

Sam's Spring Fattoush Salad

Serves 4 to 6

2 pieces lavash bread

¼ cup plus 3 tablespoons
extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt

Aleppo pepper (optional)

¼ cup lemon juice

1 clove garlic, peeled and
minced

5 Persian, Armenian,
or Japanese cucumbers,
thinly sliced

5 radishes, thinly sliced

3 green onions, thinly sliced

1 cup dill fronds

1 cup mint leaves

½ cup feta, preferably
sheep's milk

A FEW WEEKS after our older son was born, I ran into my friend Sam Mogannam. I was light-headed from exhaustion, teary from lack of sleep. "You want some advice about kids?" asked Sam, who has two daughters. I figured he was going to tell me what I'd already heard—to sleep when the baby was sleeping or purchase a specific brand of pacifier. Instead he grabbed my hand, looked straight into my eyes, and said, simply, "Surrender."

It remains the best parenting advice I've heard, and it's the only tip I share with new parents.

In addition to being a font of wisdom, Sam's a great cook; he's co-owner of Bi-Rite Market, a beloved San Francisco grocery store started by his grandfather, and before taking over the family business, he worked in restaurants. This is an approximation of a simple recipe he served me once. Though it's simple, the devil is in the details. Thin-skinned Persian, Armenian, or Japanese cucumbers, which have few seeds, a snappy texture, and a distinct sweetness, are what make the salad special. In a pinch, European hothouse cucumbers can be substituted, but avoid the typical grocery-store cukes, which are too seedy and wet for this recipe.

Part of what makes this salad so great is the dynamic textures; the cracker-like baked lavash croutons and the crunchy cucumbers and radishes contrast with the creamy feta and soft herbs. I dress this with an especially tart vinaigrette made from equal parts lemon juice and olive oil and serve it right away, before it gets soggy. It would be a great side dish with all sorts of things, but I particularly like it alongside the Grilled Tahini Chicken on page 93.

> Preheat the oven to 350°F. Brush the lavash on both sides with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Arrange on a baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and Aleppo pepper, if using. Transfer to the oven and bake until golden and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool.

> In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, garlic, and a generous pinch of salt. Whisk in the remaining ¼ cup olive oil until combined.

> In a large salad bowl, combine the cucumbers, radishes, green onions, dill, and mint. Drizzle half of the dressing over it and toss with your hands to coat. Break the lavash into bite-size pieces and add to the bowl along with the feta. Drizzle over the remaining dressing and gently mix with your hands to combine. Season to taste with additional salt and Aleppo pepper and serve immediately.



FANCY TOASTS

WE ARE LIVING IN the peak toast era, if you believe the food magazines, but the truth is that toast has always been one of my favorite foods. When I was a kid, I liked lightly toasted Pepperidge Farm white bread buttered edge to edge and showered with cinnamon sugar. I still like that, but I have also developed an appreciation for salty, oil-slicked pieces of toasted baguette onto which I pile all sorts of delicious things, from canned sardines to mashed hard-boiled eggs and sliced avocado.

Really, you can put anything you want on top of toast, but these are my favorite vegetarian combinations. If you make all three, you'll have an especially beautiful assortment.

Makes about 20 toasts

FOR THE TOASTS:

1 baguette, cut diagonally into 1/3-inch-thick slices

Extra-virgin olive oil, for brushing

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 clove garlic, peeled

> Preheat the oven to 350°F. Arrange the slices of baguette on a rimmed baking sheet in a single layer. With a pastry brush, brush each toast on both sides with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Transfer to the oven and bake until crisp but not brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven. Rub the garlic over the surface of each toast once. Let cool. Toasts are best the same day they're made.

Garlicky Broccoli Rabe and Provolone

1 bunch broccoli rabe, ends trimmed

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling

2 cloves garlic, peeled and slivered

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Kosher salt

20 toasts (at left)

2 ounces aged provolone or Pecorino Romano cheese

> Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the broccoli rabe and boil until

just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain. When cool enough to handle, squeeze the broccoli rabe hard over the sink to remove any excess liquid and transfer to a cutting board. Finely chop the broccoli rabe. Pour the 2 tablespoons of olive oil into a medium frying pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, until the garlic is aromatic, about 30 seconds (do not let it brown). Add the chopped broccoli rabe and stir to coat with the olive oil; cook 3 minutes, until silky. Season to taste with salt. Spoon some of the mixture onto each piece of toast and use a vegetable peeler to shave some cheese over the top of each. Drizzle with additional olive oil.

Roasted Tomatoes and Ricotta

1 pound small tomatoes, such as Early Girls, cored and halved, or cherry tomatoes, halved

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, peeled and slivered

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 sprigs fresh thyme

1 cup whole-milk ricotta

1/2 teaspoon lemon zest

20 toasts (facing page)

> Preheat the oven to 375°F. Put the tomatoes in a baking dish, cut-side down, and drizzle with the olive oil. Sprinkle the garlic over, tucking it between the tomatoes, and season with salt and pepper. Add the thyme sprigs. Transfer to the oven and bake until the tomatoes are soft and slumped, about 30 minutes (if you're using cherry tomatoes, begin checking them after 15 minutes; they won't take as long as the larger Early

Girls). Remove from the oven and let cool. The tomatoes can be made ahead; they can sit at room temperature for a few hours or refrigerated, covered, for up to a day. Let them return to room temperature before using.

> In a small bowl stir together the ricotta and lemon zest. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon some of the ricotta on the crostini, then spoon some of the roasted tomato juices from the baking dish onto the ricotta and top each with a tomato half.

Pea Smash and Marinated Feta

1/2 cup feta, preferably sheep's milk

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 cup shelled fresh or frozen peas

5 mint leaves

1 teaspoon kosher salt

20 toasts (facing page)

Freshly ground black pepper

> Crumble the feta into large pieces over a bowl and add 1/4 cup of the olive oil, the thyme, red pepper flakes, and lemon zest. Stir gently to combine and let stand 30 minutes. (The marinated feta can be made ahead; wrap tightly and refrigerate for up to 3 days and let come to room temperature before using.)

> Bring a small saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the peas and cook until just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and transfer to the bowl of a food processor. Add the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil, mint, salt, and lemon juice and pulse into a chunky mash.

> Spread some of the pea mash on the crostini and top each with some of the marinated feta and freshly ground black pepper.

Makes one 12-inch tart

FOR THE CRUST:

5 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes

1½ cups all-purpose flour

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

3 tablespoons vegetable shortening, lard, or cold bacon fat

1 large egg

2 to 3 tablespoons ice water

FOR THE TART:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 large white onions, peeled and thinly sliced

¼ teaspoon sugar

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

½ cup heavy cream

1 egg

2 anchovy fillets

1 clove garlic, peeled

½ cup olives, black or green, pitted and chopped

1 teaspoon thyme leaves, chopped

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Creamy Onion Tart with Olives

KNOW A WOMAN who never cooks the same thing twice for guests. She keeps a journal noting when and to whom she served each particular dish, ensuring there are never any repeats. I'm sort of in awe of her record-keeping, especially since I can't recall what I ate for breakfast by the time dinner rolls around, but her method is antithetical to my own; I believe in repeats, in making a dish so often and for so many people that it becomes inextricably linked to you, something friends request and look forward to eating or want the recipe for. Your culinary calling card, so to speak.

My friend Nan Duffly believes in repeats too, and every year around the holidays, she hosts an open house at which she serves the same dishes, including a spiced, cured beef tenderloin, cooked rare and sliced thin, and a version of this exceptional onion tart.

The recipe was originally published in the *Boston Globe*; Nan adapted it slightly and I have adapted it a bit more, adding a briny olive topping that complements the sweet onions and flaky pastry, but it's awesome even without that flourish. It has enough custard to bind it but not so much that it detracts from the onions. I like the mellow sweetness of white onions in this recipe, but you can substitute yellow instead.

Adding a bit of shortening to the pastry makes it especially flaky (come at me, haters), but you could use all butter or substitute lard or bacon fat for the shortening.

> FOR THE CRUST: Spread the cubed butter in a small dish in a single layer and freeze until very cold, 15 minutes. In a food processor, pulse the flour and salt until blended. Add butter and shortening and pulse until the butter

chunks are about the size of peas. In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg and 2 tablespoons of the ice water. Add the egg mixture to the food processor and

RECIPE CONTINUES >



pulse just until the mixture holds together in a shaggy ball (you may need to add the additional tablespoon water).

> Turn the dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap, use the plastic wrap to gather the dough into a ball, then flatten it into a disk with the heel of your hand. Tightly wrap and chill at least 1 hour and up to 3 days. (The dough can be frozen for up to a month. Let thaw overnight in the refrigerator before using.)

> FOR THE FILLING: In a large frying pan, heat the butter over medium heat until it melts. Add the sliced onions and sugar and cook, stirring occasionally, until all the liquid has evaporated, about 15 to 20 minutes. The onions should be soft and light golden brown. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat, transfer to a bowl, and let cool. In a small bowl, whisk together the cream and egg. When the onions are cool, add the cream mixture and stir to combine.

> Preheat the oven to 400°F. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let stand 5 minutes. Unwrap and, on a lightly floured surface with a lightly floured rolling pin, roll dough into a 14-inch circle. Use a paring knife to trim the shaggy edges. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Top with the onion mixture, spreading in an even layer and leaving a 1½-inch border. Fold the border over and pleat and crimp to create a crust. (If you're making this tart for stand-up eating, roll the dough into a large rectangle instead of a circle, and cut it into squares after it's baked.) Transfer to the oven and bake until the crust is a deep golden brown, about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool.

> In a mortar and pestle, pound the anchovy fillets and garlic to a paste (if you don't have a mortar and pestle, you can finely mince the anchovies and garlic and then use the side of your knife to grind into a paste). Transfer to a bowl and stir in the olives, thyme leaves, and olive oil. Dot the olive mixture evenly over the surface of the tart, then cut it into wedges and serve.

Seeded Rye Gougères

Makes 2 dozen

1 cup milk or water

8 tablespoons butter

¾ teaspoon kosher salt

¾ cup all-purpose flour

⅓ cup rye flour

4 eggs

1 cup grated Gruyère cheese

FOR THE TOPPING:

1 egg

½ teaspoon kosher salt

2 teaspoons sesame seeds

2 teaspoons sunflower seeds

1 teaspoon poppy seeds

WHEN I WORKED AT LA VARENNE, the French cooking school in Burgundy, I always volunteered to go on the morning bakery run; I drove the beat-up school car to the village boulangerie for baguettes and bought a cheesy gougère for the ride home. Lyle Lovett's album *Pontiac* was stuck in the car's tape deck, so that became the unlikely sound track of that summer.

While in Burgundy, I learned how to make veal demi-glace and pike quenelles and *pâte feuilletée*. But of all of the French recipes I picked up, it's choux (pronounced "shoe") pastry I make the most. This simple dough, used for gougères (and éclairs), is easy to make and totally rewarding. I love to watch them inflate in the oven into airy, rich puffs.

I like to add a bit of rye flour to this and other savory doughs (you'll notice I include some in the dough for my calzones, page 121), just enough to impart a nutty flavor that is enhanced by the Gruyère and the seeded topping. It's completely optional, though, and the gougères will be equally good if made entirely with all-purpose flour.

If you want to make a sweet version, omit the cheese and seeded topping. Once cooled, split them, fill them with scoops of ice cream, and serve with chocolate or caramel sauce drizzled over.

> Preheat the oven to 425°F. Combine the milk, butter, and salt in a medium-size, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium low and add the flours all at once. Cook, stirring, until the mixture comes together into a ball and begins to leave a film on the bottom of the pan, 2 to 3 minutes.

> Transfer the dough to the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Mix the dough on low speed to cool it slightly. When steam is no longer rising from the dough, add the eggs one at a time, mixing each egg in completely before adding the next. Fold in all but 2 tablespoons of the cheese and transfer the dough to a piping bag. (Alternatively, you can forget the piping bag

RECIPE CONTINUES >

Flank Steak with Salsa Verde

Serves 4 to 6

FOR THE SALSA VERDE:

2 cups Italian parsley leaves

2 cups basil leaves

¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil

½ cup capers

2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

½ teaspoon kosher salt

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1½ to 2 pounds flank steak

Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper

Extra-virgin olive oil



ON MY LAZIEST NIGHTS, the ones when I haven't thought about dinner in advance, I'll often make flank steak. I generously season it with salt and black pepper, then cook it over a bed of hot coals or on the stovetop in a hot cast-iron pan. It's a reliable staple, especially served with salsa verde slathered all over it and an ear of boiled corn or some roasted potatoes (or try the smash-fried potatoes that accompany the Summery Sausage Bake, page 103).

But that's just one way to eat it. The cooked meat would be righteous in a steak sandwich or sliced thin and shingled over a salad; it's good in a bowl of noodle soup or subbed for the pork meatballs in the vermicelli dish on page 143. Cheaper and leaner than a rib eye, quick to cook, and equally good hot or at room temperature, flank steak can be dressed up or down, depending on your time, energy, and ingredients.

Salsa verde, a blitzed mixture of basil, parsley, capers, and vinegar, is a condiment to know. It's great with steak, but also with roasted chicken, potatoes, grilled halibut, or sardines, and it's a good way to use up bunches of herbs.

> In a food processor, or with a mortar and pestle, combine the parsley, basil, olive oil, capers, vinegar, red pepper flakes, and salt. Process until smooth. Let stand at room temperature at least 1 hour before serving. The sauce will keep, refrigerated, for up to 2 days; let come to room temperature before serving.

> Remove the steak from the refrigerator and season generously on both sides with salt and pepper. Drizzle with a little olive oil and let the meat come to room temperature.

> Prepare a gas or charcoal grill for direct, medium-high-heat grilling. (Alternatively, the steak can be cooked in a cast-iron frying pan on the stovetop over high heat.) Grill the steak, turning once, about 6 minutes per side for medium. Transfer to a cutting board and let stand 10 minutes, then thinly slice across the grain. Serve warm, with salsa verde alongside.



Lois

Rigatoni with Roasted Tomatoes, Ricotta, and Mint

Serves 4

1 cup fresh whole-milk ricotta

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 1/2 pounds small tomatoes,
cored and halved

3 cloves garlic, peeled and
slivered

Kosher salt and freshly
ground black pepper

2 sprigs fresh thyme

1 sprig fresh rosemary

12 ounces rigatoni

1/4 cup fresh mint leaves,
finely chopped, plus some
for garnish

I HAVE MADE MORE PASTA in the six years since my first son was born than I'd made in all the years before that. Parents always seem to bemoan the fact that their children are subsisting on a diet of buttered noodles, but I side with the kids: pasta with salted butter and Parmigiano is one of the world's great foods. Still, it's my motherly duty to expand my kids' palates, and this pasta is straightforward enough that my boys will eat it but also interesting enough that parents dig it too.

Slow-cooking the tomatoes in a generous amount of olive oil until they slump in the pan renders them sweet and soft, even if you're beginning with less than prime specimens, and the tomato-olive oil matrix that forms in the bottom of the roasting dish becomes the light sauce for the pasta (I use this same roasting method on page 37). Instead of stirring in the ricotta, which dilutes the tomato sauce and turns it an icky pink color, I dollop it on top so you can take a bit with each bite. You can use any short dry pasta you prefer, but my children like slipping the fat rigatoni noodles on their fingers before they eat them, so that's what I use.

> Preheat the oven to 350°F. Put the ricotta in an ovenproof bowl and set aside. Pour 1 tablespoon of the olive oil into the baking dish and arrange the tomatoes in a single layer in the dish, cut-side down. Drizzle the remaining oil over the tomatoes, sprinkle the garlic over, tucking it between the tomatoes, and season with salt and pepper. Add the thyme and rosemary sprigs. Transfer to the oven and roast until the tomatoes are slumped and soft, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and, with your fingers,

pluck off and discard the tomato skins. Transfer the tomatoes and accumulated juices to a large bowl. Turn the oven off and put the ricotta in the oven to warm slightly while you cook the pasta.

> Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. When the water is boiling, add the pasta and cook until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the pasta cooking water, and immediately add the pasta to the bowl with the tomatoes. Stir to combine, adding some of the pasta cooking water

as needed, until the rigatoni is well coated. Add the mint and stir to mix, then transfer to a serving platter. Remove

the ricotta from the oven and dollop spoonfuls of it on top of the pasta. Drizzle with a ribbon of olive oil, season

with salt and pepper, and garnish with mint. Serve.



over medium heat. Set a wire rack over a rimmed baking pan. When the oil is hot, add some of the eggplant slices in a single layer. Fry the eggplant, turning once, until golden brown on both sides and tender inside, about 5 to 6 minutes total. Carefully monitor the heat; if the eggplant is browning quicker than it's softening or if the bits of breading that fall into the oil are blackening, reduce the heat. Transfer the fried eggplant to the wire rack. Repeat until all the eggplant has been fried, skimming out crumbs with a slotted spoon and adding more oil to the pan as necessary.

> **MAKE THE SAUCE:** In a medium saucepan over medium heat, heat the olive oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened and translucent, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute more, then add the cherry tomatoes and cook, stirring, until they begin to soften and pop, about 5 minutes more. Reduce the heat to low, add the oregano, and continue cooking until the sauce thickens slightly, 5 minutes more. Season to taste with salt. Remove from the heat and transfer to a serving bowl.

> Preheat the broiler to high. Transfer the eggplant slices to an oven-safe platter, baking dish, or rimmed baking sheet, shingling the slices slightly. Top with the mozzarella and broil just until the mozzarella melts, about 2 minutes. Remove from the oven, sprinkle with flaky salt, garnish with torn basil leaves, and serve immediately, with the sauce alongside.

Summery Sausage Bake

Serves 4 to 6

1½ pounds small new potatoes (each about the size of a golf ball)

3 ears corn, shucked

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 Italian-style pork sausages (a mix of sweet and hot)

2 cloves garlic, peeled and slivered

1 tomato, cored and quartered

1 pint cherry tomatoes

3 sprigs fresh oregano

Aioli (page 35), for serving (optional, but very good)

I HAVE ALWAYS LIKED the idea of clambakes; cooking food in a pit on the beach just seems like a fun thing to do. But now, so deep into this cookbook, I think of you as a friend, so I'll just be honest: they're just never as good as I want them to be, and it's often the seafood that's the weakest link (I've been to more than one clambake where I was served semi-raw lobster).

But the supporting actors in a clambake, namely potatoes, corn, and sausage, are some of my favorite foods, so I combined them in this skillet dinner, adding in some jammy tomatoes to complete the summer supper. The technique I use on the potatoes here—boiling them whole until tender, crushing them slightly, and panfrying them until crisp—is one of my favorite ways to prepare small potatoes. Even if you never make this recipe (I don't know why you wouldn't, but that's your business), please make the spuds—they can be served as a side dish with plenty of things, like the Garlic-Butter Roast Chicken (page 115) or the Flank Steak with Salsa Verde (page 80).

Piling everything together in one big pan feels festive and generous, not unlike the clambakes that inspired it; if you don't have a frying pan large enough to accommodate everything, you can always build the bake in a deep casserole dish, a Dutch oven, or in two smaller oven-safe frying pans.

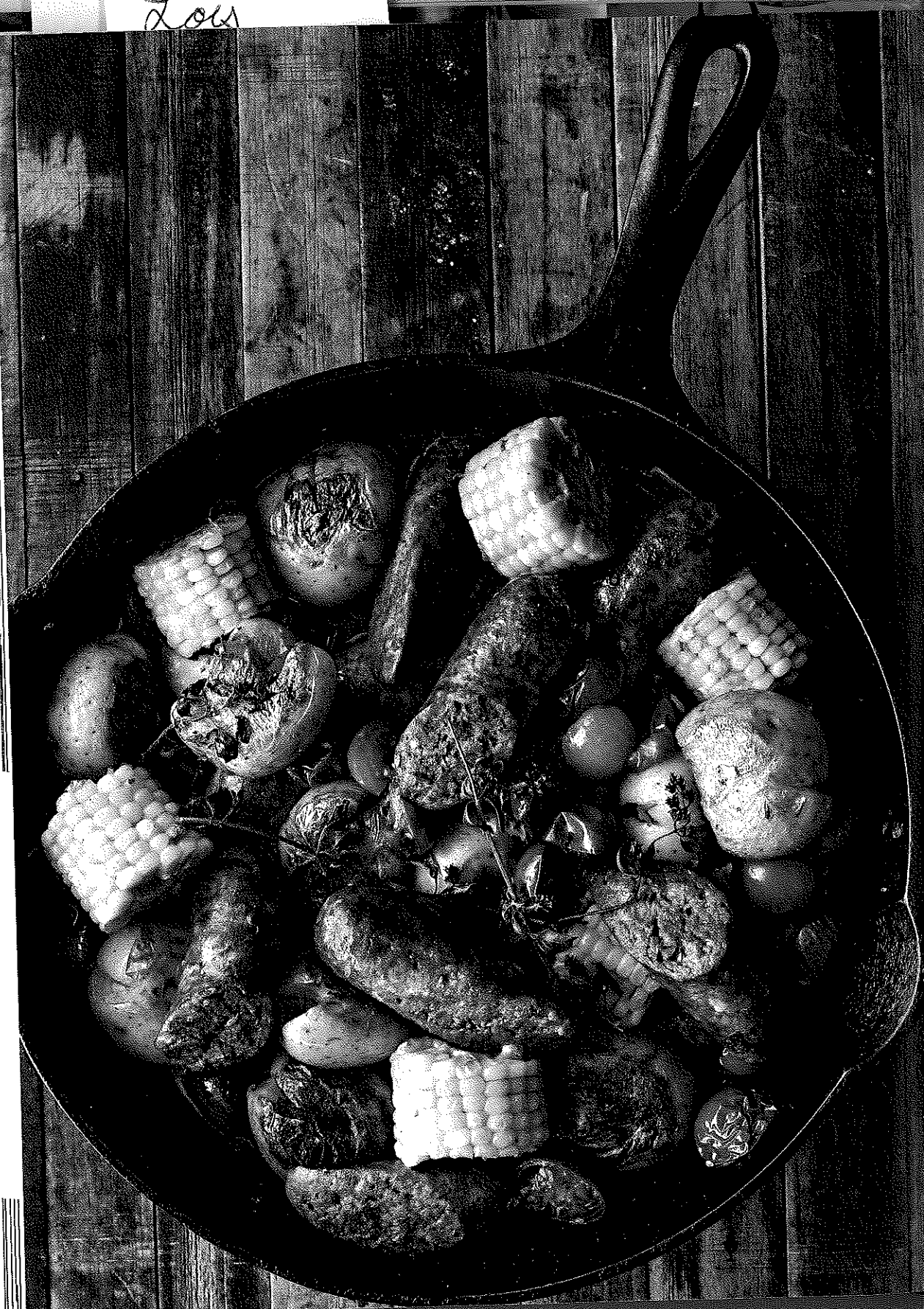
> Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and preheat the oven to 400°F. Add the potatoes and corn to the water; cook the corn for 10 minutes, then remove with tongs and set aside. Cook the potatoes until tender but not falling apart, 5 to 10 minutes more. Drain. When the corn and potatoes are cool enough to handle, cut the corn into 1½-inch-thick wagon wheels and use the bottom of a juice glass to smash the potatoes slightly (don't press so firmly

that the potatoes fall apart, just enough to crush them a bit). Transfer the smashed potatoes to a plate, drizzle with a tablespoon of olive oil, and season with salt and pepper.

> In a 12-inch heavy ovenproof frying pan (a cast-iron one is great) over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil. When the oil is hot, add the potatoes and fry, turning once, until

RECIPE CONTINUES ▾

Lois



SUMMERY SAUSAGE BAKE, *continued*

golden brown on both sides, about 5 to 6 minutes total. Return the fried potatoes to the plate.

> Reduce the heat to medium and add the sausages to the pan (if the pan looks dry, add another tablespoon olive oil). Fry the sausages, turning occasionally, until golden brown all over but still raw within, about 5 minutes. Add the sausages to the plate with the potatoes.

> Add the garlic and the quartered tomato to the pan and cook, stirring, until the tomato begins to break down, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and add the smashed potatoes to the pan in a single layer. Add the cherry tomatoes, tucking them in around the potatoes. Lay the sausages on top of the potatoes and surround with the corn wagon wheels. Tuck in the sprigs of oregano. Season everything with salt and pepper and drizzle with another tablespoon of olive

oil. Transfer to the oven and bake until the cherry tomatoes have popped and the sausages are cooked through, about 15 minutes.

> Remove the sausages from the pan and slice crosswise into thirds. If serving in the skillet, return the sausage pieces to the skillet. Otherwise, transfer the contents of the pan to a large platter and top with the sausage. Serve with aioli alongside, if using.

Makes one 9-inch cake

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2½ teaspoons ground ginger
 - 1½ teaspoons ground nutmeg
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - ¾ teaspoon ground cloves
 - 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ½ teaspoon kosher salt
 - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
 - 1 cup packed plus 2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
 - 2 large eggs
 - ½ cup crème fraîche or sour cream
 - 1 ounce grated fresh ginger (peeled before grating)
 - 7 tablespoons unsulfured molasses (not blackstrap) dissolved in ½ cup hot water
 - 2 tablespoons finely chopped candied ginger
- FOR THE GLAZE:
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
 - 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon milk
 - ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Glazed Gingerbread Cake

I AM REALLY PARTICULAR about gingerbread, even though it's a humble dessert. I believe that good gingerbread should be moist enough that it sticks to your fingers a bit if you're eating it with your hands and that it should have enough ginger and black pepper to make it a little spicy. So committed was I to creating the ultimate gingerbread that I tested almost a dozen variations on this recipe; for a while, I was bringing gingerbread everywhere I went, giving wedges to the UPS man, the teachers at my kids' school, and all our neighbors.

This gingerbread falls into the category of sweets that I call snack cakes, meaning it's appropriate at any time of day (especially breakfast). Most gingerbread recipes are made with oil, but mine is made with butter and crème fraîche, which give the finished cake an especially delicate, tender crumb and great flavor. It also tastes richly of ginger, which appears in the recipe in three forms: fresh, powdered, and candied.

> Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 9-inch round pan and line the bottom with parchment paper. Grease the parchment. Set aside. In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, ginger, nutmeg, baking soda, ground cloves, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and black pepper.

> In an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium-high speed until creamy, then add the brown sugar and beat until blended. Reduce the speed to medium and add the eggs one at a time, beating until smooth, then

beat in the crème fraîche and grated fresh ginger. Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the dry ingredients in 3 batches, alternating with the molasses mixture, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients. Mix in the candied ginger.

> Transfer the batter to the prepared pan. Bake until a tester inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, about 45 to 50 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool 15 minutes, then turn out of the pan and let cool completely.

RECIPE CONTINUES >

> MAKE THE GLAZE: In a medium bowl, whisk together the confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla until smooth. When the cake is completely cool, pour the glaze over it, letting some run down the sides. Cut into thick wedges and serve plain or with whipped cream.





Maple- Blueberry Cornmeal Cake

Makes one 9-inch cake

1 cup dark amber maple syrup

13 tablespoons unsalted butter,
at room temperature

2 cups blueberries

1½ cups all-purpose flour

½ cup coarse cornmeal

1½ teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

3 eggs

¾ cup buttermilk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar

Crème fraîche or vanilla
ice cream, for serving

WHILE MY FATHER might not be a great cook, he loves good food, and he introduced me to some of the finer tastes in life, including Ritz crackers spread with both unsalted butter and Jif peanut butter (a technique we call “double buttered” in our family). Dad was also responsible for one of my favorite childhood breakfasts: crumbled leftover corn bread, toasted in the oven, then generously dotted with salted butter and doused in real maple syrup. This cake, which tastes a lot like that breakfast, is for my dad.

> Preheat the oven to 350°F. Put the maple syrup in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil and cook until the syrup has reduced by half. Remove from the heat and stir in 1 tablespoon of the butter (the mixture may crystallize, but this is okay), then pour into a 9-inch-by-3-inch round cake pan and tilt the pan so that the syrup coats the bottom evenly. Arrange the berries in a single layer on top.

> In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, and baking soda. In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, buttermilk, and vanilla.

> In an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a large bowl with a handheld mixer), beat the remaining 12 tablespoons

of butter and the sugar on high speed until fluffy. Reduce the mixer speed to low and alternate additions of dry and wet ingredients. Mix until the batter is smooth, scraping down the bowl as needed.

> Transfer the batter to the pan and smooth the top. Bake until the cake is golden brown and pulling from the edges of the pan and a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean, 1 hour. Cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack, then run a thin knife or offset spatula around the edges of the pan and turn the cake out onto the rack. Let cool completely, then transfer to a platter. Cut into wedges and serve with a spoonful of crème fraîche or ice cream. The cake is also very good for breakfast.