



AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

SERVES  
**6 to 8**

ACTIVE TIME  
**20 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**20 MINS**

VEGETARIAN

## TOMATO-WATERMELON SALAD



THIS SALAD COMBINES TWO favorites of the summer garden. For an especially attractive plate, use a selection of height-of-the-season heirloom tomatoes in various colors with juicy red and/or yellow watermelon.

### CHEF'S NOTE

This is a great summer salad that combines crisp, sweet, juicy watermelon with the season's most flavorful tomatoes. If yellow watermelons such as 'Moon and Stars' or 'Yellow Buttercup' are available, try mixing them with red melons.

6 mixed vine-ripened heirloom tomatoes (such as Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, or German Green)

2½ pounds seedless watermelon

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons sherry vinegar

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 pinch Espelette pepper or cayenne pepper

½ cup Vidalia or other sweet onion, thinly sliced

¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped

Core the tomatoes and cut into wedges.

Cut the green skin off the watermelon, trimming away the white rind and exposing the flesh. Cut the flesh into large dice.

In a large salad bowl, whisk the olive oil, vinegar, salt, black pepper to taste, and the Espelette pepper until a light emulsion forms. Add the watermelon, tomatoes, and onion and toss well. Add the parsley, taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper, and toss again before serving.





AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

SERVES  
**6 to 8**

ACTIVE TIME  
**20 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**3 HRS**

A NATIVE OF GUYANA, SOUTH America, Dionne Alleyne is one of Sweet Home Café's senior cooks and has been a key member of the culinary team since the opening. When she was asked to create a classic southern-style potato salad, she combined her culinary passion and skill in this version, which has been a winner at the Café since it first appeared on the menu.

## POTATO SALAD



2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes,  
uniform in size, unpeeled

3 teaspoons kosher salt, divided

¼ cup yellow onion, finely diced

¼ cup cider vinegar

2 tablespoons sugar

¾ cup mayonnaise, preferably Duke's

3 tablespoons yellow mustard

¼ cup sweet pickle relish

½ cup celery, finely diced

¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley,  
finely chopped

¼ cup scallions, white and  
light green parts, thinly sliced

Freshly ground black pepper

Put the potatoes and 2 teaspoons of the salt into a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and cook the potatoes until tender, about 25 minutes (test by inserting the tip of a paring knife into a potato; it should be tender but still firm). Drain the potatoes and let cool in a single layer to room temperature.

Once the potatoes have cooled, carefully peel off the skins and cut the potatoes into medium dice.

Put the onion into a small strainer and rinse briefly under cold water. Pat dry on a paper towel.

In a large bowl, combine the vinegar, sugar, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt and whisk until the sugar and salt are dissolved. Then add the mayonnaise, mustard, and relish, whisking until well blended.

Add the potatoes, celery, onion, parsley, and scallions to the mayonnaise and gently mix. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours prior to serving. Once the salad is fully chilled, check the seasoning and adjust with salt and pepper to taste.



CONTINENTAL  
UNITED STATES

SERVES  
**4 to 6**

ACTIVE TIME  
**30 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**3 HRS  
30 MINS**

## COLESLAW



1 head green cabbage, about  
2½ pounds, core and ribs  
removed, and leaves thinly sliced

1 cup carrot, shredded

½ cup Vidalia or other  
sweet onion, finely diced

¼ cup cider vinegar

¼ cup sugar

½ teaspoon celery salt

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1 cup mayonnaise,  
preferably Duke's

⅓ cup sweet pickle relish

1 ½ tablespoons Creole  
mustard (such as Zatarain's)  
or Dijon mustard

2 dashes Tabasco sauce

Freshly ground black pepper

Combine the cabbage, carrot, and onion in a large bowl and set aside.

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, sugar, celery salt, and kosher salt and whisk until the sugar and salts are dissolved. Add the mayonnaise, relish, mustard, Tabasco sauce, and pepper to taste, whisking until well blended.

With a rubber spatula, fold the mayonnaise mixture into the cabbage mixture, mixing until the cabbage is evenly coated. Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 3 hours prior to serving. It will keep for up to one day.

THE WORD COLESLAW COMES from the Dutch *koolsla*, or “cabbage salad.” In fact, cabbage is the only consistent ingredient in coleslaw. Additions can include shaved carrots, onions, bacon, or even pineapple. Dressings also vary widely and can range from a simple mayonnaise or sour cream to a vinaigrette. This version calls for sweet pickle relish for a touch of sweetness and Tabasco for vinegary zing.

## FRIED GREEN TOMATOES



THIS SOUTHERN CLASSIC IS typically prepared when the tomatoes are coming so fast they cannot all be served in salads or put up in sauces. The mix of Japanese *panko* (bread crumbs) and cornmeal gives the slices an extra-crispy crunch, while the Roast Tomato Aioli doubles the tomato taste.

### ROAST TOMATO AIOLI

1 cup Aioli (page 202)  
½ cup preserved roasted tomatoes or oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and finely chopped  
2 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

### FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

1½ cups vegetable oil  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
¾ cup buttermilk, preferably full fat  
2 large eggs, beaten  
¼ teaspoon hot sauce  
⅓ cup yellow cornmeal  
⅓ cup panko bread crumbs  
1 tablespoon sugar  
5 firm green tomatoes, cored, and cut into ¼-inch-thick slices  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

#### TO MAKE THE ROAST TOMATO AIOLI

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and blend well. Cover and set aside.

#### TO MAKE THE FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

Pour the vegetable oil into a large cast iron skillet and preheat over medium heat.

Meanwhile, pour the flour into a small bowl. In a second small bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, eggs, and hot sauce. In a third small bowl, stir together the cornmeal, bread crumbs, and sugar.

Arrange the sliced green tomatoes on a work surface and season both sides with the salt and pepper. Dredge each tomato slice first in the flour, coating all sides, then in the buttermilk blend, coating thoroughly, and finally in the bread crumb and cornmeal mix, coating on both sides. Remove and shake off any excess cornmeal. As each slice is prepared, set it aside on a baking sheet.

Using a deep-frying thermometer, confirm the temperature of the oil has reached 375°F (maintain that temperature throughout the cooking).

Working in batches, place the breaded tomatoes into the oil and fry on both sides until crisp, about 2 minutes per side.

Remove the tomatoes with a slotted spoon and transfer to a separate baking sheet lined with paper towels to drain off excess oil. Serve hot with the Roast Tomato Aioli.

## CORN PUDDING



THE AFRICAN AMERICAN kitchen often intersects with the cooking of Native Americans. Here, a southern corn pudding is a history lesson in a casserole. It combines the British tradition of pudding making with Native American corn in a dish that is pure southern comfort food.

5 ears corn, preferably locally grown, shucked and cleaned of silk

2 tablespoons sugar

1½ teaspoons kosher salt

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 tablespoon butter, plus 2 tablespoons, melted

½ yellow onion, very finely chopped

1 large egg, beaten

2 cups half-and-half or light cream

¼ cup cream cheese, at room temperature

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

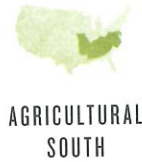
Cut the corn kernels from the cobs and transfer to a large bowl.

Add the sugar, salt, flour, and nutmeg to the corn and mix to thoroughly combine.

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until translucent and tender (do not brown), about 5 minutes. Then add the onion to the corn in the bowl.

In a separate medium bowl, whisk the egg, half-and-half, cream cheese, and the 2 tablespoons melted butter until well blended. Pour the cream mixture into the bowl with the corn and onion and mix until all the ingredients are fully incorporated.

Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with butter. Pour the corn mixture into the prepared dish and bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until set and golden brown. Serve hot.



AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

SERVES  
**8 to 10**

ACTIVE TIME  
**20 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**1 HR**

## GINGER & BROWN SUGAR CANDIED SWEET POTATOES



FOR MANY PEOPLE, IT IS NOT Thanksgiving without a casserole dish of candied sweet potatoes—often incorrectly called candied yams—placed prominently on the table. (The yam, an edible tropical tuber, belongs to a different botanical family.) This version has so much taste that you won't even miss the marshmallows.

6 sweet potatoes  
(about 4½ pounds)

1 pinch kosher salt,  
plus 2 teaspoons

1 cup freshly squeezed  
orange juice

¾ cup packed light  
brown sugar

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

4 tablespoons grated  
peeled fresh ginger

½ vanilla bean, or ½ teaspoon  
pure vanilla extract

2 cinnamon sticks

1 teaspoon freshly  
grated nutmeg

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into ¾-inch-thick slices. Put them in a pot, cover with cold water, and add the pinch of salt. Bring the water to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook for 5 minutes.

While the sweet potatoes simmer, put all the remaining ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. The ingredients should blend into a creamy consistency. Remove from the heat and set aside. Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Drain the sweet potatoes. Transfer them to a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and pour over the orange juice mixture. Gently mix to coat the sweet potatoes.

Bake uncovered for about 40 minutes, until the liquid has thickened and the sweet potatoes are tender and glazed. Gently stir the potatoes two or three times during the cooking process to help thicken the glaze. Serve hot.



NORTHERN  
STATES

SERVES  
**6 to 8**

ACTIVE TIME  
**40 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**1 DAY**  
PLUS  
OVERNIGHT  
SOAKING OF  
THE BEANS

## YANKEE BAKED BEANS



YANKEE BAKED BEANS, SOMETIMES called Boston baked beans, were common New England fare by the mid-seventeenth century. Traditionally cooked low and slow in a stoneware pot on a wood-fired stove—a technique mimicked with today's slow cookers—they were a go-to dish served everywhere from lumber camps to fancy restaurants, often on Saturday night. Molasses, the residue left over from sugar refining, is the common sweetener except in Vermont, where maple syrup is typically used. This version uses two sweeteners, molasses and maple sugar.

1 pound dried great  
northern beans

1 small yellow onion, peeled  
but left whole, plus 1 cup  
finely diced yellow onion

1 large carrot, peeled

1 celery stalk

⅓ cup unsulfured molasses

2 tablespoons maple sugar

⅓ cup packed light brown sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

3 tablespoons Dijon mustard

2 bay leaves

1 pinch ground cloves

8 ounces salt pork or bacon slab,  
cut into 1-inch cubes

2 teaspoons freshly ground  
black pepper

2 dashes cider vinegar (optional)

### THE NIGHT BEFORE

Sort through the beans to remove any debris and stones. Place the beans in a colander and rinse under cold water. Transfer to a large soup pot and cover with cold water. The water level should reach at least 2 inches above the beans. Leave to soak overnight.

### THE NEXT DAY

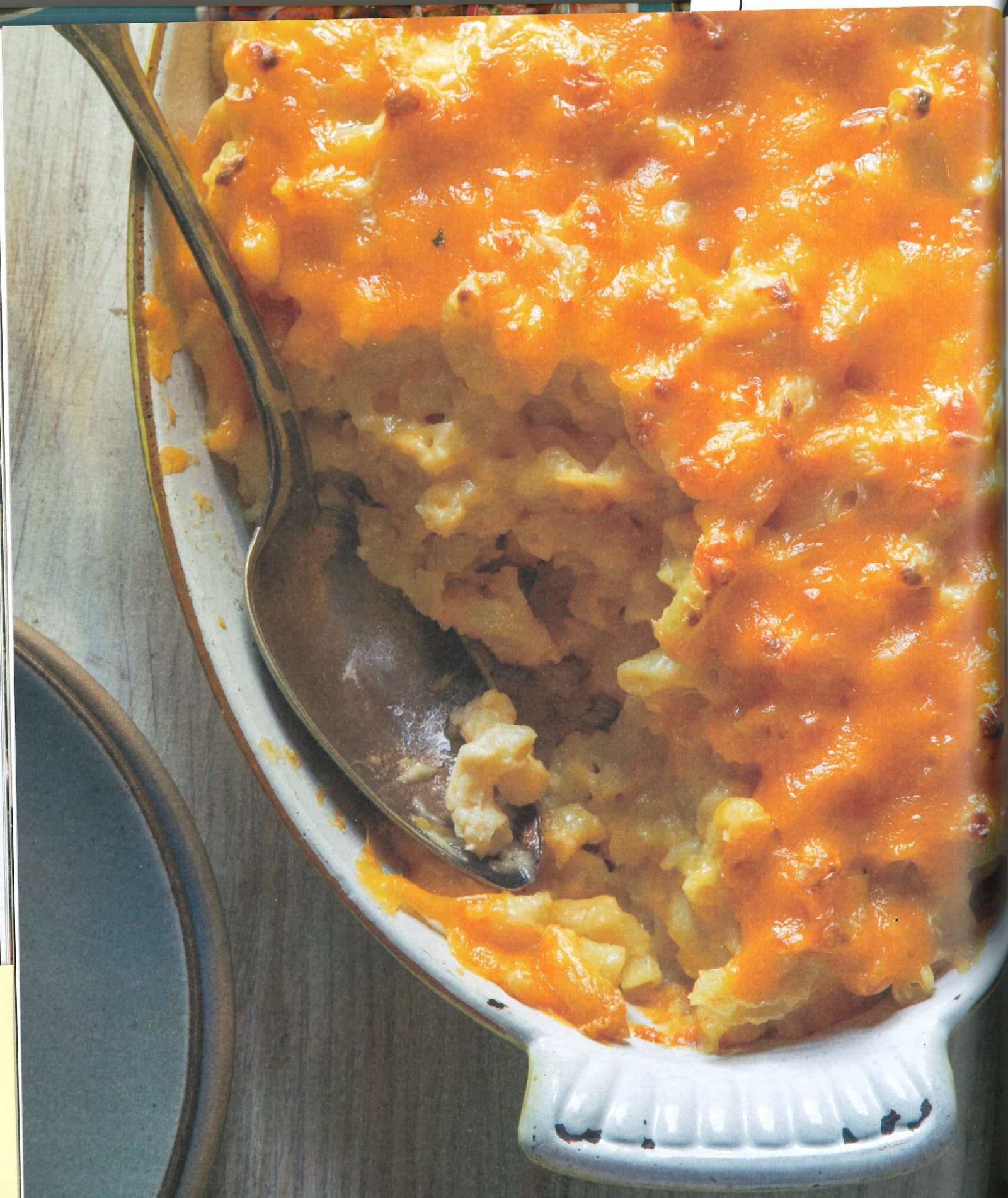
Drain the beans, rinse with cold water, and add fresh water to 2 inches below top of pot. Add the whole onion, carrot, and celery. Place the beans over medium heat and cook uncovered at a steady simmer until creamy and tender, about 45 minutes. Drain the beans through a colander, reserving half of the cooking water, and keeping the beans and cooking water separate. Discard the onion, carrot, and celery.

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

In a medium bowl, combine the molasses, maple sugar, brown sugar, salt, mustard, bay leaves, and cloves with 1 cup of the reserved bean cooking water. Stir until fully blended.

Put the beans, salt pork, diced onion, and the molasses mixture in a heavy pot with a fitted lid (such as a Dutch oven) and mix well. Bake, stirring every 30 minutes, until tender, 4 to 5 hours. If the beans begin to look dry before they are ready, add about ½ cup of the reserved bean cooking water to moisten them. To develop a rich browning, the cooking liquid should come just to the top of the beans but not fully cover them.

When the beans are done, remove them from the oven and stir well. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper to taste. You can also adjust the level of tartness with a splash or two of cider vinegar.



## BAKED MACARONI & CHEESE



FOOD HISTORIANS DEBATE whether Thomas Jefferson brought home a recipe for macaroni and cheese from England or from northern Italy. No one knows. What we do know is that a variant of the dish was served at a state dinner in 1802 and mentioned in reports as “a pie called macaroni.” A variation of this dish appears in *The Virginia Housewife: Or, Methodical Cook*, an 1824 cookbook by Mary Randolph, a cousin of Jefferson’s. Whatever its origin, the dish has been taken to the hearts and stomachs of African Americans in the United States and in the Caribbean, where it is sometimes known by its British name, macaroni pie. This version uses Cheddar, though some cooks use other cheeses.

4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup whole milk  
3 cups half-and-half  
1 teaspoon dry English mustard  
¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 pinch cayenne pepper  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
12 ounces sharp orange Cheddar cheese, grated, divided  
1 pound elbow macaroni, cooked and drained

**Preheat the oven** to 325°F. Lightly butter a 9-by-13-inch broiler-proof baking dish.

**In a large saucepan** over low heat, melt the butter. Add the flour and stir with a wooden spoon until smooth. Increase the heat to medium and cook, stirring, until the mixture turns a light golden color, about 3 minutes. Whisk in the milk and half-and-half, then bring to a simmer while continuing to whisk. Simmer the sauce for about 5 minutes, until nicely thickened. Remove from the heat.

**Stir in the mustard**, nutmeg, cayenne, salt, and pepper to taste, followed by three-quarters of the grated cheese. Whisk until all the ingredients are fully incorporated. Add the cooked macaroni to the cheese sauce and toss to blend.

**Pour the macaroni mixture** into the prepared baking dish. Bake for 30 minutes, until the mac and cheese is bubbly. Top with the remaining cheese. Reset the oven to the broiler setting and broil until the cheese has slightly blistered and is lightly browned. Serve hot.



CONTINENTAL  
UNITED STATES

SERVES  
**4 to 6**

ACTIVE TIME  
**30 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**1 HR  
10 MINS**



## MARYLAND CRAB CAKES



THE MARYLAND CRAB CAKE is a version of a fish cake that is particular to the Chesapeake area. Baltimore boasts two different types, both made from Maryland blue crab. One is lightly breaded, deep-fried, and may have a filler of some sort, and is often served with saltine crackers or on a hamburger bun. The version served at the Café is prepared from all lump crabmeat and is sautéed in butter.

### CHEF'S NOTE

True Blue crabs are certified Maryland crabs harvested in the waters of the Chesapeake. If True Blue crabmeat is not available, substitute Gulf crabmeat to avoid frozen, pasteurized, or imported crabmeat. These cakes can also be made smaller for serving as party hors d'oeuvres.

2 pounds jumbo lump crabmeat, preferably True Blue certified crab

2 large egg yolks

1½ tablespoons mayonnaise, homemade or Duke's

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon Old Bay seasoning

2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 dash Tabasco sauce

1 dash Worcestershire sauce

½ teaspoon sea salt

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1½ cups plain bread crumbs

½ cup vegetable oil

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Lemon wedges, for serving

**Pick through the crabmeat** to remove any bits of shell. Be careful not to break up the lumps of crab too much. Place the meat in a large bowl and set aside.

**In a small bowl**, combine the egg yolks, mayonnaise, mustard, Old Bay seasoning, lemon juice, Tabasco sauce, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and cayenne, whisking until well blended. Spoon the mixture over the crabmeat and gently blend until the meat is coated, being careful not to break it up too much. Gently form the crab mixture into 12 three-ounce puck-shaped cakes.

**Spread out the bread crumbs** on a large plate. Lightly coat the crab cakes with the crumbs. Transfer the cakes to a platter and cover with plastic wrap. Chill the crab cakes in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour before cooking.

**In a large nonstick skillet**, heat the oil and butter over medium heat. When hot, working in batches to avoid crowding, add the crab cakes to the pan and cook, turning once, until golden brown, about 4 minutes on each side. Serve hot with lemon wedges.



AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

MAKES  
**12**  
CAKES

ACTIVE TIME  
**40 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**1 HR  
45 MINS**



CAFÉ SPECIAL

SERVES  
**6 to 8**

ACTIVE TIME  
**45 MINS**

TOTAL TIME  
**1 DAY**  
REFRIGERATE  
OVERNIGHT

VIETNAMESE SPICED

# CHICKEN WINGS



CREATED FOR A SPECIAL promotion at the Café, these chicken wings have a decidedly Asian flavor. They owe their unique taste to a heady mix of five-spice powder, lime juice, sambal chile paste, and the *nước mắm* fish sauce.

**CHEF'S NOTE**

These wings can also be cooked indoors or on a stove top grill pan.

3 pounds chicken wings, each split into two pieces

6 garlic cloves, chopped into a fine paste

¼ cup freshly squeezed lime juice

½ cup nước mắm fish sauce or other Vietnamese fish sauce

¼ cup soy sauce

¼ cup packed light brown sugar

2 tablespoons Creole mustard, such as Zatarain's

1 tablespoon five-spice powder

2 lemongrass stalks, white bulb-like sections only, cut into 1-inch slices

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 tablespoons sambal chile paste

3 Thai peppers, thinly sliced, for garnish

½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, for garnish

1 lime, thinly sliced, for garnish

THE NIGHT BEFORE

Put the chicken wings in a large bowl.

To make the marinade, combine the garlic, lime juice, fish sauce, soy sauce, sugar, mustard, five-spice powder, lemongrass, oil, and chile paste in a medium bowl and mix well. Pour the marinade over the chicken wings and mix until evenly coated. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

THE NEXT DAY

Preheat a medium fire in a charcoal or gas grill.

Drain off and reserve the marinade from the chicken wings. Place the wings on a baking sheet. Transfer the marinade to a saucepan and bring the mixture to a full boil. Reduce the heat to the lowest setting and keep the sauce warm.

Place the wings on the grill and cook them, basting frequently with the marinade. Move the wings around on the grill and turn them over regularly. They will become richly caramelized and lightly charred, but be sure to avoid burning. The wings will be cooked when they have reached an internal temperature of 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, about 18 minutes.

Transfer to a platter and garnish with the Thai peppers, cilantro, and lime.





## PIMENTO CHEESE



AN ICONIC SOUTHERN SNACK food, pimento cheese turns up everywhere from fancy buffets to informal gatherings. Although the traditional version uses sharp Cheddar, cooks are experimenting with different cheeses and coming up with their own spins on this southern favorite.

### CHEF'S NOTE

For best results, use a mayonnaise with no added sugar.

1 pound cream cheese,  
at room temperature

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup mayonnaise, preferably Duke's

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup pimentos, preferably  
freshly roasted and peeled,  
or jarred Spanish piquillo peppers,  
cut into tiny dice

1 teaspoon hot sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon smoked paprika  
(*piminton*)

1 pinch cayenne pepper

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon freshly ground  
white pepper

1 $\frac{1}{4}$  pounds aged sharp Vermont  
Cheddar cheese, coarsely grated

In a medium bowl, stir the softened cream cheese with a stiff whisk until smooth. Add the mayonnaise and continue mixing until both ingredients are fully blended into a uniform consistency.

Add the pimentos, hot sauce, sugar, paprika, cayenne, salt, and pepper and mix to blend well.

Gently fold in the Cheddar and mix to distribute the cheese evenly. Avoid overmixing; the cheese should remain in coarse pieces.

Transfer to a container with a lid. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.



AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

MAKES

4 cups

ACTIVE TIME

20 MINS



TOTAL TIME

20 MINS





WESTERN  
RANGE

SERVES  
**4 to 6**

ACTIVE TIME  
**20 MINS**



TOTAL TIME  
**4 HRS  
20 MINS**

VEGETARIAN

ALSO KNOWN AS MARINATED black-eyed peas, Texas Caviar is the state's version of a marinated bean salad. It consists of only black-eyed peas or of a mix of various beans, minced bell pepper, and corn. Created around 1940, it has become a Lone Star classic and is guaranteed to turn up at many a Juneteenth celebration.

# TEXAS CAVIAR



2½ cups cooked black-eyed peas, preferably from fresh or frozen (rinse and drain well if using canned peas)

1 yellow bell pepper, finely diced

1 cup cilantro leaves, roughly chopped

1 serrano pepper, seeded and finely chopped

1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped

3 plum tomatoes, seeded and diced

6 scallions, white and light green parts, thinly sliced

¼ cup red onion, diced

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup freshly squeezed lime juice

1 teaspoon garlic, finely chopped

1 teaspoon ground cumin

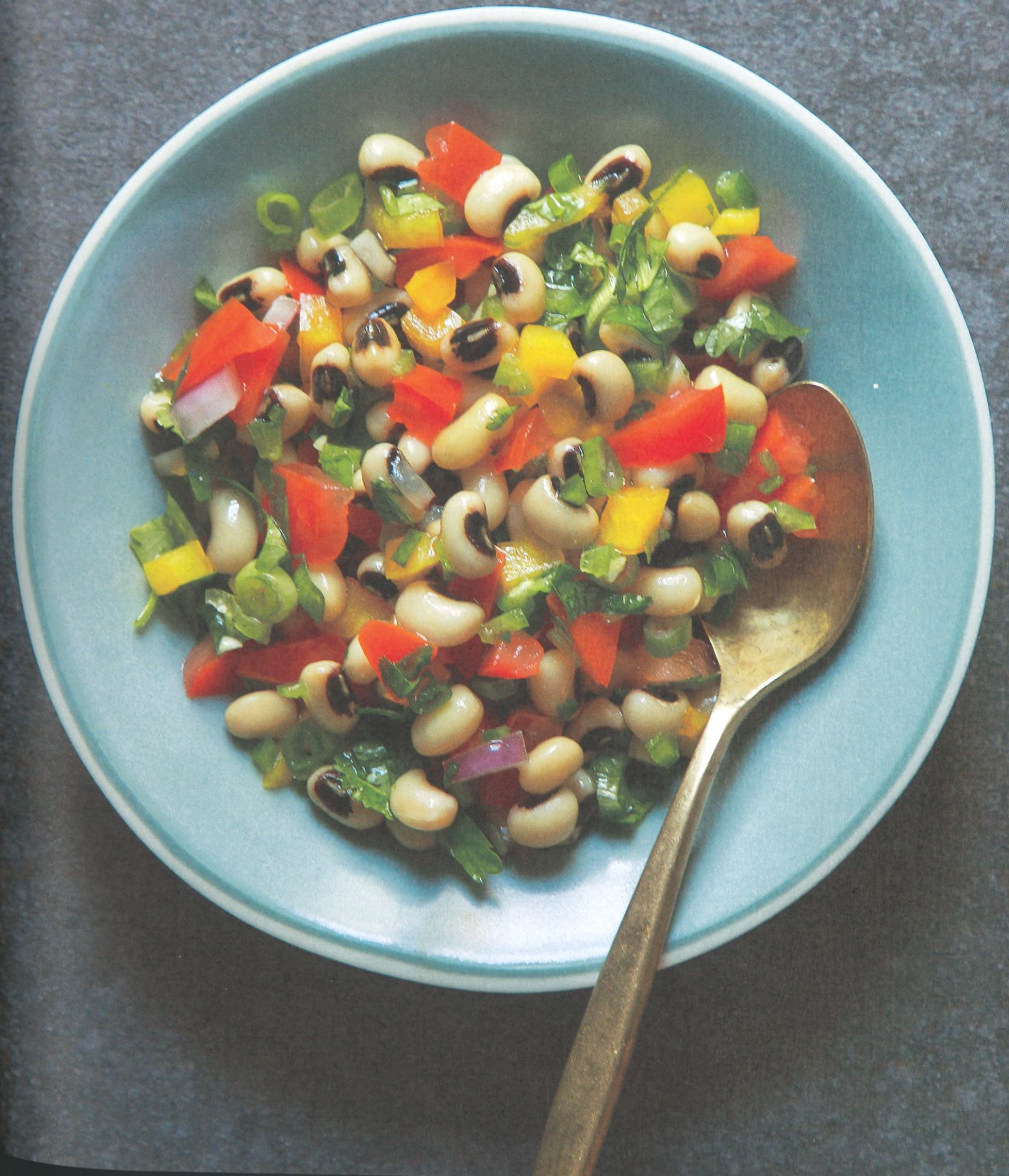
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Hot sauce, for seasoning

In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients and gently mix until well blended. Add the cumin and salt. Adjust the seasoning with black pepper and hot sauce to taste. Transfer to the refrigerator to marinate for a minimum of 4 hours.

Serve as a side salad or with tortilla chips.





AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

MAKES  
**1**  
2-INCH  
LAYER  
CAKE

ACTIVE TIME  
**45 MINS**



TOTAL TIME  
**3 HRS  
15 MINS**

# RED VELVET CAKE



ALTHOUGH MANY THINK that red velvet cake has been an American standby for centuries, it is actually a twentieth-century invention, having originated in the 1920s. The ruby-hued chocolate cake was later adopted with delight by African Americans and began turning up on their menus. The famous Amy Ruth's soul food restaurant in Harlem began serving it in 1998, and Cake Man Raven opened one of the first bakeries devoted to the cake in Brooklyn in 2000.

## CAKE

2½ cups cake flour  
2 tablespoons Dutch-process cocoa powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt  
1½ cups vegetable oil  
2 large eggs  
1½ cups granulated sugar  
1 cup buttermilk, preferably full fat  
2 tablespoons red food coloring  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract, preferably Bourbon vanilla  
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar

## FROSTING

½ pound (2½ sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted  
1 teaspoon Bourbon vanilla extract  
1 pound cream cheese, at room temperature  
¼ cup mascarpone cheese  
½ cup pecans, finely chopped

## TO MAKE THE CAKE

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter and lightly flour two 8-by-3-inch nonstick cake pans.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt.

Combine the oil, eggs, sugar, buttermilk, food coloring, vanilla, and vinegar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, mix on medium-low speed until the mixture is smooth.

Set the mixer at low speed and gradually add the dry ingredients, mixing just to the point a batter has formed. Stop the machine, scrape down the sides of the bowl, and then mix for another 30 seconds.

Evenly divide the batter between the prepared cake pans. Bake until the cake pulls away slightly from the sides of the pans, about 30 minutes. A toothpick inserted in the center should come out clean. Invert the cakes onto wire racks, lift off the pan, turn upright, and let cool to room temperature.

## TO MAKE THE FROSTING

Combine the butter, sugar, and vanilla in the bowl of the stand mixer. With the paddle attachment, mix the ingredients on medium speed until they are smooth and creamy. Add the cream cheese and mascarpone and mix until well blended.

## TO ASSEMBLE THE CAKE

Using a long serrated knife, shave off a very thin layer of cake from the top and bottom of each cake layer (this will help the frosting cling to the cake). Place the trimmings in the bowl of a food processor and process to very fine crumbs; reserve for the decoration.

Set one of the cake layers on a cake stand. With a narrow offset spatula, spread a layer of frosting across the top of the first layer, spreading it to an even depth of ½ inch. Place the second cake layer on top. With the remaining frosting, evenly cover the sides and top of the cake.

Mix together the reserved cake crumbs and pecans. Immediately after applying frosting, decorate the sides of the cake with a thin layer of the crumb mixture. The top of the cake should remain frosted white. Store the cake in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

