

lentil & kielbasa salad

serves 6

I worked on lentil salad for years and couldn't get the flavor right. One day, I was having lunch with a friend in Paris and I asked her what the secret was and she said that they put a turnip in the cooking liquid—and then throw away the turnip! Thick slices of kielbasa and goat cheese toasts make this a hearty winter lunch.

Good olive oil

- 2 cups medium-diced leeks, white and light green parts
- 1 cup (¼-inch-diced) carrots (2 carrots)
- 1 pound green French Le Puy lentils, rinsed and drained
- 1 whole peeled onion stuck with 6 whole dried cloves
- 1 small turnip
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic (3 cloves)
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 5 tablespoons good red wine vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 scallions, white and green parts, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves
- ½ cup minced fresh parsley leaves
- 10 ounces kielbasa, halved lengthwise and sliced ½ inch thick diagonally
- 6 (½-inch-thick) diagonal slices of a baguette
- 4 ounces creamy herbed goat cheese, such as Montrachet

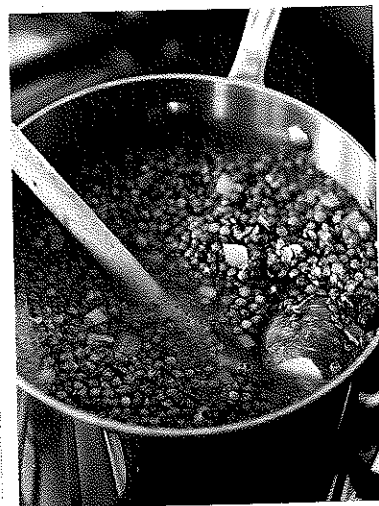
Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large saucepan, add the leeks, and cook uncovered over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add the carrots and cook for one minute. Add the lentils, onion, turnip, and 6 cups of water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer uncovered for 20 to 25 minutes, until the lentils are tender. Discard the onion and turnip and drain the lentils, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Place the lentils in a large bowl.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl or glass measuring cup, whisk together the garlic, mustard, vinegar, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper. Slowly whisk in ½ cup olive oil, add to the lentils, and toss. If it's dry, add a few tablespoons of the reserved cooking liquid.

MAKE AHEAD
Prepare the salad, cover, and refrigerate for up to 3 days, saving some of the cooking liquid to add later. Prepare the goat cheese toasts just before serving.

Add the scallions, thyme, parsley, kielbasa, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper and toss. Set aside to cool.

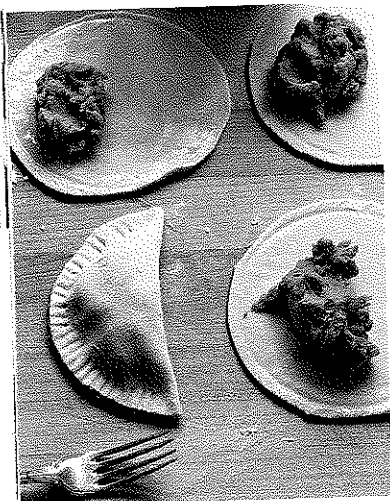
Toast the baguette slices and spread with the goat cheese. Taste the salad for seasonings and serve at room temperature with the goat cheese toasts.



spicy sweet potato empanadas

makes 8 empanadas

While I was in San Francisco filming my TV show, we came across a bevy of fantastic food trucks. One truck made empanadas filled with all kinds of international flavors, which inspired me to come home and make these sweet potato empanadas seasoned with orange, maple syrup, and chipotle chile powder. Baking them in puff pastry instead of frying them in empanada dough makes these so much lighter!



- 1 pound sweet potatoes, scrubbed (2 potatoes)
- Good olive oil
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1½ tablespoons unsalted butter, diced
- 1½ tablespoons pure Grade A maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon chipotle chile powder
- ½ teaspoon grated orange zest
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 sheets (1 box) frozen puff pastry, such as Pepperidge Farm, defrosted in the refrigerator
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon of water, for egg wash
- Flaked sea salt, such as Maldon

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line one sheet pan with aluminum foil and another with parchment paper.

Rub the sweet potatoes with olive oil and prick them all over with the tines of a fork. Place the potatoes on the foil-lined sheet pan. Bake for about 1 hour, until very tender when pierced with a knife. Lower the oven to 375 degrees.

Allow the potatoes to cool enough to handle, then peel and discard the skins, placing the potatoes in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add the sour cream, butter, maple syrup, chile powder, orange zest, orange juice, 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, and ¾ teaspoon black pepper and mix well. Set aside.

Unfold one sheet of the cold puff pastry on a floured cutting board. Roll the sheet into a 12-inch square with a rolling pin. With a sharp paring knife, cut four 5-inch circles from the

pastry, using a dish as a guide and discarding the scraps. Place a heaping soup spoon of filling on each circle, leaving a 1-inch border. Brush the edges of the circles with the egg wash and fold over, making half circles. Crimp the edges together with the tines of a fork. Repeat with the second sheet of puff pastry. Place on the parchment-lined sheet pan. Chill for 15 minutes.

Brush with the egg wash and sprinkle with the sea salt and pepper. Make 2 small slits in each empanada to allow steam to escape. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until puffed and browned. Serve hot.



MAKE AHEAD
Prepare the filling up to 2 days ahead. Assemble the empanadas and refrigerate for up to 4 hours. Bake just before serving.

crusty baked shells & cauliflower

serves 6 to 8

When I met David Tanis in Paris, he was the head chef at Alice Waters's legendary restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California. David now writes cookbooks and my favorite food column in the New York Times. This wildly popular recipe is from his column. I love the creamy cauliflower with the crispy pasta plus sage, capers, garlic, and Fontina.

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

¾ pound medium shells, such as Barilla

Good olive oil

2½ pounds cauliflower, cut into small florets (1 large head)

3 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh sage leaves

2 tablespoons capers, drained

1 tablespoon minced garlic (3 cloves)

½ teaspoon grated lemon zest

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

2 cups freshly grated Italian Fontina Val d'Aosta cheese, lightly packed (10 ounces with rind)

1 cup (8 ounces) fresh ricotta

½ cup panko (Japanese bread flakes)

6 tablespoons freshly grated Italian Pecorino cheese

2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves

Grate (or rather grind) the Pecorino in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Fill a large pot with water, add 2 tablespoons salt, and bring to a boil. Add the pasta and cook al dente, according to the instructions on the package. Since it will be baked later, don't overcook it! Drain and pour into a very large bowl.

Meanwhile, heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large (12-inch) sauté pan over medium-high heat, add half the cauliflower in one layer, and sauté for 5 to 6 minutes, tossing occasionally, until the florets are lightly browned and tender. Pour the cauliflower, including the small bits, into the bowl with the pasta. Add 3 more tablespoons of oil to the sauté pan, add the remaining cauliflower, cook until browned and tender, and add to the bowl.

Add the sage, capers, garlic, lemon zest, red pepper flakes, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon black pepper to the bowl and stir carefully. Stir in the Fontina. Transfer half of the mixture to a 10 × 13 × 2-inch rectangular baking dish. Spoon rounded tablespoons of ricotta on the pasta and spoon the remaining pasta mixture on top. Combine the panko, Pecorino, parsley, and 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a small bowl and sprinkle it evenly on top. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until browned and crusty on top. Serve hot.

MAKE AHEAD
Assemble the dish, cover, and refrigerate. Bake before serving.



herb & apple bread pudding

serves 8 to 10

This bread pudding is based on the Thanksgiving stuffing that I've been making for Jeffrey for decades. I prefer to roast my turkey without stuffing because it cooks faster and stays moister. Bread pudding that bakes alongside the turkey is the best of both worlds: moist turkey and crispy stuffing.

- 8 cups ($\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-diced) country bread cubes, crusts removed
- 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) unsalted butter
- 3 ounces pancetta, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diced
- 2 cups chopped yellow onions (2 onions)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups medium-diced celery
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup medium or dry sherry
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary leaves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh parsley leaves
- 7 extra-large eggs
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cups chicken stock, preferably homemade (page 68)
- 2 cups grated Gruyère cheese, lightly packed (6 ounces with rind), divided

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the bread in a single layer on a sheet pan and bake for 20 minutes, tossing once, until lightly browned. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat the butter in a large (12-inch) sauté pan over medium-low heat. Add the pancetta, raise the heat to medium, and cook for 5 minutes, until browned. Stir in the onions, celery, and apple and cook over medium to medium-high heat for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender. Stir in the sherry, rosemary, 1 tablespoon salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons pepper and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, until most of the liquid is gone. Off the heat, stir in the parsley.

Meanwhile, whisk the eggs, cream, chicken stock, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the Gruyère in a very large bowl. Stir in the bread and

the vegetable mixture and set aside for 30 minutes to allow the bread to soak up the custard. Pour into a 9 × 13 × 2-inch oven-to-table baking dish. Sprinkle with the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Gruyère and bake for 50 to 60 minutes, until the top is browned and a knife inserted into the middle comes out clean. Serve hot.



MAKE AHEAD
Assemble early in the day, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate. Bake just before serving.

limoncello ricotta cheesecake

serves 12

I've made this limoncello ricotta cheesecake too many times to count. People can't believe how light and flavorful it is, plus it's nice to have a small square of cheesecake instead of a big rich, dense wedge. Grated lemon zest on top gives it extra flavor and tells people what to expect even before they take a bite.

FOR THE CRUST

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs (15 crackers)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

FOR THE FILLING

- 16 ounces cream cheese, such as Philadelphia, at room temperature
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 1½ cups fresh ricotta
- ½ cup Italian limoncello liqueur, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest, plus extra for serving (2 lemons)
- 5 extra-large eggs, at room temperature

A hot dry knife will help make a clean slice.

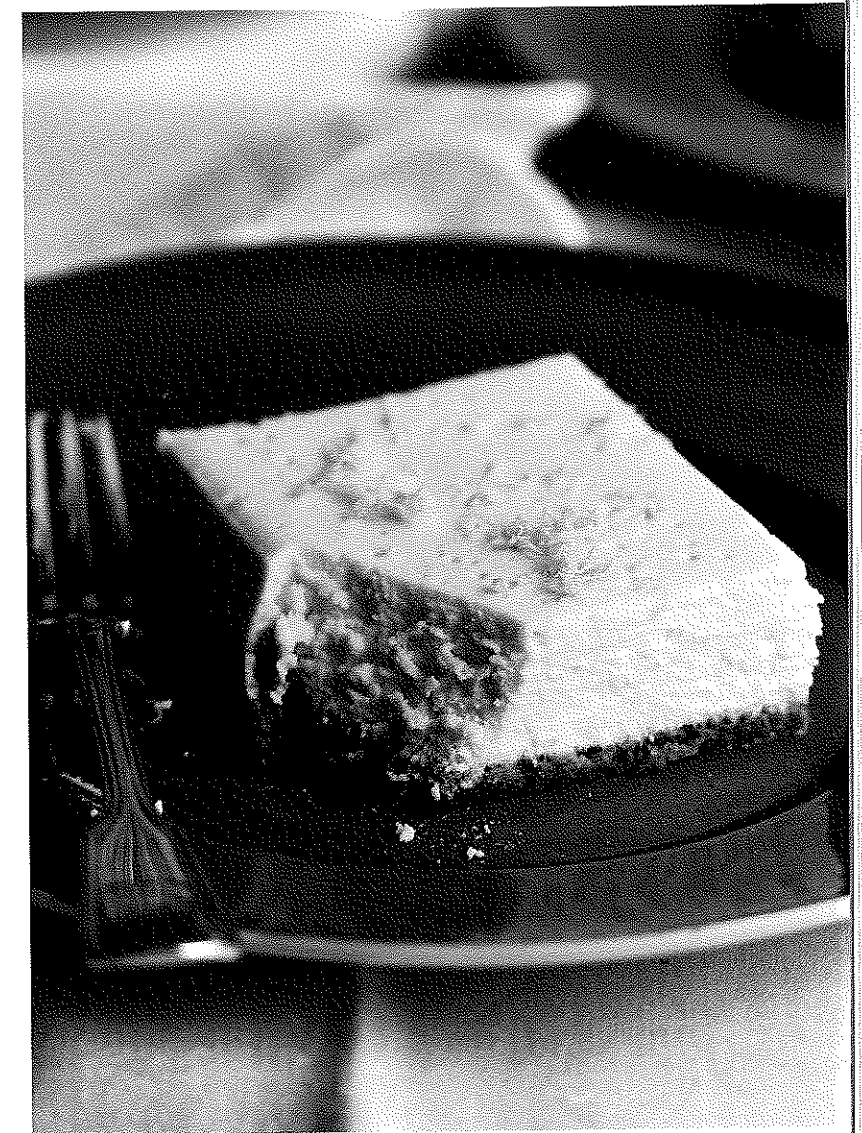
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Position an oven rack in the center of the oven. Spray a 9 × 13 × 2-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.

For the crust, combine the graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and butter in a medium bowl and mix until moistened. Press the mixture evenly in the prepared pan and ¼ inch up the sides. Bake for 8 minutes and set aside to cool.

For the filling, place the cream cheese and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium speed for 3 minutes, until light and fluffy. Add the ricotta and beat for another minute, scraping down the bowl. With the mixer on low, add the limoncello, vanilla, and lemon zest and beat for one minute. With the mixer on medium-low,

add the eggs, one at a time, beating until incorporated. Scrape down the bowl and mix until the batter is smooth. Pour over the crust.

Place the baking pan in a roasting pan large enough to hold the baking pan completely flat. Place the pan in the oven and carefully pour enough of the hottest tap water into the roasting pan to come halfway up the sides of the baking pan. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, until almost set in the center. (It will still be a little jiggly when you shake the pan gently.) Turn off the heat and leave the cheesecake in the oven in the water bath for 15 minutes to prevent the cheesecake from cracking. Take the baking pan out of the water bath and place on a rack to cool completely. Wrap the entire pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight. Sprinkle with extra grated lemon zest, cut into 12 pieces, and serve cold.



MAKE AHEAD
Prepare completely, wrap, and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

pumpkin roulade with ginger buttercream

serves 8

I'm always looking for an alternative to the expected pumpkin pie for the holidays. I've made pumpkin mousse, pumpkin banana mousse tart, and finally I decided to make a pumpkin version of a bûche de Noël. It's a pumpkin spice cake filled with a mascarpone and ginger cream. You can make it in advance and keep it refrigerated before serving.



To make in advance, wrap the filled cake in plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Dust with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

FOR THE CAKE

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 extra-large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup canned pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar, plus extra for dusting

FOR THE FILLING

- 12 ounces Italian mascarpone cheese
- 1 1/4 cups sifted confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1/4 cup minced dried crystallized ginger (not in syrup)
- Pinch of kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Grease a 13 x 18 x 1-inch sheet pan. Line the pan with parchment paper and grease and flour the paper.

In a small bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and salt and stir to combine. Place the eggs and granulated sugar in the bowl of an electric

mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium-high speed for 3 minutes, until light yellow and thickened. With the mixer on low, add the pumpkin, then slowly add the flour mixture, mixing just until incorporated. Finish mixing the batter by hand with a rubber spatula. Pour into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake the cake for 10 to 12 minutes, until the top springs back when gently touched.

While the cake is baking, lay out a clean, thin cotton dish towel on a flat surface and sift the entire 1/4 cup of confectioners' sugar evenly over it. (This will prevent the cake from sticking to the towel.) As soon as you remove the cake from the oven, loosen it around the edges and invert it squarely onto the prepared towel. Peel away the parchment paper. With a light touch, roll the warm cake and the towel together (don't press!), starting at the short end of the cake. Allow to cool *completely* on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, make the filling. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the mascarpone, confectioners' sugar, and cream together for about a minute, until light and fluffy. Stir in the crystallized ginger and salt.

To assemble, carefully unroll the cake onto a board with the towel underneath. Spread the cake evenly with the filling. Reroll the cake in a spiral using the towel as a guide. Remove the towel and trim the ends to make a neat edge. Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve sliced.





wild rice salad

SERVES 4 TO 6

This is an old recipe from the 1970s but it's still delicious. I love the strong nutty flavor of wild rice but it needs to be paired with other ingredients that balance it in a salad. The sweetness of oranges and grapes along with the acidity of a raspberry vinaigrette really do the trick; plus the scallions and pecans give it lots of flavor and texture. This is great on a buffet of summer salads. I also add dried cranberries for a counterpoint of something tart.

- 1 cup long-grain wild rice (6 ounces)
- Kosher salt
- 2 navel oranges
- 2 tablespoons good olive oil
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar
- ½ cup seedless green grapes, cut in half
- ½ cup pecans, toasted (page 209)
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons scallions, white and green parts, chopped
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Place the wild rice in a medium pot with 4 cups of water and 2 teaspoons of salt and bring to a boil. Simmer uncovered for 50 to 60 minutes, until the rice is very tender. Drain well and place the rice back in the pot. Cover and allow to steam for 10 minutes.

While the rice is still warm, place it in a mixing bowl. Peel the oranges with a sharp knife, removing all the white pith. Cut between the membranes and add the orange sections to the bowl with the rice. Add the olive oil, orange juice, raspberry vinegar, grapes, pecans, cranberries, scallions, ½ teaspoon of salt, and the pepper. Allow to sit for 30 minutes for the flavors to blend. Taste for seasonings and serve at room temperature.

sausage-stuffed mushrooms

SERVES 6 TO 8

When I'm making a turkey for Thanksgiving, I don't stuff it for two reasons. First, I prefer stuffing that's crunchy outside and moist inside rather than the soggy stuffing that comes out of the bird. Second, in order for the stuffing to be done, the turkey has to cook longer and it ends up being dry. My solution? I roast a turkey and make these mushrooms filled with sausage-and-bread stuffing to serve alongside.

- 16 extra-large white mushrooms, caps and stems separated
- 5 tablespoons good olive oil, divided
- 2½ tablespoons Marsala wine or medium-dry sherry
- ¾ pound sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- ¾ cup minced scallions, white and green parts (6 scallions)
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic (2 cloves)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ⅓ cup panko (Japanese dried bread flakes)
- 5 ounces Italian mascarpone cheese
- ⅓ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2½ tablespoons minced fresh parsley

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

Trim the mushroom stems and chop them finely. Set aside. Place the mushroom caps in a shallow bowl and toss with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil and the Marsala. Set aside.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the sausage, crumbling it with a wooden spoon. Cook the sausage for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until it's completely browned. Add the chopped mushroom stems and cook for 3 more minutes. Stir in the scallions, garlic, salt, and pepper and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the panko crumbs, stirring to combine with the other

ingredients. Finally, swirl in the mascarpone and continue cooking until the mascarpone has melted and made the mixture creamy. Off the heat, stir in the Parmesan and parsley and season to taste. Cool slightly.

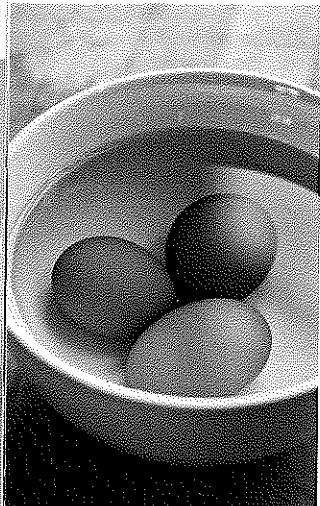
Fill each mushroom generously with the sausage mixture. Arrange the mushrooms in a baking dish large enough to hold them all in a snug single layer. Bake for 50 minutes, until the stuffing is browned and crusty.



old-fashioned banana cake

SERVES 8

At Barefoot Contessa we always seemed to have too many overripe bananas so I came up with this delicious banana cake to use them up. Eventually, the cake was so popular that we didn't have enough bananas to meet the demand for the cake!



If you need to get eggs to room temperature quickly, put them in a bowl of warm water for 5 minutes.

- 3 very ripe bananas, mashed
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup light brown sugar, lightly packed
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 extra-large eggs, at room temperature
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe follows)
- Walnut halves, for decorating

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9 × 2-inch round cake pan.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the bananas, granulated sugar, and brown sugar on low speed until combined. With the mixer still on low, add the oil, eggs, sour cream, vanilla, and orange zest. Mix until smooth.

In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, and salt. With the mixer on low, add the dry ingredients and mix just until combined. Stir in the chopped walnuts. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes, turn out onto a cooling rack, and cool completely.

Spread the frosting thickly on the top of the cake and decorate with walnut halves.

cream cheese frosting

FOR ONE 9-INCH CAKE

- 6 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2½ cups sifted confectioners' sugar (½ pound)

Mix the cream cheese, butter, and vanilla in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on low speed until just combined. Don't whip! Add the sugar and mix until smooth.

