



Taste & Trends

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Comfort Foods

Meet the Away From Home Chef Jessica White

From 100°F in the summer to below zero in the winter, growing up in the Midwest means exposure to polar ends of the weather spectrum. To provide relief from the extremes of a winter blizzard or the gloominess of a summer thunderstorm, my family and I turn to our favorite comfort foods.

I struggled to define comfort food because it means something different to everyone. I believe it is any food that provides you comfort and helps make the bad days good and the cloudy days sunny. They are foods from our childhood that we associate with fond memories.

Personally, my comfort foods vary depending on the season, and my favorites provide nostalgic and sentimental value. They provide happiness and a connection to my past. Currently, I am doing a lot of harvesting from my garden and prepping for the winter months. I have been processing my tomatoes to be used throughout the fall and winter in homemade tomato soup (paired with grilled cheese, of course), a soup we call red soup (basically a beef vegetable) and chili. We

also can our own salsa, which is used for dipping chips and building lots of nacho platters. During the summer months we enjoy BLTs, ice cream, and other frozen treats.

Comfort foods provide support when we are feeling down, stressed, or just not feeling 100%. Why do comfort foods make us feel better? Studies have shown that when eating comfort foods your body releases feel-good hormones like dopamine after being consumed — making us feel happy and relaxed. Some of the most popular foods that fall into this category are pizza, French fries, pasta, and burgers. These foods tend to remind us of the simpler times of childhood and help take the edge off a bad day.

What defines “comfort food” for you? Is it super indulgent and over the top? Or is it easy simple? Either way, I hope you enjoy the cheesy comfort recipe I’ve shared with you below!



Goat Cheese Pizza Dip

Head to [page 4](#) to check out Chef Jessica’s creation!

Insights


82% of people indulge in comfort foods frequently, at least **once a week or more**, and do so more often at night or as a **late-night** snack.

Comfort foods belong in **any dining occasion**, without a distinct emotional need for them.

1 in 3 consumers report they would enjoy comfort foods as part of their **regular meals**.

When looking for comfort foods, consumers aren't necessarily interested in something complex or sophisticated, but rather **simple, quick, and comforting**.

Top meals associated with comfort foods



Pizza	55%
French fries	45%
Burgers	44%
Pasta	39%
Fried fast food (chicken nuggets, etc.)	38%

Taste, practicality, and price are the **most important attributes** when deciding which comfort foods to indulge in.

Menu Inspiration



Classic Canadian Poutine

MC's Garage – Mankato, MN

Homemade cheese curds with fries smothered in house gravy.



Pepperoni Apizza

Modern Apizza – New Haven, CT

Brick-oven baked with a mozzarella base and topped with pepperoni.



SWAG Burger

BurgerFi – National

Spicy Wagyu burger with charred jalapeños and candied ghost pepper bacon, sweet tomato relish, pepperjack cheese and hot steak sauce.



Orange Chicken Tenders

Starbird Chicken – California

Chicken tenders topped with cilantro, green onion, and toasted sesame seeds topped with creamy sesame vinaigrette and orange glaze.



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Goat Cheese Pizza Dip

Yield: 12 servings

INGREDIENTS

Goat Cheese, crumbled	12 oz
ALLEGRO Tuscan Tomato & Herb Pasta Sauce	15 oz
Mushrooms, sliced and sauteed	8 oz
Pepperonis, quartered	4 oz
Basil	As needed

GOAT CHEESE PIZZA DIP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Place the tomato sauce, mushrooms and pepperoni in a baking dish and top with crumbled goat cheese.
3. Bake until goat cheese starts to brown, about 15 minutes.
4. Top with finely chopped basil.

Serve with garlic cheese bread, bread sticks, or toasted crostini.



ALLEGRO Tuscan Tomato and Herb Pasta Sauce 10078485304705 – 105oz, 6 count

Prepared with vine-ripened California tomatoes, extra virgin olive oil, and NO citric acid, ALLEGRO is a great-tasting, ready-to-use pasta sauce perfect for your back-of-house needs.

