eggplant to cool slightly, then scoop out the roasted eggplant flesh (discard the skin) into a blender. Add the roasted garlic cloves (minus the skin), lemon juice, tahini, and the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil.
4. To get a nice dipping consistency, you may need to add slightly more lemon juice, olive oil, or a little water, but taste and check it first.
5. Serve with toasted pita bread, crostini, or raw vegetables.

STEAK AND HOMEMADE FRIES

STEAK

Choose the best steak you can afford from a farm or shop you trust. Rib-eye, strip, sirloin, tomahawk, filet, or flatiron steaks are some options, and they vary in price and size. Timings given here are for a strip steak, but a larger bone-in steak will need searing as below and cooking in a hot oven depending on its size. You can add mushrooms, onion, garlic, and a little cream and Dijon mustard to the meat juices in the pan to make a quick sauce to serve with the steak.

Prep 5 minutes | Cook 15 to 20 minutes (plus 30 minutes for oven-cooked fries)

Serves 2

Ingredients

2 strip steaks (about 9 ounces each), 1 inch thick
salt and pepper
oil and butter for frying

Method

1. Season your steak well with salt and pepper, then let it get to room temperature before you cook it. (Never cook it straight from the fridge.) Heat a heavy-bottomed pan on high heat and add a little oil or fat.
2. When cooking a strip steak, which has a good bit of fat on one side, use tongs to hold the steak upright with the fat side down in the hot pan first, to sear the fat and release some of it into the pan.
3. Set the steak flat again and sear one side of the steak, then turn it and baste it regularly, adding a knob of butter during cooking.
4. Cook for as long or as little as you like to get the steak to your preference—rare, medium, or well-done. This just takes practice and experience. Approximate cooking times for a 1-inch-thick strip steak: 1.5 to 2 minutes per side for rare, 2 to 3 minutes per side for medium-

rare, 3 to 4 minutes for medium to well-done, and 5 to 6 minutes per side for well-done.

5. Before serving, rest your steak for up to 10 minutes on a warm plate or carving board with a groove to collect the meat juices.

HOMEMADE FRIES

These can be fried or alternatively made in the oven, which uses less fat. I am trying to cut out oils like sunflower, canola, corn, and other seed oils from my family's diet because they are highly processed.

Prep 10 minutes | Stand 1 hour | Cook 10 minutes per batch

Makes as many as you need for your party

Deep-Fried Fries

Ingredients

large baking potatoes (about 12 ounces each), such as russets;
allow 1 to 2 potatoes per person
salt
enough beef tallow drippings or high-temperature oil for filling your
fryer by one-third or a few tablespoons for an air fryer

Method

1. Peel, slice, and cut the potatoes into the fry size of your preference and set in a bowl of cold water to rest for an hour or so to remove the starch. (This makes them crispy.)
2. Heat up the tallow or oil in a deep pot or deep-fryer.
3. Dry the potatoes with a kitchen towel or paper towel before frying.
4. Fry the fries in one batch first, until cooked through but not browned, for 5 to 10 minutes. Lift them out of the pan and let the fat heat up again.
5. Give the fries a second fry until browned and crispy—watch them if you've cut them very thin—then lift out of your fryer, season to taste, and serve.

Oven-Cooked Fries

Ingredients

- 2 to 3 large baking potatoes (about 16 ounces each), such as russets
- salt
- 3 tablespoons beef tallow drippings, lard, or goose fat

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. Peel (see note) and slice the potatoes as above, soak in cold water for an hour or so, then drain and dry them.
3. In a sheet pan, melt a few tablespoons of the fat in the oven. Remove from the oven and toss the potatoes on the pan to cover in the fat.
4. Roast for 30 to 40 minutes, depending on their thickness, until browned and crispy, and season to taste.

Note: You can leave the skins of the potatoes on if they are washed.

I also make oven-roasted cubes of potatoes by adding a chopped onion, garlic, and herbs before roasting. You can experiment to find the way your family likes them best.

LENTIL AND TOMATO SOUP

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 40 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup red lentils
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 3 ounces slab bacon or pancetta, cubed

Method

1. In a large heavy-bottomed pot, heat the olive oil over low heat. Add the onion and carrot, and sauté for about 10 minutes, or until soft.
2. Add the lentils, cumin, coriander, and a good grind of salt and pepper. Cook for a minute or two to release their flavors.
3. Add the canned tomatoes and most of the stock. Stir, partially cover, and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes. If it looks too thick, add some more of the stock.
4. Meanwhile, fry the bacon or pancetta cubes and set aside.
5. Blend the soup with an immersion blender (or in a stand blender).
6. Serve with the pan-fried bacon or pancetta cubes and a drizzle of the fat from the pan.

FIELD MUSHROOM SOUP

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 30 minutes

Serves 2 to 4

Ingredients

16 ounces wild field mushrooms, or good flat portobello-type mushrooms (or a mixture)
3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 medium onions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
salt and pepper
1 glass white wine
2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
1 cup chicken stock
3/4 cup whole milk
grating of nutmeg
heavy cream and minced fresh parsley, to serve

Method

1. Clean the dirt off the mushrooms with a brush and check for any critters lurking in them—a good tap usually shakes them off. Roughly chop the mushrooms.
2. In a large heavy-bottomed pot, heat the butter over low heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook for about 10 minutes to soften.
3. Add the mushrooms and cook for 3 minutes, seasoning them well. Add the wine, bring to a boil, then simmer for 2 minutes.
4. Sprinkle in the flour to thicken the soup and cook for 1 minute. Add the stock and simmer for about 15 minutes. Add the milk and nutmeg, heating through without boiling.
5. Blend the soup with an immersion blender (or in a stand blender). Serve with a swirl of cream and a sprinkle of finely chopped parsley.

EGGS, SIX WAYS

Free-range organic eggs are amazing. They are a brilliant source of protein and are full of nutrients. They are a meal in themselves.

SCRAMBLED EGGS

Melt a generous knob of butter in a nonstick skillet, then add 2 or 3 well-seasoned beaten eggs per person. Use a spatula to gently stir and fold them over medium-low heat until forming loose curds. The care and patience you give the eggs will be rewarded in silky-smooth deliciousness. Scrambled eggs are my favorite and go well with smoked salmon, toast, sausages, mushrooms, and broiled tomatoes.

OMELET

For one omelet, I use 2 or 3 eggs, a knob of butter, a tablespoon of fresh, finely chopped herbs, a handful of grated cheese, and whatever other fillings I like, such as a few cooked mushrooms or some chopped ham. Gently melt the butter in a nonstick skillet, then pour in the beaten egg. Push the egg to the middle of the pan using a spatula, then swirl the pan so any uncooked egg reaches the edges. Cook over medium heat until bubbling, and sprinkle on your fillings. When parts of the top look like they're cooked through, roll the pan toward you and fold over one side of the omelet. Leave for another minute to cook the center through.

POACHED EGGS

Crack a very fresh egg into a cup. Bring a pan of water to barely a simmer, then swirl the water with a spoon. Tip the egg gently into the water. Turn off the heat and leave for 4 minutes exactly. Scoop out gently with a slotted spoon. Two or more eggs in the same pan will need longer cooking time.

BOILED EGGS

Place your egg(s) in a pan of cold water and bring to a boil. As soon as the water starts bubbling, turn the heat off and place a lid on the pan—3 minutes for soft-boiled, 7 minutes for hard-boiled. We prefer ours soft and runny to dip toast fingers into the yolk.

FRIED EGGS

I have never understood the American versions of fried eggs, sunny-side up or over-easy. I just cook my fried eggs in a skillet in a little bacon fat or lard and give them 2 to 3 minutes, spooning a little of the hot fat over the yolk and the white to help them cook.

FRENCH TOAST

Beat 2 or 3 eggs in a shallow dish and lay a slice of bread in it—stale bread or brioche loaf works well—turning it after a minute. Heat a generous knob of butter in a skillet until bubbling and put the wet bread straight into the pan. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes each side to brown. Dust with powdered sugar and cinnamon and serve with crispy bacon or fruit and drizzle with maple syrup.

FRITTATA

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 35 minutes

Serves 6

Ingredients

salt

9 ounces new potatoes, or other boiling potatoes, such as red potatoes or fingerlings

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 onion, finely sliced

1 large zucchini or 2 small ones, sliced thinly

5 tablespoons unsalted butter

9 large eggs

pepper

a handful of chopped fresh herbs: parsley, cilantro, or mint leaves

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. In a medium pot of boiling salted water, cook the new potatoes for 8 minutes, or until soft when poked with a sharp knife. Drain and set aside until cool enough to handle.
3. Meanwhile, in an ovenproof heavy-bottomed 12-inch skillet, heat the oil and sauté the onion for 3 to 4 minutes, or until soft. Scoop the onion out into a dish. Add the zucchini slices and a bit of the butter to the pan and cook for 3 minutes to soften them, turning them occasionally.
4. Cut the cooked potatoes into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-thick slices.
5. Add the rest of the butter, the cooked potato slices, and onion to the zucchini in the pan. Stir the whole mixture together carefully so you don't break down the potatoes, then cook over medium heat until some of the potatoes have a little color.
6. In a medium bowl, crack the eggs and beat together, then add salt, pepper, and the chopped herbs.
7. Pour the eggs over the potato, onion, and zucchini mixture and shake

the pan gently from side to side to make sure the egg has reached the bottom. Don't stir, since you don't want scrambled egg.

8. Keep over the heat for 1 to 2 minutes, being mindful not to burn the bottom of the egg. Lift carefully into the oven to bake for 20 minutes, or until the top is puffy and golden brown.
9. Let cool slightly, then run a knife around the edge of the frittata and either tip out onto a plate or leave in the pan. Slice up and serve with a green salad. I like frittata warm, but it is also good stored in the fridge and served cold.

SAUSAGE ROLLS

Prep 30 minutes | Cook 40 minutes

Makes 24 small or 10 large sausage rolls

Ingredients

- 1 sheet frozen all-butter puff pastry (12 to 14 ounces), thawed overnight
- 1 pound good-quality sausage meat (see note) or 6 sausages, casings removed
- 1 small onion or 1/2 medium onion, chopped very finely (best in a food processor)
- small bunch of sage leaves, chopped finely
- 1 free-range egg, beaten, to glaze

Note: I always buy our local Cumberland sausage or have meat from our own pigs.

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface into a 14 × 10-inch rectangle about 1/8 inch thick. Cut the pastry into 2 long rectangles 14 × 5 inches.
3. In a bowl, mix the sausage meat, onion, and sage thoroughly. I find it easiest to mix by hand. (You can carry straight on or wash your hands and leave them wet for forming the sausage fillings.)
4. Dividing between the 2 pastry rectangles, form the sausage down the center of one side of the pastry. Using a pastry brush or your finger, wet along one of the long edges of a pastry rectangle with fresh, cold water. Clean and dry your hands, then fold over the sausage roll onto the wet line of pastry to form a seal underneath.
5. Place the long sausage roll on a cutting board and, using a sharp knife, cut to the length you want. Small bite-sized ones are ideal for children and parties, longer ones for main meals or packed lunches. Freeze raw ones at this point for future baking.

6. Place the cut sausage rolls on a baking sheet and make a slash or small cut in the top of any large ones to let the steam escape. Brush with the beaten egg and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until golden.

ISAAC'S BANANA BREAD

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 40 to 50 minutes

Ingredients

- 10 tablespoons (150 grams) unsalted butter, plus more to serve
- 4 bananas
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups (200 grams) self-rising flour
- a pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 4 ounces dark chocolate chips or a bar chopped into chunks
(optional)

You will need

- a 1-pound loaf pan

Method

1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan and line with parchment paper.
2. In a small saucepan, melt the butter and set aside to cool.
3. In a bowl, mash the bananas and mix with the beaten eggs. Set aside until the butter is cool. (If you add butter that is too hot, it will cook the egg.)
4. In a large bowl, sift the flour, salt, and baking soda. Add the sugar and stir.
5. Stir the melted butter into the mashed banana and egg mixture. Add the banana mixture to the flour mixture and fold in well. Add the chocolate, if using, and stir.
6. Scrape the batter into the lined loaf pan and bake for 40 to 50 minutes, covering with foil if the top is browning too fast. The loaf is ready when a skewer comes out clean. Serve warm with butter.

BEEF SHIN STEW WITH ROOT VEGETABLES AND RED WINE

Beef shin (or beef shank) is a perfect cut of meat for this inexpensive, delicious winter stew. It cooks slowly and is so tender that it falls apart as you eat it. This stew takes less than 15 minutes to prepare and cooks away all day, filling the kitchen with an amazing smell.

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 4 1/2 hours

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- salt and pepper
- 1 pound beef shin or shank meat, diced
- 1 teaspoon lard or splash of olive oil, for browning the meat
- 2 carrots, cut into chunks
- 1 parsnip, cut into chunks
- 1 leek, cut into slices
- 1 onion, cut into chunks
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 beet, cut into chunks, or a few whole button mushrooms
- 2/3 cup red wine
- rosemary, thyme, or a bouquet garni (optional)
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 1/2 cups good beef stock
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch, mixed to a paste in a little water (optional)
- greens and mashed potatoes, or rice, to serve

Method

1. Season the flour generously. Toss the meat in the seasoned flour.
2. In a large skillet, heat a little lard or olive oil. Add the beef pieces and brown them, without disturbing, turning only once they've got a good deep color.

3. Place the browned meat in a slow cooker or Dutch oven.
4. Add the carrots, parsnip, leek, onion, garlic, and beef to the skillet and gently cook to soften them. Feel free to substitute any vegetables you like and have on hand. Turnip, winter squash, or celery root also work well in this.
5. Add the vegetables to the slow cooker or Dutch oven and stir into the meat.
6. Pour the red wine into the skillet, sizzling it up and scraping everything from the pan into the liquid, then pour the wine mixture over the meat and vegetables and add the herbs (if using).
7. Add the tomato paste and stock and stir well, then cover and set to cook in the slow cooker on high for 3 hours, or in the Dutch oven at 350° F for 3 hours.
8. The stew is best left to cool and be reheated the next day, as it naturally thickens. But if you are serving it straight away and the gravy is too thin, simmer in a pan or the Dutch oven, uncovered, for 10 minutes longer to reduce it, or add the cornstarch paste and cook on the stovetop for an additional 10 minutes.

Note: Serve with a fresh green vegetable, such as cabbage, beans, or broccoli and some buttery mashed potatoes or mashed sweet potatoes. I also serve this with rice sometimes.

PANETTONE (BREAD AND BUTTER) PUDDING

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 45 minutes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter (optional), at room temperature, plus more for greasing the baking dish
- 1 (26-ounce) panettone (see note), 1 large brioche loaf, or 8 to 10 slices stale white bread
- 3 ounces (generous 1/2 cup) dried fruit (golden raisins, currants, cranberries), dark chocolate chunks (optional; see note)
- a few teaspoons orange marmalade (optional)
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 3 large eggs
- 6 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 2 tablespoons demerara sugar or crunchy raw cane sugar

Note: If your panettone already has dried fruit or chocolate, you don't really need to add extra.

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Butter an 8 × 12-inch baking dish.
2. Cut 8 to 10 slices off the panettone or brioche. If using stale white bread, use the butter to coat the slices on both sides. If using panettone or brioche, don't use any butter.
3. Slice off the edges of the panettone. Line the edges of the baking dish with the slices and tear up rough chunks of the rest of the panettone with your hands for the filling, adding fruit or chocolate, if using. Stud with 3 to 4 teaspoons marmalade if you like. If you are using bread, cut four slices diagonally and line the dish with triangles, then tear up the rest into rough chunks for the filling.

4. In a medium saucepan, heat the milk and cream gently until just below boiling. Let stand for a minute.
5. In a bowl, crack the eggs and whisk with the sugar. Whisk in the vanilla extract (or scrape the vanilla seeds out of the pod into the bowl).
6. Stir in the hot cream, whisking well to form a custard.
7. Pour the cream mixture over the bread and tap the dish to spread the mixture evenly. Sprinkle the top with demerara sugar.
8. Bake in the oven for 20 or 30 minutes, or until golden brown.

SWEET GELATIN FOR ALL OCCASIONS

REAL FRUIT GELATIN

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 5 minutes

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon unflavored gelatin powder
- 4 1/4 cups apple juice
- about 1 2/3 cups (8 ounces) frozen raspberries

Method

1. In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin powder over 1/4 cup of the apple juice and let bloom.
2. In a 2-quart saucepan, combine 2 cups of the apple juice and the raspberries and bring to a boil.
3. Off the heat, stir in the softened gelatin. Then stir in the remaining 2 cups apple juice.
4. Strain through a sieve into a serving dish or glasses, or a greased mold.
5. Refrigerate overnight until set.

Note: This can also be made with a good-quality pressed fruit juice.

Omit the whole fruit and use half the juice. Add the gelatin to half of the juice, boil, then add the rest of the juice before chilling.

ALCOHOLIC JELLO SHOTS

Prep 7 minutes

Makes 16 double shots or 32 singles

Ingredients

- 1 (3-ounce) box fruit gelatin mix
- generous 1 cup boiling water

3/4 cup chilled water

7 tablespoons chilled vodka

Method

1. In a bowl, stir together the gelatin mix and boiling water and stir until the gelatin dissolves.
2. Add the cold water and vodka, pour into shot glasses, and refrigerate overnight to set.

HAM HOCK BROTH

Prep 50 minutes | Cook at least 5 hours

Makes 1 large pot (serves 6 to 8)

Ingredients

- 1 ham hock or pork knuckle (about 2 1/4 pounds, pasture-raised pork, if you can)
- 1 cup dried soup mix (about 7 ounces) or dried grains/legumes of your choice (barley, split peas, lentils)
- 4 carrots
- 2 onions
- 1/2 turnip
- 3 celery stalks
- 1 leek
- good glug of olive oil, plus more to serve
- salt and pepper
- organic or homemade chicken/vegetable stock on standby, to top up with if necessary
- kale, lacinato (Tuscan kale), or spinach, to serve (optional)
- parsley, to serve
- squeeze of lemon, to serve (optional)

Method

1. In a large pan (or a slow cooker), cover the ham hock with cold water (9 to 10 cups should do it). Bring the water to a boil and simmer gently for 2 hours (or 4 hours in a slow cooker on high), or until it looks like the ham is starting to fall off the bone.
2. Remove the ham hock and let cool. Skim off any white foam or fat from the surface and strain the liquid through a sieve into a large bowl. (This can be made up to 3 days ahead and the ham hock stored in the fridge, covered, along with its stock.)
3. Using the large pan (or slow cooker) again (no need to wash), pour the ham stock back into it and add the dried soup mix or grains/legumes

of your choosing. Gently simmer on the stovetop for 1 hour (or another 4 hours in the slow cooker on high).

4. While all of that is cooking away, finely chop the carrots, onions, turnip, celery, and leek—as small as you dare. I like to do all of this by hand, and if I am making four times the quantity it can take a while, but you can enjoy that time by listening to a good audiobook or podcast. Get the kids to help or—even better—ask a friend over for coffee and put them to work with the promise of a container of the finished broth as a thank you. You can use a food processor, but the vegetables usually don't end up as tasty or attractive in the finished soup.
5. Using a good glug of olive oil in the bottom of another heavy-bottomed pot, sauté the vegetables until they are soft. Be patient, because this takes at least 20 minutes. Stir gently and season generously with salt and pepper.
6. Add the softened vegetables to the pan of ham stock and softened grains/legumes. Set this to simmer gently and prepare the ham.
7. Using your hands, peel the chunks of meat away from the bone and discard the fat. Chop or tear the pieces into a bowl before adding to the stock pot, making sure there is enough stock to cover the ham and veg; add regular stock if needed.
8. Cook for 40 to 50 minutes, checking to make sure the grains/legumes are soft and the broth is flavorful. Add more liquid and seasoning if necessary. Broth improves over a couple of days—it will get thicker, so just thin it down to your taste with chicken stock.
9. When almost ready to serve, add the greens (if using) and the parsley and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes to cook them through. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil and squeeze of lemon if you like.
10. If not serving immediately, store, covered, in the fridge for 3 to 4 days or freeze in containers.

COOKIES

SIMPLE SHORTBREAD COOKIES

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 15 minutes

Makes about 20 cookies

Ingredients

- 12 tablespoons (6 ounces) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 7 tablespoons (85 grams) sugar, preferably superfine
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (225 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more to dust
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (30 grams) self-rising flour

Method

1. Heat the oven to 300°F. Place one or two baking sheets in the oven.
2. In a bowl, beat the butter and sugar together until smooth.
3. Sift the flour in and beat to form a dough, but try not to overwork it.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick and cut into 3-inch rounds. You can also do this by rolling the dough into a log and slicing off rounds. Any dough that you don't use can be wrapped, labeled, and frozen.
5. Bake on the preheated baking sheet(s) for 10 to 15 minutes, or until light in color but not golden. Don't overbake.

RAISIN AND OAT COOKIES

Prep 10 minutes | Cook 12 minutes per batch

Makes 24 cookies

Ingredients

- 2 sticks plus 2 tablespoons (9 ounces / 250 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 1 tablespoon (160 grams) granulated sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (160 grams) packed dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs

1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 cups (380 grams) all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
a pinch of salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 1/4 cups (110 grams) rolled oats
1 1/2 cups (220 grams) raisins

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. (You may need to use two or three sheets or bake the cookies in batches.)
2. In a stand mixer (or in a bowl using a hand mixer), beat the butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat well, scraping the sides of the mixer halfway through.
4. Add the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and oats and mix again. Stir in the raisins.
5. Scoop out 1 1/2-tablespoon balls (about 30 grams each) of cookie dough onto a lined baking sheet and press gently with a fork. (If not baking all the cookies at once, freeze them on a baking sheet and bake from frozen for an extra 2 minutes.)
6. Bake each batch for 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden brown.
7. Let cool on a cooling rack.

EASY CHOCOLATE CAKE

Prep 25 minutes | Cook 40 minutes

Serves 8

Ingredients for the cake:

- 12 1/2 tablespoons (6 1/4 ounces / 175 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup (175 grams) packed light brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (150 grams) self-rising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 5 tablespoons (30 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 ounces dark chocolate
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons milk

Ingredients for the icing:

- 16 tablespoons (8 ounces / 225 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 3/4 cups (220 grams) powdered sugar
- 8 ounces dark chocolate, melted

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease two 8-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with rounds of parchment paper.
2. Make the cake. In a stand mixer (or in a bowl using a hand mixer), beat the butter and brown sugar together until light and fluffy and the sugar has dissolved into the butter.
3. Add the eggs, flour, baking powder, and cocoa powder and whisk again until combined.
4. Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pot of barely simmering water.

5. Add the melted chocolate, vanilla, and milk to the batter and stir until fully combined.
6. Split the cake batter between the pans and smooth down gently with a spatula.
7. Bake in the center of the oven for 20 to 30 minutes, or until risen and a skewer comes out clean.
8. Make the icing. In a food processor, whizz the butter, powdered sugar, and melted chocolate until blended and smooth. A hand whisk or stand mixer works well too.
9. Run a knife around the cake tin to release any edges that may have stuck, invert the pan, and gently release the cake onto a cooling rack. Allow the cake to cool completely before icing, then use half the icing to fill the cake and half to top it.

KITCHEN TABLE CHICKEN PIE

This recipe will make one family-sized pie in a small roasting pan or ovenproof dish. Alternatively, you can cook some pasta and add to the filling for a creamy pasta dish.

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 50 minutes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients for the pie:

- oil for frying
- 1 pound free-range chicken parts (I like to use half breast and half boneless, skinless thighs, cut into chunks); see note
- 2 ounces bacon or pancetta, diced
- a few mushrooms, sliced or quartered (optional)
- 1 large leek or 2 small ones, halved lengthwise, then crosswise into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch slices
- 10 ounces puff pastry (store-bought frozen dough), thawed but cold
- 1 free-range egg, beaten

Note: You can also use cooked meat stripped off a roast chicken if you have any leftovers—just add it once you’ve made the white sauce.

Ingredients for the white (béchamel) sauce:

- 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups whole milk
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons salted butter
- 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 organic chicken bouillon cube

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a skillet, heat a little oil over medium heat. Working in batches, fry the chicken until golden and cooked through. Remove the chicken from

the pan and set to one side. (If using leftover cooked chicken, you will add it later.)

3. Add the pancetta or bacon to the chicken pan, fry until golden and cooked through, and add to the chicken.
4. If using mushrooms, cook them for 2 to 3 minutes in the bacon fat before adding them to the chicken too.
5. Fry the leek or pop it in a microwaveable dish with a small knob of butter and a splash of water and cook on high for about 4 minutes, until soft.
6. Make the white (béchamel) sauce. In a small, preheated pot, combine the milk, butter, and flour and heat through gently, stirring all the time with a whisk until it has thickened. Crumble in the bouillon cube or, if your sauce is looking thick, add a little boiling water along with any juices from the chicken or leeks.
7. Combine the creamy sauce with the chicken, bacon, mushrooms, and leeks. (If you're using cooked chicken, add it at this point.) Stir gently to combine it all and spoon the mixture into a 9 × 12-inch ovenproof baking dish.
8. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to 1/4 inch thick. Wet the sides of the dish or pan with just your fingertips.
9. Carefully lay the pastry on top of the filling. Trim excess pastry with a serrated knife and crimp the edges with your fingers. Use any leftover cuttings of pastry to make decorations, if you like. Cut 3 or 4 air holes in the top to let any steam escape and brush with the beaten egg. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until crisp and golden. I usually serve my chicken pie with roasted, mashed, or new potatoes and steamed or boiled carrots.

EXTRA RECIPES

LEMON DRIZZLE CAKE

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 30 minutes

Makes 1 loaf cake

Ingredients

- 7 tablespoons (3 1/2 ounces / 100 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 3/4 cups (225 grams) self-rising flour
- grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar (or 3 to 4 tablespoons powdered sugar)

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan and line with parchment paper.
2. In a stand mixer (or in a bowl using a hand mixer), cream the butter and sugar really well until light and fluffy—it can take a good 5 minutes before the sugar dissolves.
3. Add the eggs and a tablespoon of the flour and beat in well.
4. Add the rest of the flour and fold in gently with a metal spoon to keep the mixture light.
5. Stir in the lemon zest and milk. You will have quite a firm batter. Spoon the batter into the prepared loaf pan and gently smooth the top.
6. Bake for 30 minutes, or until golden and a skewer or toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Let cool slightly in the pan while you make the topping. (It should still be warm for the next step.)
7. In a small pot, heat the lemon juice and granulated sugar until the sugar has dissolved.
8. Prick the warm loaf with a skewer and pour the hot topping over the cake.

(Alternatively, let the cake cool completely. In a small bowl, stir together the lemon juice and powdered sugar and drizzle over the top of the cake.)

Note: When baking, it is always worth doubling the recipe and making two cakes, one to eat and one to give away or freeze for another occasion.

GINGERBREAD

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 14 tablespoons (7 ounces / 200 grams) unsalted butter
- 1 cup (200 grams) packed dark brown sugar
- 5 tablespoons (100 grams) molasses
- 5 tablespoons (100 grams) Lyle's golden syrup
- 2 ³/₄ cups (340 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 ¹/₄ cups (290 grams) whole milk
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 large eggs, beaten

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease and line a deep 8 × 12-inch roasting pan.
2. In a pot, melt the butter, brown sugar, molasses, and golden syrup without boiling. Set aside to cool. When I measure my syrup and molasses with a tablespoon I grease the spoon first, and it slips off easily straight onto the scales.
3. In a stand mixer (or in a large bowl), sift the flour, ginger, and cinnamon together.
4. Warm the milk in another pot, or microwave gently for 30 seconds, and stir in the baking soda.
5. Pour the cooled butter/molasses mixture from the first pot into the flour and spices with the mixer (if using) set on low, then add the beaten eggs and the warm milk to form a loose batter. Keep scraping the bottom of the bowl to incorporate any mixture that has gotten stuck.
6. Bake in the center of the oven for 1 hour, covering the top with foil or parchment paper after about 40 minutes, or until a skewer comes

out clean. Let cool in the pan before turning out and cutting into squares.

Note: Gingerbread forms a sticky top if left in a tin for a few days and improves. It also freezes well, so I often make two at a time.

COFFEE CAKE

Prep 45 minutes | Cook 45 minutes

Serves 8

Ingredients for the cake:

- 12 tablespoons (6 ounces / 170 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (170 grams) packed light brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups (170 grams) self-rising flour
- 2 tablespoons strong coffee (see note)

Ingredients for the buttercream filling:

- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (50 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup (100 grams) sifted powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon strong coffee
- 1 tablespoon whole milk

Ingredients for the coffee fudge frosting:

- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- scant $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons strong coffee
- walnut halves, to decorate (optional)

Note: I mix 6 teaspoons of instant coffee into 5 or 6 tablespoons of boiling water for the cake, filling, and topping.

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease two 8-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with rounds of parchment paper.

2. Make the cake. In a stand mixer (or in a large bowl using a hand mixer), whisk the butter and brown sugar to a creamy, smooth consistency, scraping down the bowl to make sure it is all combined.
3. Add one egg at a time with a little of the flour to stop the mixture from curdling, then fold in the rest of the flour.
4. Beat in the strong coffee until well combined. Scrape the cake batter out of the bowl with a spatula into the two lined cake pans, denting the center of the mixture to help them rise evenly in the oven.
5. Bake in the middle of the oven for 25 to 30 minutes, but check them after 20 minutes. The cakes are ready when you can insert a skewer into the center of the cake (I use a knitting needle) and it comes out clean, with no raw cake mix on it. They will also be golden and springy to the touch. Cool for 10 minutes in their pans, then carefully tip them onto a rack to cool.
6. Make the buttercream filling. In a bowl, whisk the soft butter first before adding the powdered sugar or you will end up with clouds of powdered sugar as you try to break down the butter. I put a tea towel over my bowl and use a simple electric hand whisk.
7. Add the coffee and milk and whisk thoroughly until smooth. Cover and let set in the fridge.
8. When the cake layers are completely cool, turn one out onto a plate, gently spread with the cooled buttercream, and then place the second layer on top.
9. Make the coffee fudge topping. Sift the powdered sugar into a heatproof bowl.
10. In a pot, combine the butter, brown sugar, cream, and coffee and heat, keeping a close eye so you don't burn it, until it begins to boil and starts to rise up in the pot.
11. Remove the pot from the heat and pour the hot mixture steadily into the powdered sugar. Using a balloon whisk, beat the mixture well until smooth, spreadable, and fudge-like. This topping doubles easily and keeps well, covered and stored in the fridge or freezer, ready for icing another cake.
12. Top the cake with the coffee fudge frosting while it's still warm, spreading

it to the edges of the cake with a metal offset or frosting spatula—if it has gotten too hard to spread, just gently warm it in the microwave or a pot until it is spreadable again. Decorate the top with a few walnut halves if you like.

DROP SCONES

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 15 minutes (if cooking in batches)

Makes 6 large or 10 small scones

Ingredients

- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons (110 grams) self-rising flour
- a pinch of salt
- 1 heaping tablespoon (15 grams) unsalted butter, plus more
for frying
- ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 4 tablespoons whole milk
- butter and jam to serve

Method

1. Sift the flour into a bowl and add the salt.
2. Rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips. (If doing a double batch, I would use a food processor to rub in the flour.)
3. Add the sugar to the bowl and stir.
4. In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk the egg and milk together, then pour into the flour, mixing well to form a smooth batter. The batter will be quite thick.
5. In a skillet or flat griddle pan, heat a small knob of butter, swirling it so it covers the bottom. Carefully drop a tablespoon of the scone batter onto the hot pan, scraping the mixture off the spoon with your finger or another spoon, with plenty of space between them, as they spread while cooking.
6. Wait for little bubbles to appear in the scones—after roughly 3 minutes—before turning them, managing the heat of the pan carefully so you don't burn them.
7. Remove to a plate to serve. Best eaten warm, spread with butter and jam.

SCONES

Prep 30 minutes | Cook 10 minutes

Makes 6 large scones

Ingredients

- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (340 grams) self-rising flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 5 tablespoons (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces / 75 grams) unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- scant $\frac{3}{4}$ cup golden raisins
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 grams) milk
- juice of $\frac{1}{4}$ lemon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg, beaten, to glaze (or extra milk)

Method

1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Put a baking sheet in the oven to heat up.
2. In a large bowl, rub the flour, salt, and butter together to a breadcrumb consistency. Stir in the sugar and the raisins.
3. Warm the milk in a pot, or in the microwave for 30 seconds, then stir in the lemon juice and vanilla.
4. Add the wet ingredients to the dry—with a fork or a knife initially, to stop your fingers from becoming too sticky—then bring it together to form a dough. Use your hands when it is in a rough ball. Don't overwork it.
5. Lightly press out or roll the dough on a floured worktop to roughly 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. Use a 3-inch round cutter, cut out 6 scones. You may need to pat the scraps together to cut all the scones.
6. Brush the tops with beaten egg (or milk) and lift onto the preheated baking sheet.
7. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until risen and golden brown. Allow to cool.

FANCY NIBBLES

SMOKED SALMON TRIANGLES

Spread good-quality brown bread with softened butter or cream cheese and top with thin slices of smoked salmon. Cut the crusts off and cut into triangles, grind some black pepper over it, and serve with wedges of lemon.

HUMMUS WITH PARMA HAM

Cut a baguette into thin slices and toast, or use crostini, and spread with hummus and top with curled pieces of Parma ham.

For a quick homemade hummus (makes about 1 1/2 cups): Blend 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas (drained and rinsed), 1/2 garlic clove, 2 tablespoons olive oil, juice of 1/2 large lemon, 2 tablespoons tahini, and 1 tablespoon water. Season generously with salt and pepper and loosen with more water as needed. Season with extra lemon juice, salt, or tahini.

PARMA HAM WITH ASPARAGUS OR MELON

Steam or parboil spears of asparagus, let cool, then wrap with Parma ham. Alternatively, wrap chunks of melon in the thin ham.

CROSTINI

On a baking sheet, arrange thin slices of baguette or ciabatta loaf—3 to 4 per person—drizzle well with olive oil, and toast in the oven at 375°F for 5 to 10 minutes, turning once. Let cool and serve with the hummus (above) or either of the following pâtés.

CHICKEN LIVER PÂTÉ

Prep 15 minutes | Chill 8 hours or overnight

Makes 1 small loaf or 6 portions in ramekins

Ingredients

- 1 pound chicken livers, membranes removed (you can presoak the livers in milk to help remove the membrane)
- 14 tablespoons (7 ounces) unsalted butter, melted
- 3 1/2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon brandy

Method

1. In a skillet, sauté the chicken livers in a little of the melted butter for 2 to 3 minutes and set aside to cool slightly.
2. Transfer the livers to a blender and whizz until smooth. Add the rest of the melted butter and the cream, and season well with salt and pepper. Blitz again until completely smooth.
3. Add the brandy and give a quick blend before scraping out into either several small ramekins or a 1 1/2-pound loaf pan lined with plastic wrap. Tap the pan or ramekins on the kitchen surface to remove any air bubbles in the pâté.
4. Chill in the fridge, ideally overnight.

Note: Serve this pâté spread on toast with some sliced cherry tomatoes, pickles, or sliced red onions marinated in red wine vinegar.

SMOKED SALMON PÂTÉ

Prep 10 minutes

Makes 7 ounces

Ingredients

- 5 ounces smoked salmon
- 2 tablespoons crème fraîche or full-fat sour cream
- 2 tablespoons (1 ounce) cream cheese

juice of 1/2 lemon

1 teaspoon grated fresh horseradish or 1 tablespoon horseradish
cream (optional)

salt and pepper

capers, parsley, or dill to serve

Method

1. In a food processor, combine the smoked salmon, crème fraîche, cream cheese, lemon juice, and horseradish (if using) and blitz to make a slightly coarse pâté—not a puree.
2. Scrape out into a bowl to check the seasoning, adding a grind or two of black pepper. Taste before adding any salt since smoked salmon is already salty.
3. Serve in a bowl, topped with a few capers, finely chopped fresh parsley, or dill.

OSMAN'S SPICY EGGS

Prep 15 minutes | Cook 20 minutes

Serves 1 to 2

Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, finely sliced
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 to 2 green chiles (or to taste), finely chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 small tomato, chopped
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- naan, chapati, or flatbreads to serve
- yogurt to serve

Method

1. In a skillet, sauté the onion in the oil for 10 minutes, or until soft.
2. Add the chopped chile(s), pepper flakes, chili powder, salt, and tomato and cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add the eggs and let them sit for a minute before stirring gently with a spatula until cooked to your liking.
4. Stir in the cilantro and warm through.
5. Serve with warm naan bread, chapati, or flatbreads, and yogurt.

ŁUKASZ'S SHAKSHUKA (BAKED EGGS)

Prep 20 minutes | Cook 40 minutes

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 bell peppers (red, green, or yellow), halved and thinly sliced
- 1/2 zucchini, finely diced
- 6 tomatoes, chopped, or 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon hot smoked paprika
- 4 large eggs
- cilantro or parsley to serve

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. In a large, heavy-bottomed ovenproof skillet, heat a little olive oil. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the bell peppers and zucchini and cook for another 15 minutes, stirring gently to soften the vegetables.
3. Add the tomatoes, some salt and black pepper, the sugar, and smoked paprika. Cover and cook over low heat for 10 minutes.
4. Make 4 small wells around the perimeter of the pan and crack an egg into each well. Slide the pan, uncovered, into the oven and bake for 7 to 9 minutes, or until the eggs are just cooked. This is best if the eggs are still runny.
5. Scatter with fresh herbs and serve.
6. Make a small well at the edge of the pan and crack an egg in.
7. Repeat for all 4 eggs and then put the pan, uncovered, in the oven for 7–9 minutes until the eggs are just cooked. This is best if the eggs are still runny.
8. Sprinkle with fresh herbs and serve.

HELPFUL LISTS

PANTRY STAPLES

BASIC LONG-LASTING STAPLES

- Flour: self-rising and all-purpose, bread flour, and whole wheat flour
- Sugar: granulated, superfine, powdered, light brown, and dark brown sugar
- Bread: naan, wraps, rolls, or sliced
- A few jars of good-quality simmer sauces: butter chicken curry sauce, sweet and sour, or tomato and basil
- Curry paste: korma, tikka, massaman, and Thai green or red paste
- Cans of coconut milk
- Cans of tomatoes: diced or whole plum tomatoes
- Passata or tomato puree
- Tuna: canned in spring water
- Corn: canned
- Beans: cans of baked beans in tomato sauce, and cans or jars of kidney beans, borlotti beans, butter beans, and chickpeas
- Ready-to-eat lentils: red or green in pouches, ready to add to meals
- Dried lentils/couscous
- Dried noodles: egg or rice noodles or packs of “straight to wok” noodles
- Pasta: I have a selection of spaghetti, linguine, tagliatelle, macaroni, penne, fusilli, and rigatoni
- Rice: basmati, Arborio (risotto rice), short-grain rice, and wild rice
- Rolled oats
- Dark chocolate (several blocks hidden in my pantry)
- Syrup: Lyle’s golden, light corn, and maple
- Molasses
- Canned fruit: pears, pineapple, and peaches
- Packs of fruit-flavored gelatin
- Spreads: jam, chocolate spread, and peanut butter
- Condiments: horseradish, cranberry sauce, chutney, and relish
- Vinegar: malt, red or white wine, and balsamic

- Oil: olive and peanut
- Organic bouillon cubes: chicken, beef, and vegetable

FRIDGE STAPLES

- Butter: salted and unsalted
- Cream: heavy cream and crème fraîche or full-fat sour cream
- Cheese: a selection of Parmesan, cheddar, and something like Brie or Monterey Jack
- Yogurt: plain regular or Greek
- Meat: lardons / diced pancetta, bacon, sausages, ground lamb or beef, chicken breasts or thighs, and cold cooked ham, beef, or turkey; any cut of frozen meat that I am thawing
- Potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, onions, and garlic
- Vegetables in season
- Fruits in season

FREEZER STAPLES

- Frozen peas
- Frozen green beans
- Oven fries
- Meat: a variety of whole chicken; lamb, pork, and beef roasts; sausages, burgers, steaks, and ground meat
- Fish sticks
- Shrimp
- Bread
- Pizza / garlic bread
- Pastry: packs of rolled pie dough and puff pastry
- Berries: blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries
- Ice cream

MEALS WE SHOULD NEVER FEEL GUILTY ABOUT

Most of my meals are quick. I rush into the house from jobs outside or picking the kids up and often don't know what we're going to eat. Here are a few ideas for putting food on the table in a really short time. The main thing here is that we eat together and there is very little thinking involved.

A COLD SUPPER

Cured meats, hummus, bread and cheese, with some raw vegetables like cherry tomatoes, carrot and cucumber sticks, and a few boiled eggs sliced in half—this is a meal. Don't feel guilty for not cooking. We call it a “platter” in our house. It's various “fridge bits” unwrapped and put out so everyone can eat what they like best.

ANYTHING ON TOAST

For me, it is mostly baked beans and scrambled or fried eggs. I also like a few mushrooms or a tomato and some bacon.

SOUP

Ideally homemade and stored in the fridge or freezer. But you can make a very simple vegetable soup in a pot or microwave in very little time. To turn it into a more filling meal, make it with good stock and add toppings like pumpkin seeds, bacon, crispy fried onions, or small pieces of chicken or salmon. Or have cold meat or cheese and bread on the side.

FISH STICK SANDWICHES

These can be as basic as a slice of bread and a couple of fish sticks, or make them fancy by toasting bread rolls and adding mayonnaise or tartar sauce and salad greens.

PIZZA

A simple margherita pizza combines all the food groups: starchy carbs, vegetable sauce, dairy, and protein toppings. When you can, try to make the pizzas

yourself. Pizza crusts can be batch-made and stored in the fridge for two days or in the freezer between layers of parchment or wax paper—just stretch them out a little again before using. Make the sauce yourself by roasting a sheet pan of roughly chopped tomatoes, a couple of cloves of garlic, and a chopped onion, drizzled in olive oil and seasoned well. Blitz to form a sauce (or use a simple can of plain tomato sauce), and top with good-quality mozzarella or other grated cheese. Add any toppings you like but don't overload the pizza since this will make it soggy. Or just buy the best-quality pizza you can afford. Check the ingredients list on the package—you're looking for a simple list, as far as possible additive- and preservative-free.

BACON

Most meals can be improved by adding a little bacon.

Choosing the right bacon starts with knowing how the pig was raised and what it was fed on. Pigs raised outdoors, grown slowly and organically, have a richer, meatier, more distinct flavor. Meat like this is nutrient-dense. A little goes a long way.

Pork that has been raised indoors with very little room to move around and fed grain so as to grow quickly is obviously much cheaper on the supermarket shelves than the above, but you get what you pay for. Meat like this is an inferior product, usually watery and bland. And—crucially—we must be careful to check where it has been produced, because we could be buying meat that has been farmed in terrible farming systems and shipped across the globe. I always advocate choosing local produce and buying the best you can afford.

Bacon can be used in a number of ways. We like it thickly sliced, fried in a heavy pan, and served with egg on toast or in a bread roll. I use pancetta, cubes of fatty cured bacon, regularly, too, in pasta sauces, chicken pies, Bolognese sauce, beef stews, or on top of salads or soups. Pancetta or a little fried bacon makes a bowl of boiled new potatoes or sautéed leeks delicious when scattered on top and drizzled with the fat from the pan. The kids often make pancakes with crispy bacon strips for an American-style breakfast.

SMOKED VS. UNSMOKED

Most supermarket smoked bacon is soaked in a chemical brine or injected with a smoke-flavored additive. If I am buying bacon I prefer unsmoked, knowing that my bacon has been cured simply with salt and sugar or spices. (Brown sugar or maple syrup with the curing salt makes a good mix to rub over the pork belly.) It will have been left to rest for a week or more before slicing. Traditional methods of smoking bacon over woodchips are still used, but it just takes a little time and effort to source good-quality produce.

CREATIVE LUNCHBOX IDEAS

For a change from the regular sandwich, be creative with different bread types: wraps, ciabatta, focaccia, sourdough, bake-at-home baguettes, rolls, and rye bread are all a change from ultraprocessed supermarket loaves.

A FEW IDEAS TO MAKE LUNCHTIME MORE INTERESTING

- Sourdough toasted, rubbed with raw garlic, and topped bruschetta-style with fresh tomatoes, virgin olive oil, salt, and pepper
- Soft sub rolls filled with egg salad and chopped salad, including cherry tomatoes, iceberg lettuce, grapes, and peppers
- Farmstyle loaf (sandwich bread) with ham, mustard, tomatoes, and pickles; or roast beef, horseradish, and lettuce
- Rye bread with scrambled eggs or sliced boiled eggs and smoked salmon
- Hot baguettes with minute steaks, mushrooms, and onions
- Ciabatta rolls with pulled pork and barbecue sauce or applesauce
- Wraps filled with crispy chicken, paprika mayonnaise, and shredded slaw and salad; or falafel, hummus, and raw carrot sticks
- Flatbreads with pulled slow-cooked pulled lamb, salad, tzatziki, and pomegranate seeds
- Toasted sandwiches with bacon, Brie, and cranberry sauce
- Baguettes or rolls filled with sausages with red onion marmalade

- Malted wheat bread filled with sliced, cold roast chicken with mango chutney, mayonnaise, and lettuce
- The ultimate Christmas sandwich made with leftover roast turkey in a white bread roll, spread with stuffing and cranberry sauce, and a simple coleslaw, and salty potato chips on the side

SIMPLE STUDENT MEALS

Student food shouldn't just be pasta or Cup Noodles. There are so many easy things you can make that only take a little planning and shopping. Simple meals don't have to be expensive, but remember that the "cost" should take into account investing in nutrient-dense foods that satiate and stop you from wanting to buy and snack on processed foods afterward.

SUPPER IN A SHEET PAN

Place chicken thighs and legs, chunks of sweet potato, and any other vegetables you like—bell peppers, zucchini, winter squash, onion, tomato—in a sheet pan. Sprinkle with herbs, drizzle with olive oil, and season well with salt and pepper. Roast at 400°F for 30 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through. Any leftovers from the pan of cooked roasted vegetables are great for mixing with pasta and tomato sauce or using up in a soup.

SOUP

Sauté a chopped onion and some vegetables in olive oil to release their flavor before adding stock and season well. Blend if you like a smooth soup, and add milk or cream or a can of tomatoes for a more filling meal.

MACARONI AND CHEESE WITH PANCETTA AND LEEKS

Make a basic white sauce (see page 73, but don't add the chicken stock cube), and add some grated cheese and drained cooked macaroni. In a skillet, sizzle up some pancetta, and meanwhile cook the leeks in the microwave for 5 to 8 minutes with a knob of butter and a splash of water to keep them bright

green. Stir the pasta and sauce together with the pancetta and leeks, top with breadcrumbs or grated cheese, and finish under the broiler or in the oven.

VEGETABLE STIR-FRIED NOODLES

Serve with sliced chicken breast, sliced minute steak, or a few shrimp, and any seasonings (soy, garlic, lemongrass, ginger).

SAUSAGE CASSEROLE OR SAUSAGE GNOCCHI

Cook the sausages first, then slice and mix with a tomato and vegetable sauce, adding in a package of precooked tomatoey lentils if you like, then stir in a package of gnocchi (cooked according to package directions) or serve with mashed potatoes.

QUICK BOLOGNESE

Brown some ground beef with onion and garlic. Season well, add in canned diced tomatoes or tomato sauce, and cook for 30 to 40 minutes. Make it into a chili by adding some chopped bell peppers, seasoning with chili powder and cumin before adding the tomato/beef mixture and then adding a can of red kidney beans 10 minutes before the end.

BAKED POTATOES WITH DIFFERENT FILLINGS

Cheese and apple, tuna salad, baked beans, cooked lentils and bacon, left-over Bolognese, chicken curry, or sausage casserole.

QUICK CURRY WITH CHICKEN OR VEGETABLES

Pan-fry your chicken or vegetables until cooked through or soft, add 2 table-spoons of curry paste, and sizzle for 2 minutes to release the flavors, then add a can of coconut milk, bring to a simmer, and add some greens like spinach or shredded kale for 2 minutes at the end.

SALAD BOWLS

Cheese, chicken, tuna, or shrimp with shredded lettuce, diced vegetables, boiled eggs, and a tasty dressing.

A SIMPLE STROGANOFF

Pan-fry 1 or 2 pieces of steak or a sliced pork chop with onions, garlic, and mushrooms, a little Dijon mustard, white wine or chicken stock, and a cup of heavy or light cream, or sour cream or crème fraîche. Serve with pasta or rice.

AN EASY RISOTTO

With onion, garlic, stock, and risotto rice (following the package cooking directions) and any flavors—frozen shrimp and peas, mushroom and chicken, leek and pancetta, or butternut squash and toasted pine nuts.

Students, don't forget that a piece of fish, lamb, or pork with some boiled, mashed, or roasted potatoes and a few steamed vegetables is a delicious meal. Food should not be about whether it is Instagrammable or from the latest recipe trend. Food is about nourishment and looking after yourself.

FAVORITE COOKBOOKS

I like looking at cookbooks for inspiration and presentation ideas, but the bulk of my cooking is done by instinct and either buying fresh seasonal ingredients or using up what I already have in the freezer, basing my meals around good-quality meat. I don't want a recipe that calls for lots of things I don't have, so I tend to avoid cooking from a book. I have learned how to cook from trial and error, watching and copying, substituting ingredients according to my family's tastes, and experimenting.

I learned basic techniques like roasting, sautéing, frying, boiling, braising, and baking by practicing over time. I've honed extra techniques from watching chefs on TV or reading books. I prefer not to have a photograph of what I am making because the real thing never looks the same as the staged food.

Leiths Cookery Bible by Prue Leith and Caroline Waldegrave

Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat by Samin Nosrat

How to Eat by Nigella Lawson

Midnight Chicken and *The Year of Miracles* by Ella Risbridger

At Elizabeth David's Table compiled by Jill Norman

Delia's Frugal Food by Delia Smith

NOURISHING FOOD FOR SELF-CARE

- Thick toast, scrambled eggs, poached salmon
- Baked potato with butter, baked beans, and good-quality, thick-sliced cooked ham
- Mashed potato with butter and cream and sausages with onion gravy and peas
- Butter chicken curry, rice, and naan bread
- Ham hock broth (see pages 67–68)
- Chicken broth with noodles and vegetables

MEALS FOR WHEN I'M IN SURVIVAL MODE

Toast with marmalade and a boiled egg, a slice of thick brown bread with peanut butter and an apple, or a bowl of cereal gets me through if I am not able to cook. At busy times I rely on simple meals pieced together from things I always have, like sausages, burgers, bacon, chicken, and ground beef in the freezer.

- Rolls filled with beef, lamb, or pork burgers, sausages, or bacon—basically anything in a bread roll that is quick and effortless
- Deli lunch: meat pies or pasties, hard-boiled eggs, cooked ham and beef, and ready-made salads with bread
- Pasta with meatballs and tomato puree
- Cheat's Bolognese: ground beef and a store-bought pasta sauce with pasta
- Cheat's curry: find a bottled sauce you like—we like butter chicken—and then pan-fry chicken and add the sauce, served with rice
- Cans of soup
- Baked beans on toast

EASY WAYS TO FEED LITTLE ONES

- Cheese and crackers
- Breadsticks and dips: hummus, cream cheese, or a smoked-salmon-pâté-style dip (smoked salmon blended with cream cheese and lemon juice)
- Raw vegetable sticks—carrot, cucumber, and celery—and cherry tomatoes
- Cooked pasta twists
- Toast fingers with cheese
- Baguette and butter
- Boiled eggs, halved
- Any kind of bread and a filling your child likes: ham, beef, chicken, tuna, salmon, cheese, or egg salad
- Cold sausages, sliced
- Soup, homemade and kept warm in a thermos
- Yogurt
- Fruits: blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and halved grapes and little oranges or a banana
- Homemade muffins, tea bread, cookies, and granola bars

A NOTE ON BUYING CAKE

Most store-bought cakes contain a ton of preservatives. A long shelf life also indicates that the cake is full of unknown substances. Look for a bakery that makes them on-site and serves them fresh.