

Pimento Cheese

MAKES 3½ CUPS

Celebration

- 2 garlic cloves, grated on a Microplane
- 1 whole roasted red bell pepper, peeled, seeded, and chopped (½ cup)
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated (2 cups)
- 8 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, grated (2 cups)

This is *the* party cheese y'all. You've gotta have some if you're throwing one. And if you do have some, anyone who comes over will think you're having a party. There's nothing easier than pimento cheese, but I like to make mine in a mixer. It smashes the cheese into the creamy base, softening it into the spread while leaving something to chew on. Serve this with crackers (pages 27–28) as an appetizer or slather on bread to make a sandwich.

Combine the garlic, bell pepper, cream cheese, mayonnaise, cayenne, and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium-low speed until well mixed, scraping the bowl occasionally. Add the cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses and beat on low speed until the cheese is evenly distributed.

Transfer to a serving bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and preferably overnight. The garlic will mellow over time and the flavors will meld.

Make ahead: The cheese can be refrigerated for up to 1 week.

Food is universal and our
enjoyment of it is not limited
by race or geography.



Spoonbread Dressing

SERVES 8 TO 12

Celebration

- 4 tablespoons (2 ounces) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 celery stalk, finely diced
- Kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon Poultry Seasoning (page 239) or store-bought salt-free poultry seasoning
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup fine yellow stone-ground cornmeal
- 1 (11-ounce) can sweet corn niblets, drained
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 large eggs

Oh. My. God. Did I just create the best Thanksgiving dressing ever? Why, yes, yes I did. You're welcome. I got all the flavors of classic dressing (that's stuffing to you Northerners)—onion, celery, sage—and suspended them in a creamy one-pan cornbread. With this recipe, I've saved you the step of baking a whole loaf of cornbread just to crumble into a side dish. Anything I can do to make your home cooking easier and tastier, I'll do. This just saved you a whole lotta time on Thanksgiving and it's gonna get you a whole lotta praise.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Use 1 tablespoon of the butter to generously grease a shallow 3-quart casserole, Dutch oven, or baking dish.

Melt the remaining 3 tablespoons butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, celery, and 1½ teaspoons salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent and just tender, about 4 minutes. Add the poultry seasoning and cook, stirring, for 1 minute.

Add the milk, sugar, and 1 cup water and bring to a boil. Continuously whisk the mixture while you pour in the cornmeal in a slow, steady stream. Keep whisking while the mixture bubbles rapidly until the cornmeal has absorbed all the liquid and is thick and smooth, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the corn and baking powder. Cool, stirring often, until lukewarm. Don't let the mixture clump.

Whisk the eggs in a large bowl until pale yellow and very foamy with no liquid remaining. Add one third of the beaten eggs to the cornmeal mixture and stir to loosen the cornmeal mixture. Add half of the remaining eggs and fold gently until incorporated, then repeat with the remaining eggs. Spread evenly in the prepared dish.

Bake until golden brown and set without any jiggling, about 25 minutes. When you press the top, it should spring back. Serve hot or warm.



Meaty Tomato Mac AND Cheese

SERVES 8

Celebration

8 ounces macaroni
1 pound ground beef chuck
Kosher salt and freshly
ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped onion
2 garlic cloves, chopped
3 tablespoons tomato paste
1 teaspoon mustard powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne
pepper
2 tablespoons unsalted
butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose
flour
2 cups whole milk
8 ounces sharp cheddar
cheese, grated

What do you get when you cross mac and cheese with meaty tomato sauce? This pot of yum! Macaroni's curves catch all the melty cheddar beefiness of the sauce. This one-pot dish is super comforting on chilly days.

Cook the macaroni according to the package directions until al dente. Drain, rinse under cold water until cool, and drain again.

Meanwhile, heat a large Dutch oven over high heat until smoking hot. Add the beef, 1 teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper and spread in a single layer, breaking the meat into small bits. Cook until the bottom is nicely browned, about 5 minutes. Stir well, then push the beef to one side of the Dutch oven. Add the onion, garlic, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper to the other side. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 3 minutes. Stir the onion mixture into the beef and push to one side of the Dutch oven again. Add the tomato paste to the other side, reduce the heat to medium, and stir for 1 minute. Stir into the beef until well mixed. Add the mustard powder, paprika, and cayenne and stir for 1 minute.

Reduce the heat to medium-low. Push everything to one side of the pot. Add the butter to the other side. When it melts, dump the flour over the butter. Stir the flour and butter until the raw flour cooks out, about 2 minutes. Stir the roux into the meat mixture.

While stirring, add the milk $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time. Keep stirring until the mixture bubbles steadily for 2 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and stir in the cheese until melted.

Add the pasta and fold until evenly coated and hot. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Harvest Chow Chow

MAKES ABOUT 6 PINT JARS

2 cups finely chopped purple cabbage
4 cups finely chopped green cabbage
2 cups finely diced red onion
2 cups finely diced peeled beets
1 cup finely diced peeled celery root
1 cup finely diced peeled turnips
½ cup finely diced jalapeño chiles
⅓ cup kosher salt
2 cups apple cider vinegar
1 cup water
½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
1½ teaspoons ground turmeric
1 teaspoon celery seeds

At the end of the summer harvest, gardeners, farmers, and cooks all over the South chop cabbage, peppers, and green tomatoes to pickle into chow chow relish. I wondered what would happen if I did the same with fall's bounty. The blend of root vegetables—beets, celery root, turnips—mellow out the cabbage relish with their earthy mildness. Unlike its zingy summer cousin, this chow chow is chill. It still has a bright pop, perfect for topping soups, stews, and hearty meat braises. Of course, it's also great over hot dogs and sandwiches.

Mix both cabbages, the onion, beets, celery root, turnips, jalapeños, and salt in a large bowl, using your hands. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Transfer the mixture to a large colander and rinse and drain well before returning to the bowl.

Combine the vinegar, water, sugar, mustard seeds, turmeric, and celery seeds in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Pour over the vegetables and stir well. Divide among canning jars and properly seal the jars or simply refrigerate them. The chow chow will keep for up to 6 months in the refrigerator.

Red Onion Pickles

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP

1 large red onion, halved and very thinly sliced
1 habanero chile, split in half
1 fresh or dried bay leaf
½ cup apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon kosher salt

On our little kitchen table in Nashville, we always kept a little jar of home-made pickles. Now, it wasn't anything fancy. Mama'd drop some sliced onions or peppers into the jar and pour vinegar over them. That was it. But it was enough to pucker up those suckers. We'd spoon them over all our dishes, enjoying their light tang and crunch on day one, their soft whoo-dang! tart bite on day two. I've kept up that tradition, always ready to douse anything with soul food's signature pucker. Open up my fridge and you'll always find all types of pickled things. One constant is pickled onions. They go with everything—and I mean everything. I created these to dress Green Bean Salad (page 57), but I also put them in sandwiches and burgers and over hot dogs, eggs, beans, fish, and meat. Sometimes I even eat them by the forkful.

Pack the onion, chile, and bay leaf in a half-pint jar. Add the vinegar, sugar, and salt. Cover the jar tightly and shake well. The vinegar won't cover the onion mixture at first, but the onions will wilt over time and end up immersed in liquid. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to 1-week, shaking occasionally.



Chocolate Pound Cake

MAKES ONE 10-INCH TUBE CAKE

- 1 pound unsalted butter, cut into cubes, at room temperature, plus more for the pan
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for the pan
- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 6 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips

Granny gave me her cherished pound cake recipe. And her blessing to make the recipe my own. That's the beauty of passing down recipes in the family. The details are meant to change with each generation, but the spirit stays the same. In the case of this cake, I found inspiration in generations before Granny. I saw a recipe in an old cookbook that started the batter in a cold oven. After trying that technique, I never turned back. It gives the cake an incredible short, dense crumb. The slow rise yields a center nearly as creamy as a chocolate truffle. The cocoa deepens over days even as the cake stays moist, making this ideal for shipping to loved ones far away or baking ahead of time for a party.

Butter and flour a 10-inch tube pan.

Sift the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt into a large bowl. Break the eggs into a separate bowl. Beat the butter with both sugars in a stand mixer with the paddle attachment on low speed until blended. Scrape the bowl, raise the speed to medium, and beat until really creamy.

Scrape the bowl, turn the speed to medium, and add the eggs one at a time, beating really well after each addition. Scrape the bowl, add the vanilla, and beat again on medium speed until well blended.

With the speed on low, gradually add the dry ingredients in thirds, alternating with the buttermilk. Scrape the bowl, add the chocolate chips, and mix just until blended. Pour into the prepared pan and smooth the top.

Put the pan in the center of a cold oven and turn the heat to 325°F. Bake until a tester or skewer comes out clean, about 1 hour and 45 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes, then unmold and let cool completely on the rack.

Make ahead: The cake keeps at room temperature tightly wrapped for up to 1 week.



Red Cabbage AND Beet Slaw WITH Horseradish-Ginger Dressing

SERVES 6

Everyday & Celebration

- 1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh horseradish
- 1 teaspoon grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups finely diced green cabbage
- 2 cups finely diced red cabbage
- 2 cups coarsely grated peeled red beet
- Snipped fresh chives, for garnish

We celebrate Juneteenth with red foods (see page 304), so this is the slaw I'm bringing to my picnic. Red cabbage and beets taste light and lemony in my horseradish-ginger dressing. I toss green cabbage into the mix, too, for a medley of bright crunch.

Whisk the horseradish, ginger, lemon zest, mayonnaise, lemon juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper in a large bowl. Add both cabbages and the beet and fold until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with chives and serve.

Make ahead: The slaw can be refrigerated for up to 2 days. Before serving, toss again and top with snipped chives.

