



---

# QUEENSBAY LADIES AUXILLARY COOKBOOK

---

A Companion to the Queensbay Series by Drea Stein



[DATE]

[COMPANY NAME]

[Company address]

## Welcome

Welcome to the Queensbay Ladies Auxiliary Cookbook. Modeled after those delightful compilations of recipes from women's clubs, these are easy and satisfying recipes. I'm a writer but I also love to cook, and these are recipes that show up in my books, or if they haven't they will. Enjoy!

## Appetizers and Light Bites

Who doesn't love a nosh here and there. You know when you go to a wedding, it's always the apps that are the best part! So amp up your next party with some of these great little dishes. Most are pretty easy to use and perfect for casual get togethers, book clubs, or Bunco nights.

### Bruschetta with Mushrooms & Herbed Cheese

This bruschetta recipe is a great appetizer for small, intimate gatherings. The presentation looks elegant and the final result is truly delicious. You can use any type of mushroom you wish, but the combination of small white and baby Portobellos used here creates an interesting mix of subtle flavors and textures.

#### Ingredients:

5 T. unsalted butter, divided

2 T. olive oil

1/2 medium shallot, finely minced

2 cloves garlic, peeled finely minced

1 c. white mushrooms, cleaned and chopped

1 c. baby Portobello mushrooms, cleaned and chopped

2 t. fresh thyme leaves, stems removed

1 1.2 T. fresh rosemary, stems removed and leaves finely chopped

1/4 c. brandy or peach juice

salt and pepper to taste

4 oz. goat cheese, room temperature

4 oz. ricotta cheese

2 t. fresh thyme leaves, stems removed

2 t. fresh rosemary, stems removed and leaves finely chopped

2 small 6" Ciabatta loafs, cut in half lengthwise, then cut into 2-3" sections

#### Directions:

In small skillet over medium heat, melt 1 T. butter. Add oil and shallots and sauté 2 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 2 more minutes. Add mushrooms and sauté approximately 8-10 minutes or until mushrooms release juices. Add thyme and rosemary and sauté 2 additional minutes.

Stir in brandy or peach juice and simmer until reduced by half. Turn off heat and whisk in 2 T. butter. If desired, season to taste with salt and pepper.

In a separate bowl, mix goat cheese with ricotta cheese and fresh herbs until well combined.

Butter bread slices with remaining 2 T. butter and place on grill over direct medium heat (or use a grill pan if indoors). Toast until golden brown. Then, spread with herbed goat cheese mixture and top with mushrooms. Serve immediately.

## Honey Mustard Chicken Wings

Chicken wings are such a great choice for casual outdoor gatherings because they are easy to make and are perfect for eating with your fingers. They are also extremely versatile because they can be tossed with any number of sauces or seasonings. The honey-mustard sauce used in this version is delicious and it pairs beautifully with potato salad or other picnic-worthy side dishes.

### Ingredients:

#### Honey-Mustard Sauce

- 1 T. unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 3 T. honey
- ¼ c. Dijon mustard
- 1 t. hot sauce (optional)

#### Wings

- 3 pounds chicken wings
- salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or spray with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken wings to baking sheet in a single layer, not touching or overcrowding. Season wings with salt and pepper, then place in oven. Bake until skin is crispy, approximately 45 - 50 minutes.

About 20 minutes before the wings are done, add garlic and butter to a saucepan and heat over medium high heat until garlic becomes translucent. Reduce heat to low and add honey and Dijon mustard. Stir to combine. Simmer for a few minutes, until honey dissolves completely. Remove from heat and stir in hot sauce, if using.

Add the cooked wings to a glass bowl and pour honey-mustard mixture over them. Toss until coated and either serve immediately, or place on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper (or sprayed with non-stick cooking spray) and place under broiler for a couple minutes, until brown and bubbly.

Serve with creamy red potato salad or your favorite side dishes.

## Spicy Peach Salsa

This spicy peach salsa is absolutely gorgeous! The combination of colors creates a beautiful presentation, while the delicious blend of sweet and spicy flavors makes it a wonderful addition to simply prepared fish, chicken or pork dishes.

This one is a keeper, for sure!

**Tip:** Soak the red onion in a cup of water for 10-15 minutes before using to reduce its strong flavor and odor.

For best results, make this salsa the night before serving so the flavors have a chance to blend. This will also soften the peaches and onion to a nice consistency.

### Ingredients:

6 fresh peaches, pits removed and cut into small pieces

3 T. fresh lime juice

½ medium shallot, minced

3 T. red onion, cut into small, thin slices

1-2 t. jalapeno peppers, seeds and veins removed, and very finely minced

3 T. fresh cilantro leaves, stems removed and chopped

salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a glass bowl and stir to combine. (Start with a very small amount of jalapeno pepper and taste before adding more). Season with salt and pepper. Cover with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator overnight or on the counter at room temperature for at least 30 minutes.

Serve with foil packet citrusy orange roughy or other minimally seasoned fish, chicken or pork recipe. This can also be served in place of regular salsa with tortilla chips.

## Soups

### Clam Chowder

It wouldn't be a cookbook about New England without a recipe for Clam Chowder.

**Total Time:** 1 hour 15 minutes

**Hands-On Time:** 45 minutes

**Yield:** 8 to 10 servings

#### Ingredients

- 3 strips thick-cut bacon
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 rib celery, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 medium-size white potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups bottled clam juice, divided
- 1 pound chopped fresh clam meat, with juices (see Note)
- Kosher salt to taste
- 3 cups light cream
- 1 teaspoon white pepper

#### Instructions

Set a 4- to 6-quart pot over medium-low heat. Add the bacon and cook, turning occasionally, until crisp, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove the bacon, leaving the fat in the pot, and crumble into small pieces; set aside.

Add the butter, onion, celery, thyme, and bay leaves to the pot. Cook, stirring often, until onions are tender and translucent, 6 to 8 minutes.

Return the bacon to the pot and stir. Reduce the heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, while you prepare the potatoes.

In a 2- to 3-quart pot on high heat, boil the diced potatoes in salted water until tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Turning back to the onion/bacon mixture, increase the heat to medium-low.

Add the flour gradually, stirring continuously, until a thick paste forms. Stir and cook 5 minutes.

Increase the heat to medium and slowly add the bottled clam juice, 1 cup at a time, incorporating it into the mixture before adding more.

Increase the heat to medium-high and add the potatoes and clam meat with its juices. Keep stirring 5 minutes, until the clams are tender.

Add the cream slowly; then stir in the white pepper.

Discard the bay leaves before serving. Serve hot.

#### Additional Notes:

Many supermarkets carry frozen, chopped clam meat in 1-pound containers, which is fresher than canned and just as convenient. Simply defrost before using.

## Chilled Cucumber Avocado Soup with Fresh Dill

This super easy and refreshing chilled soup is perfect for a hot summer day. It comes together in just a few minutes without ever needing to turn on your oven or cooktop. This soup is also a great way to use up those delicious cucumbers from your garden or local farmers' market.

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 large cucumbers, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 ½ cup Greek 2% yogurt
- ½ medium avocado, peeled and seeded
- 1 medium shallot, peeled and cut in half
- 3 T. fresh dill, chopped
- 2 T. fresh lime juice
- 2 t. ground cumin
- 2 t. sea salt
- black pepper, to taste
- optional: sprigs of fresh dill and/or sliced cucumber for garnish

### Directions:

Add all ingredients to blender or food processor and blend until smooth. If you prefer a thinner soup, add a little more chicken or vegetable stock until you reach the desired consistency. Adjust seasonings to taste. Refrigerate for at least 2- 3 hours before serving.

Serve topped with sprigs of fresh dill and thin slices of cucumber. For an even prettier presentation, toss a few cooked and chilled shrimp with some ground cumin and chop into small pieces. Sprinkle seasoned shrimp pieces on top of soup and add a sprig of fresh dill.

## Roasted Yellow Tomato Soup with Grilled Cheese Croutons

With garden-fresh tomatoes in abundant supply, summer and fall are the perfect times to enjoy this quick and easy roasted yellow tomato soup. This recipe is versatile enough to be enjoyed on warm summer days or cool fall evenings, depending on how you serve it. Following are two variations – a lighter presentation for warm summer days and another for when you’re craving something a little heartier.

For a nicer look, use tomatoes of the same color. If you mix yellow and red tomatoes, the end result is a strange, not-found-in-nature hue that isn’t very appetizing. Also, slow roasting your tomatoes will bring out their natural sweetness. However, the browning that occurs during this process will create a darker soup than using raw tomatoes.

### **Soup Ingredients:**

Ripe yellow tomatoes, approximately 2 pounds  
1 T. garlic powder  
½ cup chicken or vegetable stock  
1 large bunch fresh basil, washed and patted dry, plus additional sprigs for garnish  
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and cut into quarters.  
2 stalks celery, washed and cut into chunks  
2 large (or 3 small) cloves fresh garlic, peeled  
1 T. ground cumin  
3 T. heavy whipping cream, room temperature or slightly warmed  
sea salt and fresh cracked black pepper, to taste

### **Garnish Ingredients – Version 1**

1 large bunch red radishes  
several very thin slices of yellow tomato  
sprigs fresh basil

### **Garnish Ingredients – Version 2**

2 slices sourdough bread, crusts removed  
1 T. melted butter  
3 oz. Brie cheese, crust removed, cut into thin slices

### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 300 degrees

To prepare the soup, slice yellow tomatoes into ½” slices and place on a baking sheet lined with

parchment paper (or sprayed with non-stick cooking spray). Leave room between slices to prevent over-crowding. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and garlic powder.

Place baking sheet in the oven and roast approximately 2 hours or until the tomatoes are browned around the edges.

**For Version 1** – wash and pat radishes dry before slicing into thin pieces. Place on a lined baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place in the oven with the tomatoes to save time, but be sure to check on them frequently because they will brown up much faster than the larger tomatoes.

For best results, use a Mandoline slicer to achieve even thickness. Roast until slightly browned and crispy. Reserve to garnish finished soup.

**For Version 2** – remove crust from 2 slices of sourdough bread. Cut each slice into 4 equal-sized rectangles and brush one side with melted butter. Place buttered side down on a heated grill pan until browned grill marks appear. Remove from heat and flip each piece of sourdough over so the grill marks are facing up and top with a slice of Brie.

Place grill pan under a broiler right before you're ready to serve the soup and heat for approximately 2 minutes, or until the Brie is soft and starting to melt. Don't leave under too long or all the Brie will run off the bread base.

### **Finish Making the Soup:**

Once tomatoes are done roasting, remove from oven and cool slightly. Add roasted tomato slices to high-powered blender or food-processor, along with stock, basil, onion, celery, garlic, cumin, warmed heavy cream (warmed to prevent curdling), salt and pepper. Blend on high until smooth and thoroughly combined. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed. If desired, add additional chicken or vegetable stock, 1 tablespoon at a time, and re-blend to achieve desired consistency.

To serve, top with either roasted radishes or the grilled cheese croutons and sprig of fresh basil. Enjoy!

## Sides and Salads

Who doesn't love a good side salad? These salads are perfect for summer entertaining and neighborhood potlucks.

### Carolina Coleslaw

Unlike its creamy counterparts, this southern coleslaw recipe does not contain mayonnaise. While this easy-going version is wonderful with Carolina-style BBQ, it is also delicious with grilled burgers, chicken wings and other picnic or potluck favorites.

For best results, soak the red onion in a mixture of 1 part water to 1 part vinegar for 10-15 minutes before use to tame the strong flavor and reduce odor. In addition, tough kale leaves can be tenderized by rubbing them with some olive oil for a few minutes.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 head green cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 small or ½ medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small white onion, thinly sliced
- 3 large carrots, grated
- 4 large kale leaves, stalk removed and cut into thin ribbons
- salt and pepper, to taste
- ¾ c. apple cider vinegar
- ½ c. white sugar
- ½ c. vegetable oil
- 1 T. Dijon mustard
- 2 t. celery seeds

#### Directions:

Add the cabbage, red onion, white onion, carrots and kale leaves to a large glass bowl and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

Add the vinegar and sugar to a small saucepan set to medium-high heat. Stir the mixture until the sugar thoroughly dissolves. Remove from heat and whisk in the vegetable oil, mustard and celery seeds. While still warm, pour over the cabbage mixture and toss to combine thoroughly.

Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for a couple hours before serving. If desired, season with additional salt and pepper before serving.

## Creamy Red Potato Salad with Fresh Herbs

Nothing says “picnic” like potato salad. Fresh herbs add a lot of flavor to this creamy version that comes together in just a few minutes. For best results, make this dish a day in advance so the flavors have a chance to fully mingle.

### Ingredients:

3 pounds red potatoes, washed, dried, and cut into quarters

$\frac{3}{4}$  c. mayonnaise

$\frac{3}{4}$  c. plain Greek yogurt

1 medium shallot, outer skin removed and finely chopped

3 T. Dijon mustard

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. fresh dill, chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. fresh parsley, chopped

salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Place cut potatoes in a large microwave-safe dish and add 2 T. water. Cover and microwave for 2-3 minutes or until fork tender. (Cooking time will vary by microwave, so check after 2 minutes. Potatoes should be tender enough to split with a fork, but still firm).

Remove potatoes from dish and spread out in a single layer on a baking sheet to dry. Blot gently with a paper towel, if needed.

In a small glass bowl, add mayonnaise, yogurt, shallot, mustard and fresh herbs. Stir to combine thoroughly. Add potatoes to a separate bowl and gradually add mayonnaise mixture and toss to coat. (Don't add all of the mayonnaise mixture at once in case you decide you want less on your potato salad). Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Cover and store in the refrigerator for up to 1-2 days.

## Mediterranean Pasta Salad

This salad packs a lot of interesting flavors into each bite. From the peppery taste of fresh arugula to the salty appeal of Kalamata olives, preserved lemons and feta cheese, there is nothing bland or boring about this dish. Yet, its strong flavors aren't overwhelming because they are tempered by the satisfying addition of penne pasta and fresh herbs. This robust salad has enough presence to serve as a light, yet satisfying, main course - or it can act as the perfect complement to more neutral dishes, like grilled chicken breast or a mild white fish.

**NOTE:** You can use fresh or preserved lemons to make this recipe. I recommend trying the preserved lemons because they add more intense flavor. You can either buy a container of preserved lemons or easily make your own with Himalayan salt blocks. A word of caution, however, if you use preserved lemons, taste before adding additional salt.

### Ingredients:

1 pound penne pasta, cooked according to package directions and cooled

### Vinaigrette:

¾ c. extra virgin olive oil

¼ c. white balsamic vinegar

2 T. fresh lemon juice

1 T. Dijon mustard

salt and pepper, to taste

2 T. olive oil

3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced.

1 large or 2 medium tomatoes, washed and chopped, seeds and excess liquid removed

12-15 large fresh basil leaves, washed, dried and cut into thin strips

2 t. fresh oregano, stems removed and chopped

½ c. Kalamata olives

¼ red onion, thinly sliced

½ c. fresh or preserved organic lemon, chopped into small chunks with rinds  
2 c. fresh arugula  
2 T. Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, freshly grated  
3 oz. block feta cheese, cut into equal sized chunks

### Directions

To make the vinaigrette, whisk the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and mustard together in a small bowl until blended smooth. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

Add olive oil and garlic to a cold pan and set heat to medium high. Sauté for approximately 2 minutes before adding chopped tomato. Cook for 3 minutes or until the tomato softens. Remove from heat.

In a large bowl, combine the cooked tomato and garlic mixture with the basil, oregano, olives, red onion and preserved lemons. Add the cooked pasta, arugula and both types of cheese. Finally, add the vinaigrette and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

## Orzo Pasta Salad with Tomatoes and Capers

This chilled pasta salad is a great way to keep cool on a hot day. This delicious side dish tastes even better after the flavors have a chance to mingle, so make it a day or two in advance to take to your next picnic or casual get-together.

### Ingredients:

2 T. olive oil

3 cloves garlic, peeled and finely minced

1 large or 2 medium tomatoes, washed and chopped, seeds and excess liquid discarded

1 ½ c. dried orzo, cooked according to package directions and cooled

2 T. capers

1 T. caper liquid

1 T. fresh lemon juice

1 T. fresh thyme, stems removed and chopped

1 T. fresh parsley, stems removed and chopped

Salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Add olive oil and minced garlic to a cold skillet and turn heat to medium high. Sauté for 2 minutes, then add tomatoes and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes (until tomatoes become soft). Remove from heat and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the cooked orzo, capers and liquid, lemon juice, thyme and parsley with the tomato and garlic mixture. Toss until thoroughly combined. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour or overnight. Stir and serve chilled with grilled chicken breasts or your favorite main dish.

## Classic Caprese Salad with Balsamic Glaze



It's hard to beat the classic flavor combination of fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, and basil. However, this version adds another dimension by adding a rich and syrupy balsamic glaze instead of straight vinegar to top it off. This, combined with a really good quality extra virgin olive oil, is all you need to make this classic shine!

### Ingredients:

- 4 large ripe tomatoes
- 12 oz. fresh mozzarella, large ball
- 1 large bunch fresh basil, washed and dried
- 3 T. really good extra virgin olive oil.
- 1 cup of balsamic vinegar

sea salt and fresh-cracked black pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Thoroughly wash and pat tomatoes and fresh basil dry. Slice tomatoes into evenly sized pieces, approximately ¼" thick, and set aside. Discard the bottom and top pieces. Slice fresh mozzarella into ¼" thick pieces, as well.

On each plate, start with a tomato slice, followed by mozzarella and a large, fresh basil leaf. Repeat this pattern until you've added 1 tomato and approximately 3 oz. of mozzarella to each plate, finishing each arrangement with a tomato slice. Drizzle with high-quality extra virgin olive oil.

To make the balsamic glaze, heat 1 cup of good balsamic vinegar over medium-high heat until it begins to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the liquid is reduced to about 1/3 of its original volume, stirring continually. When the liquid becomes thick and syrupy, it is ready to use.

Let glaze cool before drizzling over the fresh tomato, mozzarella and basil. Season with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with additional sprigs of fresh basil, if desired.

## Orange Fennel Salad with Citrus Vinaigrette

Orange and fennel is a classic combination that creates a wonderful flavor profile. Because these two flavors are so distinct, it is best to let them have center stage when they come together. There is no need to complicated things when you are working with these two ingredients. In fact, you may find that adding a green leafy lettuce to this dish is unnecessary.

Whenever possible, mix together the vinaigrette ingredients in advance. Giving this combination a chance to meld makes a big difference.

### **Salad Ingredients:**

3 blood oranges (or regular navel oranges), cut into thin slices with rind removed  
1 bulb fennel, washed, dried and thinly sliced, bottom and green leaves removed and discarded  
1 head Romaine or other leafy green lettuce

### **Citrus Vinaigrette Ingredients:**

1 t. fresh orange zest  
2 T. fresh orange juice  
1 t. fresh lemon zest  
1 T. fresh lemon juice  
1 t fresh lime juice  
1 T. fresh lime juice  
¼ cup rice wine vinegar  
½ cup really good extra virgin olive oil  
1 T. honey  
2 t. Dijon mustard  
1 clove garlic, finely minced  
salt and pepper, to taste

Whenever adding citrus zest to a recipe, it is best to start with organic ingredients. Also be sure to wash the fruit thoroughly and pat dry. Zest each piece of fruit with a microplane and add the specified amount to the bowl.

While you are at it, continue zesting the entire fruit and freeze the excess amount in a plastic bag for future use. Another option is to collect the remaining juice from each piece of fruit and store in ice cube containers along with the leftover zest.

Combine the vinaigrette ingredients in a glass bowl and whisk together thoroughly to combine. The Dijon mustard will ask as an emulsifier to bind the oil and acidic components together.

Arrange the Romaine or other lettuce leaves on each plate and top with alternating slices of fennel and orange. Drizzle entire plate with citrus vinaigrette and season with salt and pepper,

to taste. Serve immediately.

## Watermelon Feta Salad with Lime-Cilantro Vinaigrette

Talk about the perfect hot weather combination! Watermelon and feta cheese make such a perfect pair. The saltiness of the feta is the perfect complement for the inherent sweetness of watermelon. When paired with the peppery taste of fresh arugula and the tangy goodness of a homemade lime-cilantro vinaigrette, you've got an incredible taste sensation that is sure to become a summer favorite.

### **Salad Ingredients:**

- 1 small round seedless watermelon, cut in half with flesh removed
- 3 oz. feta cheese, cut into evenly sized pieces
- 3 cups fresh arugula, cleaned and dried

### **Lime-Cilantro Vinaigrette Ingredients:**

- 2 T. fresh lime juice
- 3 T. fresh cilantro, washed, dried and chopped into small pieces
- 3 T. grapeseed oil
- 1 t. Dijon mustard
- 1 T honey
- 2 t. ground cumin
- 2 t. sea salt
- ½ t. pepper

### **Directions:**

If possible, make the lime-cilantro vinaigrette in advance to give the flavors a chance to meld. Combine all ingredients in a small glass bowl and whisk to combine thoroughly. Taste and adjust seasonings as desired.

Cut small watermelon in half, then remove and reserve flesh in a glass bowl. Pat the inside of each empty watermelon rind with a paper towel to dry. Set aside to use as serving bowls for the finished salad.

Add feta and washed arugula to glass bowl along with the watermelon. Top with vinaigrette and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

To serve, add watermelon feta mixture to reserved watermelon rinds and garnish with sprigs of fresh cilantro.

Note: if you are serving more than 2 people, substitute other serving bowls or use additional small, round watermelons.

## Chilled Cucumber Avocado Soup with Fresh Dill

This super easy and refreshing chilled soup is perfect for a hot summer day. It comes together in just a few minutes without ever needing to turn on your oven or cooktop. This soup is also a great way to use up those delicious cucumbers from your garden or local farmers' market.

### Ingredients:

½ cup chicken or vegetable stock  
2 large cucumbers, peeled and cut into chunks  
1 ½ cup Greek 2% yogurt  
½ medium avocado, peeled and seeded  
1 medium shallot, peeled and cut in half  
3 T. fresh dill, chopped  
2 T. fresh lime juice  
2 t. ground cumin  
2 t. sea salt  
black pepper, to taste  
optional: sprigs of fresh dill and/or sliced cucumber for garnish

### Directions:

Add all ingredients to blender or food processor and blend until smooth. If you prefer a thinner soup, add a little more chicken or vegetable stock until you reach the desired consistency. Adjust seasonings to taste. Refrigerate for at least 2- 3 hours before serving.

Serve topped with sprigs of fresh dill and thin slices of cucumber. For an even prettier presentation, toss a few cooked and chilled shrimp with some ground cumin and chop into small pieces. Sprinkle seasoned shrimp pieces on top of soup and add a sprig of fresh dill.

## Oven-Roasted Parmesan Green Beans

This elegant side dish elevates basic green beans to a whole new level. This dish is great for entertaining because it looks and tastes like you spent a lot more time on it than you actually did.

Roasting the green beans assures they will be crisp tender and full of robust flavor. As an added bonus, the high-quality extra virgin olive oil and freshly grated Parmesan cheese greatly enhances the natural appeal of this classic side.

### Ingredients:

1 pound fresh green beans, washed, trimmed and patted dried  
3 T. olive oil  
3 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely minced  
salt and pepper, to taste  
1 T. high-quality extra virgin olive oil  
3 T. freshly grated Parmesan cheese

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Line a rimmed baking pan with a sheet of parchment paper. In a medium bowl, toss the green beans, garlic and olive oil together until completely coated. Then, spread the coated green beans on the lined pan in a single layer without crowding.

Season with salt and pepper, then roast in the pre-heated oven for 15 minutes. Remove from oven once during this time to turn the beans so they cook evenly.

When finished roasting, remove from oven and place beans on serving tray. Before serving, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese.

## Sandwiches

Sandwiches are the ideal comfort food and easy to make. And it's time to promote the sandwich – not just for lunch anymore! Pair a sandwich with a salad in the summertime or a soup in winter and you have a simple and filling meal!

### BLT with Creamy Avocado Spread



When it comes down to it, most sandwich “recipes” are actually just templates because there are so many options available in terms of bread, cheese, meat, vegetables and condiments you can use.

However, when it comes to the much-loved bacon, lettuce, and tomato (BLT), any purist will tell you that there is one “true” way to make and enjoy their beloved sandwich: super soft white bread, iceberg lettuce, mayonnaise (and lots of it), plus the requisite trifecta of sandwich-y goodness for which it is named.

Delicious? Yes.

A little boring? Most definitely.

To liven things up a bit, the “recipe” below takes a couple liberties with this tried-and-true classic. Super soft white bread is swapped out for a delicious sourdough, and plain mayonnaise is replaced with a rich and creamy avocado spread. Read on for details!

Makes 2 sandwiches

#### **Basic Sandwich Ingredients:**

4 slices sourdough bread  
2 T. melted butter  
8 leaves Boston Bibb lettuce  
2 medium heirloom tomatoes (red and yellow if you can find them)  
6 slices of cooked bacon (not too crispy)  
salt and pepper, to taste

#### **Avocado Spread Ingredients:**

1 ripe avocado, skin removed and seeded, cut into small chunks  
½ cup 2% Greek yogurt  
1 large clove garlic, finely minced  
1 ½ T. fresh lime juice (approximately ½ lime)  
1 ½ t. ground cumin  
salt and pepper, to taste.

**Directions:**

For the avocado spread, place the avocado, Greek yogurt, and garlic in a glass bowl and combine thoroughly with a fork. It is okay to leave some small chunks of avocado in the mixture. Add the lime juice and cumin, then stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Let sit for approximately 30 minutes to give the flavors a chance to meld. Adjust seasonings a final time before adding to the sandwich.

Brush one side of each piece of bread with melted butter. Heat grill pan over medium-high heat and place bread, buttered side down, on pan. Apply light pressure to each slice with a spatula, being careful to not move the bread in the process. Once nice grill marks have formed, remove the bread from the pan and turn off the heat.

Allow bread to cool slightly, then add avocado spread to 2 of the slices on the non-grilled side. Top with lettuce, tomato and bacon slices before adding the top piece of bread. Cut in half and serve with your favorite side dish or chips.

## Super Easy Chicken Bacon Ranch Spinach Wrap

This recipe features a distinctive spinach wrap in lieu of the more common wheat variety. If you prefer, you can easily use another type of wrap or even more traditional slices of bread.

Regardless of what outer options you choose, the real magic of this recipe happens when you serve it with heated slices of chicken breast and warm bacon. Not only does the meat taste better warm, but it also helps melt the soft, shredded cheeses used in this recipe.

For a super easy weeknight meal, pick up a rotisserie chicken and use the warm breast meat, or make a couple extra chicken breasts earlier in the week to reheat later. If you are pressed for time, you can use your favorite prepared ranch dressing or you can make your own recipe from scratch.

Makes 2 wraps

### Ingredients:

- 2 8-inch spinach wraps
- 4 leaves Romaine lettuce, washed and dried, tough ribs at bottom removed
- 5 oz. chicken breast, cooked, warmed and cut into small chunks
- 6 slices of bacon, cooked but not too crispy
- 1 ripe tomato, cleaned, seeded and cut into small chunks
- 1 ½ oz. shredded provolone cheese
- 1 ½ oz. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 T. ranch dressing

### Directions:

To assemble, place one wrap on a smooth surface and top with 2 Romaine lettuce leaves. Add half the chicken, bacon, tomato and cheese on top of the lettuce, making sure to evenly distribute across the length of the wrap.

Gently roll one side of the wrap over the assembled ingredients and continue rolling until you reach the other side. Cut rolled wrap in half and secure each side with a toothpick. Repeat with second wrap. Serve with a dill pickle and your favorite potato chips.

### 3 Gourmet Grilled Cheese Combinations

The classic grilled-cheese sandwich featuring lots of melted cheddar (or American) on soft white bread is the quintessential comfort food. When paired with a bowl of warm tomato soup, this popular combination evokes warm memories of childhood for many.

However, if you find your tastes in cheese and bread have expanded a bit since those early days, you might want to check out these fabulous gourmet versions, as well.

Each combination below yields 2 sandwiches.

#### **Gourmet Grilled Cheese – Version 1**

8 oz. Brie, rind removed  
3 oz. thinly sliced prosciutto, rolled and cut into thin strips  
1 cup arugula, washed and dried  
4 T. fig jam  
4 slices sour dough bread  
2 T. melted butter, unsalted

#### **Directions:**

Brush one side of each slice of bread with the melted butter. Place 2 slices in a non-stick skillet and adjust heat to medium. Add one half the Brie, prosciutto, and arugula to each slice, making sure the ingredients are evenly distributed.

Spread the fig jam on the other 2 slices (on the un-buttered side) and place on top of the assembled sandwiches in the pan, buttered side up. Press down on each sandwich with a spatula to ensure even contact and to help the interior ingredients heat evenly.

Carefully flip each sandwich and brown on the remaining side. Again, use a spatula to press down to ensure even contact with the hot surface of the pan.

Once the bread is evenly browned on both sides, remove from heat and cut in half. Serve warm.

#### **Gourmet Grilled Cheese – Version 2**

2 ripe peaches, pitted and thinly sliced  
6 oz. Muenster cheese  
1/3 cup pecans, finely chopped  
2 T. honey  
4 slices white bread  
2 T. butter, unsalted

Directions: same as above, but substituting these ingredients.

### **Gourmet Grilled Cheese – Version 3**

6 oz. smoked Gouda, sliced

1 ripe pear, washed, cored and cut into thin slices (with skin)

1 cup arugula, washed and dried

2 T. jalapeno jelly or jam

4 slices ciabatta bread

2 T. butter, unsalted

Directions: same as above, but substituting these ingredients.

## Warm Italian Panini Sandwich

A classic Italian sub sandwich normally features a mixture of cured meats, such as salami, pepperoni or ham, and provolone cheese on an Italian-style roll. Onions, tomatoes, and crispy lettuce topped with copious amounts of Italian dressing are also standard.

This version is similar, except it is on a super soft artisanal white bread without the dressing and it is served warm. If you don't have a dedicated Panini press at home – no problem. You can achieve similar results with a more versatile grill pan and a heavy cast iron skillet.

Yields 2 sandwiches

### Ingredients:

½ small red onion, sliced thin  
4 slices thick-cut artisanal white bread  
2 T. melted butter, unsalted  
2 Romaine lettuce leaves, washed and dried, tough ribs at bottom removed  
1 tomato, washed, dried and sliced  
4 oz. hard salami  
4 oz. Italian deli ham  
2 oz. pepperoni  
4 oz. sliced provolone cheese  
salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

For best results, soak the red onion slices in water for at least half an hour to soften before serving. This will also yield a milder flavor. Remove onion from water, pat dry and set aside.

Butter one side of all four bread slices. Heat grill pan over medium-high heat and add 2 slices of bread, buttered side down. (If the pan is not cast iron, spray with non-stick spray first). Add lettuce, tomato, red onion, salami, ham, pepperoni and provolone cheese on top of the bread slices in the pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, if desired. Top assembled sandwiches with remaining 2 bread slices, buttered side up.

With a spatula or a heavy, very clean cast iron skillet, apply even pressure to the top of the assembled sandwiches. This will ensure even contact with the hot grill pan below, which will create even grill marks and help heat the interior of the sandwich more thoroughly.

When the bread on the bottom is golden brown, carefully flip each sandwich and repeat until the other slice of bread is also evenly browned. Serve immediately with a dill pickle spear and your favorite chips.



## Warm Turkey, Pesto and Provolone Sandwich

The garlicky goodness of fresh basil pesto sets the tone for this quick and delicious warm sandwich. This recipe tastes more complicated than it is. Grilling the bread and heating the turkey enhances the natural flavors of the ingredients and rewards you with warm, gooey, melted cheese mingled with fresh basil and toasted pine nuts.

The best part is this sandwich comes together in just a few minutes, but tastes like you put a lot more effort into it. Enjoy!

Yields 2 sandwiches

### **Pesto Ingredients:**

3 cups fresh basil leaves  
3 cloves garlic  
½ cup toasted pine nuts  
½ cup high-quality extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper, to taste  
½ cup hard cheese, like Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated

### **Sandwich Ingredients:**

2 crusty French rolls  
2 T. butter, unsalted  
5 T. pesto (recipe included)  
6-8 oz. deli turkey breast, thin sliced  
4 oz. Provolone cheese, sliced

### **Directions:**

To prepare the pesto, combine basil, garlic and pine nuts in a food processor container. Pulse until coarsely ground. Slowly add the olive oil and blend until the mixture becomes smooth. Transfer to glass bowl and season with salt and pepper. Stir in grated cheese until thoroughly combined and use immediately.

Freeze unused portion in ice cube trays and top with additional olive oil. Use frozen pesto cubes in soups or stews for additional flavor, as needed.

Cut the French rolls in half lengthwise and butter the inside portion of both halves. Place buttered side down on grill pan heated over medium-high heat. Press down on the outside of the roll to achieve even grill marks. When golden brown, remove from heat and spread a generous amount of pesto on the warm, grilled portion of each piece.

Heat turkey in the microwave with a little bit of chicken or vegetable stock until warm. Add

turkey and Provolone cheese to each roll. The heat from the turkey and the grilled roll should melt the cheese. Serve immediately.

## Main Courses

And now it's time for the main event. Mains make the meal. These are all relatively easy and simple to prepare but pack a lot of punch into them.

### Impress Anyone Poached Salmon



Sometimes you need a simple, yet impressive lunch (or dinner) that's easy to prepare. Like when you're entertaining your future mother-in-law, an important client or even your bunco group...This is the recipe Caitlyn, from Book 2 in the Queensbay series, uses to impress a potential client. Pair with pasta salad for a lovely meal...

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- Cold water
  - Juice of 1 lemon (about 2 tablespoons; 30ml)
  - 1 medium leek or onion (about 6 ounces; 170g), halved
  - 1 large stalk celery (about 2 ounces; 55g), cut into large pieces
  - 1/2 fennel bulb, sliced (about 4 ounces; 115g) (optional)
  - A few fresh sprigs thyme and/or dill
  - 1 bay leaf
  - Kosher salt
  - 4 (8-ounce; 225g) pieces center-cut boneless, skinless salmon fillet
- 
- **For the Yogurt Sauce:**
  - 1 cup (235ml) full-fat yogurt
  - 1 tablespoon minced shallot from 1 small (1-ounce; 30g) shallot
  - 1 tablespoon (about 10g) minced fresh dill
  - 2 tablespoons (30ml) fresh juice from 1 lemon
  - 2 tablespoons (30ml) extra-virgin olive oil
  - Large pinch ground coriander seed
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

#### Directions

1. In a large saucepan, combine 1 quart (1L) cold water with lemon juice, leek or onion, celery, fennel (if using), thyme and/or dill, bay leaf, and a large pinch of salt.

2. Add salmon to poaching liquid. Water should cover, but if not, add enough to just cover salmon. Set over medium heat and bring poaching liquid to 170°F. Adjusting heat to maintain water temperature,

cook salmon until it registers 115°F when an instant-read thermometer is inserted into the thickest part of the fish, about 20 minutes. (Cooking time may vary widely, so be sure to check temperatures to determine doneness.) Carefully transfer salmon to a plate to rest for 5 minutes.

3. **Meanwhile, for the Yogurt Sauce:** In a medium bowl, stir together yogurt, shallot, dill, lemon juice, olive oil, and coriander seed. Season with salt and pepper.

4. Serve salmon while warm, spooning yogurt sauce on top, or let it cool to room temperature before serving. You can also chill the salmon and yogurt sauce before serving.

## Steamed Citrusy Orange Roughy

If you haven't tried foil packet cooking, you are in for a real treat! Preparation only takes a few minutes and clean up is a breeze. You can use this method indoors year round, or toss the packets onto your grill to enjoy a light and healthy meal during the warmer months.

This recipe uses orange roughy filets, but this technique can be used with any type of fish, lean protein and veggie combination.

You can use fresh or preserved lemons to make this recipe. I recommend trying the preserved lemons because they add a lot more flavor. You can either buy a container of preserved lemons or easily make your own with Himalayan salt blocks. A word of caution, however, if you use preserved lemons, don't add additional salt to the filets without tasting.

### Ingredients:

4 orange roughy filets

12 slices fresh or salt-cured preserved lemon

8 slices fresh lime

2 T. fresh cilantro, stems removed and chopped

1 T. fresh jalapeno pepper, seeds and veins removed and finely chopped

4 T. unsalted butter

salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

If preparing indoors, preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Tear off 4 sheets of aluminum foil into sections large enough to fold over filets, with another couple of inches on each side to seal. Place a filet slightly off center on each sheet and add 3 lemon slices and 2 lime slices on top of each. Top each filet with  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the cilantro and jalapeno pepper. Top with 1 T. of butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste.

To seal packet, fold aluminum foil in half over the ingredients. Fold the 3 open sides, one at a time, over several times to seal the packet completely. The goal is to seal the packet tight enough to hold in the steam, but allow enough room for the air to expand.

Place foil packet in preheated oven for 15 minutes, or place on hot grill over medium, direct heat and cook for approximately 8 - 10 minutes. Add a couple minutes to your cooking time if starting with frozen filets.

To serve, open the foil packets, carefully avoiding the hot steam. Discard lemon and lime slices. Transfer filets to plates (if desired) or leave inside foil packets. Top with spicy peach salsa and serve.

## Orange Roughy with Oven-Roasted Tomatoes

Foil packet cooking is the perfect cooking technique for hot days when you don't feel like being in the kitchen. You can make the packets and toss them on the grill to enjoy a light and healthy meal in less than half an hour. Even better, clean up can be as easy as tossing the packets into the trash when you are done.

This method isn't limited to warm weather, of course. You can prepare delicious foil packet meals in your oven year round. This recipe uses orange roughy filets, but this technique can be used with any type of fish, lean protein and veggie combination.

This recipe calls for oven-roasted tomatoes. Oven drying is a great way to use up excess tomatoes from your garden or the farmers' market. In addition, the process of drying them concentrates their flavor by removing excess moisture. The result is a really sweet, delicious burst of flavor in each bite.

To make, slice tomatoes into 2" thick slices and place on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Drizzle olive oil over the slices and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with fresh thyme leaves, if desired. Place in a pre-heated 200-degree oven for approximately 2 hours. When finished, the tomatoes will be nicely browned around the edges. Remove from oven and use immediately or store in an airtight container covered with olive oil. Can be stored in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

**NOTE:** You can use fresh or preserved lemons to make this recipe. Preserved lemons are recommended because they add a lot more flavor. You can either buy a container of preserved lemons or easily make your own with Himalayan salt blocks. A word of caution, however, if you use preserved lemons, don't add additional salt to the filets without tasting.

### Ingredients:

4 orange roughy filets

4 oven-dried tomato slices

4 fresh or preserved lemon slices, cut in half

2 T. fresh thyme

4 T. unsalted butter

salt and pepper, to taste

**Directions:**

If preparing indoors, preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Tear off 4 sheets of aluminum foil into sections large enough to fold over filets, with another couple of inches on each side to seal. Place a filet slightly off center on each sheet and place 1 large oven-dried tomato slice and 2 lemon slice halves on top of each. Top each filet with  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the fresh thyme and add 1 T. of butter to each packet. If desired, sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste.

To seal packet, fold aluminum foil in half over the ingredients. Fold the 3 open sides, one at a time, over several times to seal the packet completely. The goal is to seal the packet tight enough to hold in the steam, but allow enough room for the air to expand.

Place foil packet in preheated oven for 15 minutes, or place on hot grill over medium, direct heat and cook for about 8 - 10 minutes. Add a couple minutes to your cooking time if starting with frozen filets.

To serve, open the foil packets, carefully avoiding the hot steam. Discard lemon slices. Transfer filets to plates (if desired) or leave inside foil packets. Serve with Mediterranean pasta salad or another side dish with complementary flavors.

## Marinated Grilled Chicken Breast

Everyone needs a quick and versatile grilled chicken recipe that consistently delivers great flavor. This healthy and delicious option fits the bill!

The best part about this recipe is the flavors go with just about anything else you want to serve, including grilled garden vegetables, leafy salads or more substantial sides, such as potato or pasta salad. To save time, you can double or triple this recipe to pull together quick lunches or dinners throughout the week.

### Ingredients:

#### Marinade:

- 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- ½ c. apple cider vinegar
- 2 T. lime juice
- 2 t. organic lime zest
- 2 T. fresh oregano, rinsed and crushed with fingers to release oils
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, rinsed and crushed with fingers to release oils
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
- salt and pepper, to taste

4 8-oz. boneless, skinless chicken breasts

### Directions:

Add the marinade ingredients to a large glass bowl and whisk to combine. Add chicken breasts to a 1-gallon sealable freezer bag and pour marinade mixture over top. Seal back and turn to coat breasts thoroughly.

Place the bag in a bowl and set in the refrigerator for 1 to 3 hours. Turn the bag a couple times to evenly distribute the marinade.

Remove chicken from the refrigerator and discard marinade. Grill breasts over medium direct heat, turning once, for 10 – 12 minutes total. Remove from heat and let set for 5 minutes before serving.

## Rosemary Lemon Boneless Chicken Thighs



This quick and easy recipe is perfect for hectic weeknight meals. Featuring a classic blend of lemon, garlic, and rosemary, this dish doesn't need a lot of fancy ingredients to deliver robust flavor. What's more, it pairs beautifully with just about any side dish you choose, including steamed broccoli, brown rice, quinoa, or a leafy green salad.

Prep time: 15 minutes + time to marinate

Cooking time: 10-15 minutes,

Serves 4

### Ingredients:

2 large lemons, zest and juice, divided

1 T. garlic, finely minced

2 T. fresh rosemary leaves, chopped

8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs

2 T. extra virgin olive oil

Optional: Salt and black pepper, to taste

#### Directions:

In a small bowl, combine ½ of the lemon zest and juice with the garlic and rosemary and stir to combine. Place remaining lemon zest in an airtight container and freeze for future use in marinades, soups, or salad dressings. Reserve remaining lemon juice and set aside.

Unroll chicken thighs, if necessary, to expose entire surface area. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

Place chicken thighs in a large, sealable plastic bag and pour marinade on top. Seal bag and turn several times to ensure chicken is evenly coated. Place bag in the refrigerator to marinate for at least 30 minutes or overnight.

When ready to cook, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Remove chicken thighs from bag, allowing excess marinade drip off before transferring to another dish. Discard remaining marinade.

Working in batches if necessary, add chicken thighs to hot skillet and cook until browned on each side, approximately 3-4 minutes per side. Transfer thighs to a clean serving platter and set aside.

Add remaining lemon juice and ¼ cup water, if necessary, to hot skillet to deglaze. Gently scrape surface of pan with spatula to remove any browned bits. Bring liquid to a boil and then reduce heat to medium-low.

Return chicken thighs to skillet and simmer for 3-4 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Season with additional salt and black pepper, to taste. Remove from heat and serve immediately with your choice of sides.

## Grilled Herb-Rubbed, Bone-In Pork Chops

Grilling pork chops is an entirely different experience than grilling red meat. While steaks can be charred on the outside and a delicious shade of pink inside, pork needs to be more uniformly cooked throughout. Therefore, use a medium direct heat while grilling pork so the inside cooks evenly with the outside.

Keep in mind when assembling the ingredients for the herb rub that it is more of a template than a hard-and-fast rule. We aren't going for dainty precision with this technique, just a uniform infusion of robust herbal flavors.

### Ingredients

- 2 T. Kosher salt
- 6-8 large fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces
- 2 stems fresh rosemary, leaves stripped from stems and crushed
- 2 T. fresh thyme leaves, crushed with fingers
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 T. black Hawaiian salt [<<insert affiliate link>>](#)
- 4 thick-cut bone-in pork chops, approximately 1" thick

### Directions

Combine salt, basil, rosemary, thyme, garlic and pepper thoroughly in a small bowl. Rub mixture over all sides of pork chops until thoroughly covered.

Scrub grill grates with a wire brush prior to starting. Preheat grill to medium before adding pork chops over direct heat. Cook for 7-8 minutes, turn once, but

otherwise keep the lid closed as much as possible. If your chops are thinner or thicker than 1", adjust cook time accordingly.

Remove chops from heat, cover and let rest for 3 - 5 minutes before serving. Serve with a grilled summer vegetable medley and top with a pat of compound butter seasoned with the same herbs used in the rub.

## Pulled BBQ Pork Sliders

This recipe is perfect for those hot summer days when the idea of standing in front of a hot stove is more than you can stand. All you need to do is put the ingredients into your slow cooker first thing in the morning and you'll have a yummy, easy dinner waiting for you at the end of the day.

The BBQ aspect of this recipe is fairly low key. Adding it to the slow cooker infuses the meat with a great BBQ flavor, but the meat won't be saturated in it. If you want more pronounced BBQ flavor on your sliders, you can add more sauce to the meat after it is shredded.

### Ingredients:

2 pound pork shoulder roast

1 T. kosher salt

1 ½ t. black salt

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

¾ cup prepared BBQ sauce

2 whole cloves garlic, smashed, peels removed, roughly chopped

1 small yellow onion, chopped

2 T. shallot, minced

slider buns, opened with inside buttered and grilled (or toasted in the oven)

red cabbage, thinly sliced (optional)

### Directions:

Add the pork shoulder to slow cooker and season with salt and pepper. Add cider vinegar, BBQ sauce, garlic, onion, and shallot. Cover and cook for 8 hours on low.

The roast should be very tender after 8 hours. Carefully remove from slow cooker and place on a serving

platter or cutting board reserved for meat. Using a fork in each hand, start “pulling” in two directions, working on one small section of pork at a time. The goal is to “shred” the meat into small strands.

Place shredded meat into a serving container or add it directly to the prepared slider buns. Top with red cabbage for some crunch and color - or add any of your favorite toppings. Serve immediately.

## Cloud Eggs with Asiago Cheese & Chives

Eggs for dinner? Why not? We keep chickens and there are some weeks when we are overwhelmed by eggs. Since breakfast is pretty quick affair in our house, I sometimes serve eggs for dinner. But this also makes a great breakfast or brunch for a lazy weekend or when you have guests.



Prep time: 10-15 minutes

Cooking time: approximately 6 minutes

Serves 4

### Ingredients

4 large eggs

3 oz. Asiago cheese, finely grated, divided

3 T. fresh chives, finely chopped, divided

Salt and black pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Position oven rack to center position.

Preheat oven to 450°F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Crack and separate eggs, placing the whites in a large mixing bowl and reserving the yolks in another bowl.\* Season egg whites with salt and pepper, to taste.

Using a hand mixer or immersion blender, beat the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Scrape the sides of the bowl with a spatula while blending to incorporate all of the egg white.

Gently fold in 2/3 of the Asiago cheese and chives into the bowl, being careful not to deflate the egg whites in the process. Spoon the whipped egg white mixture onto the prepared baking sheet into four piles, leaving plenty of room between each mound. With the back of a spoon, create an indent in the center of each mound and place baking sheet on center rack in preheated oven and bake for 3 minutes.

After 3 minutes, remove from oven and transfer reserved yolks into the indent of each mound. Sprinkle each mound with half of the remaining cheese and fresh chives and return to oven and bake another 3

minutes or until yolks are set and egg whites are golden brown.

Remove egg clouds from oven and sprinkle with remaining cheese and chives and serve immediately.

\*For best results, reserve the egg yolks in small, individual dishes rather than in one larger bowl.

## Dessert

### Who doesn't love dessert?

If you've read any of my books, you can probably tell that I like food, preferably in its chocolate form. In the first book of my *Queensbay Series*, [Dinner for Two](#), Darby, the lawyer turned baker has a secret recipe when it comes to winning over the townspeople of Queensbay, not to mention chef hottie Sean Callahan.

It's her one of a kind chocolate chip cookie recipe, known affectionately around town as the "Better than you know what cookie". So here it is:

### The Cookie Recipe

Thanks for your interest in the cookie recipe. If you've read any of the books you know citizens of Queensbay can't get enough of their favorite cookies from the Golden Pear, Darby Reese's cafe. So here it is – the better than you know what chocolate chip cookie recipe

- Ingredients
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped or bittersweet chocolate chips (try Ghiardelli)
- Flaky sea salt or Maldon
- How to Make It
- Step 1 Preheat oven to 450°.
- Step 2 Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.

Step 3 Beat butter and sugars with an electric mixer at medium speed, occasionally scraping down sides of the bowl, until light and fluffy, 2-3 minutes. Add eggs and vanilla; beat until pale, 4-5 minutes. Reduce mixer speed to low and gradually add flour mixture until just blended. Fold in chocolate chunks using a rubber spatula.

- Step 4 – Scoop dough into even portions (2 tablespoon each) and arrange 2 inches apart on 2 parchment paper-lined baking sheets (maximum of 6 cookies per sheet). Sprinkle cookies with

flaky salt and refrigerate sheets until dough is cool to touch, 10 minutes.

- Step 5 Bake at 450°, rotating baking sheets halfway through cooking, until just golden brown around the edges, 6-7 minutes. Let cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack. Repeat process with remaining dough.

## Broiled Angel Food Cake with Maple Whipped Cream

Once you've tried broiled angel food cake, there is a good chance you'll never want it any other way. With a crisp, golden brown crust reminiscent of toasted marshmallows and that tender melt-in-your-mouth interior you've come to expect from angel food cake, this is sure to become one of your favorite go-to dessert recipes for fast and delicious results.

This recipe can be made with your favorite homemade angel food cake recipe or with the store-bought variety. However, if you buy a pre-made cake, look for one that is not packaged inside a disposable baking pan. The exterior of cakes sold like this tend to be very sticky, which makes them more difficult to slice. Look for one that is packaged with just plastic wrap around it for protection, instead.

### Ingredients:

1 pint heavy whipped cream  
1-2 T. real maple syrup

1 angel food cake, homemade or purchased  
5 T. unsalted butter, melted  
1 pint fresh strawberries, washed, hulled and cut into chunks or slices  
½ pint fresh blueberries, washed

### Directions:

In a large glass bowl, blend 1 pint of heavy whipping cream with a hand or immersion blender until it doubles in size and changes texture. Then, drizzle maple syrup into the bowl and continue blending until the mixture is light and fluffy. Set aside.

Place your oven's top rack on the highest setting and turn the broiler on high.

Due to its round shape, angel food cake is normally cut into a series of wedges. However, the pieces will not brown evenly under the broiler if cut like this. Instead, carefully slice the angel food cake with a sharp knife into equally thick sections by making a series of parallel 2" wide cuts, starting on one side of the cake and working toward the opposite side. Trim the pieces so they are all approximately the same size. The result should be uniformly sized pieces that will brown evenly.

Place the angel food cake slices on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper, and brush the top with melted butter. Turn over each piece and repeat on the other side.

Place baking sheet under the broiler until a golden-brown crust starts to form. (You may need to rotate the baking sheet to get uniform results). Keep a close eye on the cake during this time because it can burn very quickly. Once toasted, remove baking sheet from oven and turn over each piece of angel food cake. Place back under the broiler and toast the remaining side until golden brown.

To serve, arrange toasted slices on individual serving plates and top with maple whipped cream and fresh berries.

## Warm Peach Cobbler

Nothing says “summer” like a warm peach cobbler made with the freshest, juiciest peaches you can find. It’s one of those dishes that never tastes quite as good when you make it out of season - so be sure to enjoy plenty of it while you can!

### Ingredients:

#### Filling:

8 large, ripe peaches, pitted and cut into small chunks

1/3 cup white sugar

2 T fresh lemon juice

2 t. all-purpose flour

1 t. kosher salt

1 t. nutmeg

1 t. cinnamon

1 t. vanilla extract

¼ cup packed brown sugar

#### Topping:

1 cup all-purpose flour

¼ cup sugar

1 t. kosher salt

1 t. baking powder

¼ cup heavy cream

¼ cup water

8 T. unsalted butter, very well chilled

1 egg white, beaten with water added

¼ cup sugar

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 400 degrees with the rack positioned in the center.

Add peaches, sugar, lemon juice, flour, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon and vanilla extract to a large glass bowl. Thoroughly combine ingredient before transferring to a greased 8x8" baking pan. Top peach mixture with an even layer of brown sugar before placing pan in oven. Bake for 10 minutes.

While baking, add flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder to a different bowl and stir to combine thoroughly. Remove chilled butter from refrigerator and chop into very small pieces with a sharp knife. Add butter to the bowl and combine with dry ingredients with your fingers. You should have small pebble-sized pieces of butter when finished.

Add heavy cream and water to the flour mixture and stir with a fork until all the dry ingredients are moist and somewhat sticky. Do not overwork dough.

Remove peach mixture from oven and carefully spoon dough over the top. Make sure the dough is the same thickness throughout so it cooks evenly. You can cover the entire surface, or do like I did and leave deliberate spaces in between. It looks more rustic that way.

Return pan to oven and bake for another 10-15 minutes, or until the topping begins to brown. Remove from oven and brush the top with the egg white wash and sprinkle remaining sugar on top. Return to oven to finish baking, another 10-15 minutes. Remove from oven when the top is evenly browned.

Remove from oven and allow pan to cool slightly. Serve alone or topped with your favorite ice cream or whipped cream.

## No-Churn Salted Caramel & Pecan Ice Cream

Have you avoided making ice cream at home because you don't have an ice cream maker and you can't justify buying another piece of kitchen equipment you'll only use on occasion?

If so, you'll want to give this easy 2-ingredient method inspired by the [kitchn.com](#) (see link below for attribution). This recipe builds upon their technique by adding a delicious salted caramel sauce and some chopped pecans.

The results? Fantastic! If you love ice cream and a bit of salt in your snacks, you'll want to give this one a try!

### Ingredients:

#### Ice cream base:

- 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups cold heavy cream
- 1 t. vanilla extra [optional]

#### Salted Caramel Sauce:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 T. water
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 4 T. unsalted butter
- 1 t. fleur de sel salt

#### Other:

- 4 oz. chopped pecans

**Directions:**

To prepare the salted caramel sauce, add heavy cream to a small saucepan and set the heat to low. The goal is to slightly warm the cream because you don't want to add a cold dairy product to hot liquid.

Over medium-high heat, add the sugar and water to a heavy-bottomed saucepan and stir to combine. Stop stirring and bring to a boil.

Continue boiling until the mixture turns a deep amber color, then slowly whisk in the warmed cream until thoroughly incorporated. Remove from heat and add salt and butter. Stir until butter is totally incorporated into the mixture. Transfer to a serving dish or storage container and allow to cool while you prepare the ice cream.

For the ice cream, pour the sweetened condensed milk into a bowl and add the vanilla extract, if desired.

Whip the heavy cream in a large bowl with a hand mixer or immersion blender until stiff peaks form.

Add one scoop of the whipped cream to the bowl of condensed milk and mix it in. Then gently fold the rest of the whipped cream into the now lightened condensed milk. Thoroughly incorporate the whipped cream into the mixture, but do not overwork it to the point it loses its airiness.

Pour half of the whipped cream/condensed milk mixture into an 8" loaf pan. Drizzle the cooled salted caramel sauce over the milk mixture and spread the chopped pecans evenly over the entire surface. Top with remaining whipped cream/condensed milk.

Use a butter knife to incorporate the caramel sauce and pecans throughout the ice cream by pressing it down into the mixture and making sweeping "cuts" back and forth across the entire length of the pan.

Cover with wax paper and press down to remove any air pockets. Place in freezer for a minimum of 6 hours, but preferably overnight. Will last up to 2 weeks in the freezer. Store any remaining salted caramel sauce in an airtight container for up to one week.

## Peppermint Bark

Peppermint bark is one of those seasonal favorites that everyone seems to enjoy. If you've never made it before, you are in for a very pleasant surprise. This super easy recipe assembles quickly with minimal fuss.

Not surprisingly, the "secret" to outstanding peppermint bark is to use high-quality chocolate. If you prefer, you can use all dark or all white chocolate for this recipe.

**Yield:** 2 pounds

**Total Prep Time:** 2 hours, including refrigeration

### Ingredients:

16 oz. high-quality dark chocolate, chopped into small pieces

16 oz. high-quality white chocolate, chopped into small pieces

1 c. crushed peppermint candy

### Directions:

Place peppermint candy in a heavy-duty freezer bag and cover with a towel. Pound bag with a meat mallet or rolling pin until finely crushed. Set aside. (This can be done in a food processor, if preferred).

Line a small, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. If necessary, dampen the bottom of the outer edges of the parchment paper to hold it in place.

In a double broiler, melt the dark chocolate until smooth. Transfer while warm and melted to parchment paper and spread with a plastic spatula until uniformly thick.

Thoroughly clean double broiler before melting the white chocolate. Once smooth, stir in the crushed peppermint pieces until evenly distributed. Pour the white chocolate mixture on top of the dark chocolate layer. Spread until evenly distributed over the dark chocolate layer.

Place baking sheet in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. Once harden, break peppermint bark into pieces before serving or storing.

## Mini-Pumpkin Cheesecakes with Salted-Caramel Crunch Topping

These little mini-pumpkin cheesecakes are a crowd favorite because they look almost as good as they taste! For a little extra “sparkle,” top each cheesecake with some pre-made salted-caramel crunch. If you can’t find any in your local grocery store, you can order some online here:

You can also top with your favorite caramel sauce or some chopped nuts before serving. For a more minimalist approach, simply sprinkle a bit of pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon on top of the whipped cream.

**Yield:** 24 mini-cheesecakes

**Total Prep Time:** 30 minutes

### Ingredients:

#### Whipped Cream:

1 pint heavy whipping cream  
2 t. vanilla extract  
2 T. real maple syrup

#### Crust:

1 ½ c. crushed gingersnap cookies (approximately 25-30 cookies)  
2 T. unsalted butter, melted

#### Pumpkin Cheesecake:

8 oz. package cream cheese, room temperature  
1 c. light brown sugar, firmly packed  
1 t. salt  
¾ c. canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)  
1 T. Greek yogurt  
1 egg  
1 t. pure vanilla extract  
2 t. ground cinnamon  
1 t. ground nutmeg

1 t. ground ginger  
½ t. ground cloves

**Optional garnish:**

Salted Caramel Crunch (pictured)  
Caramel sauce  
Chopped nuts

**Directions:**

In a large glass bowl, blend 1 pint of heavy whipping cream and vanilla extract with a hand or immersion blender until it doubles in size and changes texture. Then, drizzle maple syrup into the bowl and continue blending until the mixture is light and fluffy. Set aside or place in refrigerator until ready to use.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 24-cup mini muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray and set aside.

Put cookies in a large heavy-duty freezer bag and cover with a towel. Pound bag with a meat mallet or rolling pin until cookies are uniformly crushed into very small pieces. (This can also be done in a food processor).

Transferred crushed cookies to a glass bowl and add melted butter. Stir with a fork until thoroughly combined.

**Note:** Add a little more melted butter to hold cookie crumb mixture together, if necessary. However, do not add too much or the butter will compete with the flavor of the gingersnap crust.

Divide cookie crumb mixture into 24 equal parts and press into the bottom of each muffin cup firmly with your fingers to form a crust. Bake in preheated oven for 8 – 10 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, brown sugar, and salt with a hand-held mixer. Add pumpkin puree and Greek yogurt to cream cheese mixture and continue beating until combined.

Open egg in a separate bowl before adding to the cream cheese mixture. Then blend in vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and cloves. Continue blending until all ingredients are thoroughly incorporated into the batter.

Evenly divide pumpkin cream cheese mixture between the 24 muffin-tin cups, placing on top of the pre-baked cookie crust. Fill each cup slightly higher than the edge of the pan.

## Beverages

### Refreshing Peach Basil Wine Spritzer

This light and refreshing cocktail combines the flesh flavors of ripe peaches and basil with the crisp taste of either sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio. The bit of sparkle added by the club soda makes for a delicious treat on a warm summer evening.

#### Ingredients:

- 4 ripe peaches, pits removed and quartered
- 1 T. honey
- 10-12 fresh basil leaves, washed
- ½ c. water
- 1 bottle sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio, chilled
- 3 cups club soda, chilled
- additional sprigs of fresh basil, for garnish
- 1 ripe peach, pit removed and cut into slices for garnish

#### Directions:

Add quartered peaches, honey, basil leaves and water to blender and blend until smooth. Once blended, spoon mixture into an ice cube tray and place in the freezer until frozen solid.

When ready to serve, pour the bottle of chilled wine and club soda into a large pitcher. Stir with a long-handled spoon to combine. Add peach ice cubes to wine glasses and top with the wine mixture. Add remaining flavored ice cubes to the pitcher or reserve to add to the wine glasses when they are refilled.

Garnish with fresh peach slices and basil before serving.

# Watermelon Mint Lemonade

This watermelon mint lemonade is super easy to make and is so refreshing on a hot summer day. This is one of those recipes you'll want to tinker around with to find the right flavor combination for your tastes. For example, the amount of water you need to add will vary depending on how juicy the watermelon is and how strong you want the flavor to be.

Directions for a mint-infused simple syrup are included. The watermelon adds a lot of sweetness, however, so you may not wish to sweeten it further. It really depends on how sweet or tart you want the final results to be.

If you are serving this recipe outside on a warm day, make extra so you can freeze some into ice cubes or an ice ring (if serving in a punch bowl). Using ice cubes made of the beverage you are serving rather than plain water will prevent watered-down drinks as the day or evening progresses.

For an adults-only variation, add some citrus-flavored vodka before serving.

## Ingredients:

### Mint Simple Syrup (optional)

½ c. granulated sugar

½ c. water

¼ c. tightly packed fresh mint leaves, stems removed and crushed

6 c. fresh watermelon, rinds removed and cut into chunks

¾ c. fresh lemon juice (6-8 medium lemons)

½ c. cold water, (plus more, if needed)

½ c. fresh mint leaves, tightly packed with stems removed

fresh mint sprigs, for garnish

lemon slices, for garnish

## Directions:

To make the simple syrup, add the sugar, water and crushed mint leaves to a small saucepan and heat over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves completely. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and discard mint leaves. Cool completely before using.

Add watermelon chunks, lemon juice and ½ cup cold water to a blender and blend until liquefied. Pour through a fine mesh strainer to remove any larger particles. Taste and add more water, if needed. Sweeten with mint-infused simple syrup, if desired.

Bruise ½ c. fresh mint leaves with fingers to release oils and add to the bottom of a large glass pitcher or jar. If serving immediately, add ice cubes to the container and pour the watermelon mixture over top. Add fresh lemon slices to the container for garnish.

To serve, pour over ice and add a sprig of fresh mint and a lemon slice for garnish.