

2 cups [280 g] walnuts, peanuts, hazelnuts, cashews, almonds, or pepitas  
 ½ cup [100 g] granulated sugar  
 ¼ teaspoon salt

Line a sheet pan with parchment paper. In a large skillet over medium heat, stir together the nuts, granulated sugar, and salt. Cook until the sugar begins to melt and the nuts begin to toast, stirring almost constantly. Turn the heat down to low and cook until the nuts are lightly caramelized. Pour the nuts onto the prepared sheet pan. Cool completely before chopping them. The nuts will keep, in an airtight container at room temperature, for up to 1 week.

## Almond Cream

Almond cream is also known as frangipane cream and is often used in traditional French baking. Most recipes contain quite a bit of sugar, but because I usually use the cream in a rich pastry that has plenty of sugar already, I can get away with less.

**MAKES 1 CUP [300 G]**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 4 tablespoons [57 g] unsalted butter, at room temperature | 3 tablespoon all-purpose flour           |
| ¼ cup [50 g] granulated sugar                             | 1 large egg, at room temperature         |
| Pinch of salt   | ¼ teaspoon almond extract                |
| ½ cup [50 g] almond meal                                  | 1 tablespoon brandy (optional, see Note) |

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, beat the butter on medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Add the granulated

sugar and salt and mix until well incorporated and creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the almond meal and flour and mix until incorporated. Add the egg and mix again until incorporated, scraping down the sides of the bowl if needed. The mixture may look broken at this point, but that is normal. Add the almond extract and brandy, if using, and stir to combine. The cream will keep, in an airtight container in the refrigerator, for up to 1 week.

**NOTE** Stir in ⅓ cup [75 g] of Pastry Cream (page 288) at the end for a richer version, or replace the brandy with ¼ teaspoon of orange essence.

### VARIATION

- **Hazelnut Cream:** Replace the almond meal with an equal amount of hazelnut flour, and replace the brandy with Frangelico.

## Caramelized Onion Jam

I'm a big fan of caramelized onions and like to sneak them into anything savory I'm making. This jam can be doubled or tripled, and it freezes well.

**MAKES 1 CUP [300 G]**

|                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 lb [455 g] yellow onions    | 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar |
| 2 tablespoons unsalted butter |                             |

½ teaspoon salt

Pinch of cayenne, or more to taste

Halve the onions around the equator and slice the halves into ¼ in [6 mm] thick half rounds. Melt the butter in a large, heavy-bottom pot over medium-high heat. Add the sliced onions, salt, and cayenne and cook until the onions begin to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium-low and cover the pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 to 30 minutes. Uncover the pot and continue cooking over medium-low heat until the onions are dark and jammy, about 30 more minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the vinegar. Let cool to room temperature, then transfer the jam to a jar and store, tightly sealed, in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

## Brown Butter

Brown butter adds a nice, nutty flavor to many dishes, but please note: It's not a perfect swap for regular butter in most recipes, because some of the liquid evaporates from the butter as it cooks. You can use any amount of butter for this; the process will be the same.

### YIELD VARIES

Unsalted butter

In a light-colored, heavy-bottom skillet, such as stainless steel, melt the butter over medium-low heat, swirling it with a heatproof rubber spatula. When it starts to bubble, turn up the heat to medium and keep stirring until it begins to foam, 3 to 5 minutes. You will start to see brown bits at the bottom of the skillet and the butter will smell nutty. Keep stirring as the butter browns, making sure to gently scrape

the bottom of the pan. The butter will quickly change from light brown to golden brown. Immediately remove it from the heat and pour the butter and any flecks on the bottom of the pan into a heatproof bowl. The brown butter can be used immediately or cooled to room temperature and stored in a tightly sealed jar in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

## Maple Mustard Dressing

This dressing is inspired by the maple mustard vinaigrette in *Savoring the Seasons of the Northern Heartland*, by Beth Dooley and Lucia Watson. I always use it on my salads, but it is also great on so many other things, like chicken, quinoa, and couscous. If you are serving a salad at brunch, this is a great addition.

**MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS [480 G]**

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ⅓ cup [230 g] maple syrup   | 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard           |
| ⅓ cup [80 g] cider vinegar  | Freshly ground pepper                 |
| 2 tablespoons store-bought garlic paste, or 3 garlic cloves, minced | 1 cup [224 g] vegetable or canola oil |

In a blender, combine the maple syrup, cider vinegar, garlic, mustard, and pepper. Blend on high speed until smooth, then lower the speed to low and pour in the oil in a slow, steady stream. Increase the speed to high and blend until the dressing is emulsified. The dressing will keep, in an airtight container in the refrigerator, for up to 2 weeks.