

RHUBARB-GINGER
CRUMB MUFFINS

My kids are such huge fans of these—an entire batch can literally be gone in a day! When we photographed these for the book and had to set the most beautiful muffins aside for the camera, the kids were so disappointed. The earthiness of the rhubarb, the spiciness of the ginger, and the delicious topping... they all complement each other so well.

FOR THE CRUMB TOPPING

- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1/3 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup finely chopped crystallized ginger
- Kosher salt
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

FOR THE MUFFINS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups diced rhubarb (2 to 3 stalks)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners.

2. Make the crumb topping: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, oats, brown sugar, ginger, and a pinch of salt. Add the butter and use your fingers to work it into the flour mixture until a crumbly, streusel-like texture forms. Set aside.

3. Make the batter: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, ginger, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, brown sugar, and orange zest on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Reduce the speed to medium-low and add the eggs one at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula after each addition. Mix until incorporated (the mixture will look broken or curdled, and that's okay).

5. Reduce the mixer speed to low. Add half the flour mixture, then the buttermilk and vanilla, followed by the rest of the flour mixture, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Turn off the mixer and fold in the rhubarb with a spatula.

6. Divide the batter among the prepared muffin cups (use about 1/3 cup batter for each muffin). Top with a heaping tablespoon of the crumb topping, pressing it lightly to ensure the mixture adheres. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let the muffins cool in the pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes before serving. They can be stored in a single layer in an airtight container for up to 5 days at room temperature or 10 days refrigerated.

MAKES 12 MUFFINS

PREP TIME
20 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
20 minutes

TOTAL TIME
1 hour 40 minutes

EASY





Make a double batch— these babies go fast! Look for rainbow carrots, and if they're more than an inch in diameter, slice them in half lengthwise.

CUMIN-ROASTED CARROTS

WITH LEMONY YOGURT AND CILANTRO

- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
- 1 bunch multicolored carrots (about 1 pound), trimmed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 1/2 cup low-fat Greek yogurt
- Grated zest and juice of 1 medium lemon
- 1/4 cup lightly packed fresh cilantro leaves, for garnish

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
spice grinder

While I love toasting and grinding my own spices, feel free to substitute in the same amount of dried spices whenever you need to.

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Set a baking sheet in the oven to heat up while you prep the ingredients.

2. In a small dry skillet, toast the cumin seeds over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the cumin to a plate to cool completely, then use a spice grinder to grind the seeds into a fine powder.

3. In a medium bowl, toss together the carrots, olive oil, ground cumin, and a large pinch of salt. Carefully remove the hot baking sheet from the oven and add the carrots, shaking the pan to make sure the carrots are in a single layer but not touching one another. Roast until the carrots are tender and deeply charred in spots, 20 to 25 minutes, shaking the pan halfway through.

4. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk together the yogurt, lemon zest, lemon juice, and a large pinch of salt. Spread the yogurt sauce in the center of a large serving platter, top with the carrots, and sprinkle with the cilantro. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4 TO 6

PREP TIME
10 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
15 minutes

TOTAL TIME
50 minutes

EASY



MIXED GREENS

WITH FENNEL AND PINK GRAPEFRUIT

- 2 large Ruby Red grapefruits
- 1 large fennel bulb, fronds attached
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot
- 1½ teaspoons honey
- 1 tablespoon champagne vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- About 4 ounces mixed baby greens

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
mandoline

1. Slice both ends off each grapefruit. Stand one up and, following the curve of the fruit, cut away the peel and pith so the flesh is exposed. Hold the grapefruit over a bowl and use a paring knife to cut between the membrane of each segment to release the segments into the bowl. When you've cut out all the segments, squeeze the membrane over the bowl to extract even more juice, then discard the membrane. Set the grapefruit segments and 2 tablespoons of the juice aside (drink the rest or save it for another use!).

2. Separate the long stalks from the fennel bulb and discard them; set a few fennel fronds aside for serving. Halve the fennel bulb lengthwise and cut out the core. Place one fennel half cut-side down on a mandoline and slice it very thinly, following the grain of the vegetable; repeat with the remaining fennel half (you should have about 4 cups sliced fennel).

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the shallot, honey, vinegar, reserved grapefruit juice, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper. While whisking, slowly stream in the olive oil until the dressing is creamy and emulsified.

4. In a large bowl, combine the fennel, mixed greens, ½ teaspoon salt, and a few hefty splashes of the dressing and toss to combine. Taste and season with additional salt.

5. Turn the salad out onto a large serving platter. Top with the grapefruit segments and reserved fennel fronds, and season with pepper. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4 TO 6

PREP TIME
5 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
20 minutes

TOTAL TIME
25 minutes

MODERATE

Swap in any citrus
you like here—blood oranges, clementines, and navel oranges all work great.

FRENCH ONION
POTATOES AU GRATIN

6 tablespoons canola oil, plus more for greasing

3 large onions (about 2¼ pounds), quartered and thinly sliced

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 garlic cloves, minced

6 to 8 Yukon Gold potatoes (about 2½ pounds), peeled and very thinly sliced

12 ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded

2½ cups half-and-half

1. In a large straight-sided skillet, heat the canola oil over medium heat. Add the onions and a large pinch each of salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are sticky, tender, browned, and nearly jammy, about 1 hour. If the onions stick to the pan at any time, add a tablespoon of water and use a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan.
2. Stir in the garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the caramelized onions cool slightly. (The caramelized onions can be made the day before and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator.)
3. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Brush a 9 by 13-inch baking dish with canola oil.
4. Lay one-fifth of the potatoes over the bottom of the pan. Season the potatoes with ½ teaspoon salt and a pinch of pepper. Sprinkle with one-fifth of the caramelized onions, followed by one-fifth of the Gruyère, then pour ½ cup of the half-and-half over the cheese. Repeat this process four more times.
5. Place the baking dish on a large baking sheet and bake until a wooden skewer inserted into the middle meets no resistance and the top is bubbling and browned, about 1 hour 30 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through the cooking time.
6. Remove from the oven and let sit for at least 20 minutes and up to 1 hour to solidify before slicing into pieces and serving.

SERVES 8 TO 10

PREP TIME
20 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
15 minutes

TOTAL TIME
3 hours
50 minutes

EASY

Let these sit for an hour post-baking; not only will the flavors meld, but the potatoes will firm up as they cool, making them easier to serve.



COCONUT CUPCAKES

WITH COCONUT BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

1 (13.6-ounce) can full-fat, unsweetened coconut milk, whisked until smooth

1/2 cup buttermilk

3 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Kosher salt

3 1/2 cups (7 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 cups granulated sugar

5 large eggs

5 cups sweetened flaked coconut

3 3/4 cups confectioners' sugar (about 1 pound), sifted

Green food dye, as needed

Miniature candy-coated milk chocolate eggs and/or your favorite Easter candies, as needed

Tip

These cupcakes can even be made a few weeks ahead and stored (unfrosted) in the freezer! After baking, let them cool completely, then store them in a single layer in zip-top bags in the freezer. The night before the party, leave them on the counter to defrost, then prepare the frosting and frost them as usual before the guests arrive.

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line two 12-cup muffin tins with paper liners.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together 1/2 cup of the coconut milk and the buttermilk and set aside. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and set aside.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large bowl if using a handheld mixer), cream 1 1/2 cups (3 sticks) of the butter and the granulated sugar on high speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes, scraping the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Reduce the speed to medium-low and add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition and scraping the sides of the bowl as needed. With the mixer on low speed, add one-third of the flour mixture. Mix until just combined, then add half the buttermilk mixture and mix until just combined. Repeat with the remaining flour and buttermilk mixtures, then fold in 2 cups of the flaked coconut.

4. Fill each prepared muffin cup three-quarters full with batter and set the tins side by side on the middle rack in the oven. Bake until a cake tester inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out clean and the tops are very lightly browned, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the tins after 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let the cupcakes cool in the tins for 20 minutes, then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.

5. Clean the mixer bowl and fit the mixer with the whisk attachment. In the mixer bowl, combine the remaining 2 cups (4 sticks) butter, the remaining coconut milk, and a pinch of salt and beat on medium speed until completely combined. (The mixture might initially look curdled but will come together as you beat it.) Increase the speed to high and beat until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Reduce the speed to medium-low and add the confectioners' sugar in two additional batches, scraping down the bowl as needed.

MAKES 24 CUPCAKES

PREP TIME
15 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
40 minutes

TOTAL TIME
1 hour 40 minutes

MODERATE

Although I've garnished them with seasonal treats here, these are **year-round winners**—top them as you wish.

Increase the speed to high and whip until light and fluffy, 2 to 4 minutes. If desired, mix 8 drops of the green dye into the frosting for a pale shade of green; add additional green dye if you want a stronger color. Fold in 2 cups of the flaked coconut. Set the frosting aside.

6. Put the remaining 1 cup flaked coconut in a small bowl and, with either gloved hands or a fork, mix in 6 to 8 drops of green dye until the coconut resembles cut grass. Add additional green dye if needed.

7. Use a butter knife to frost the cooled cupcakes with the frosting, then sprinkle them with the flaked coconut. Decorate the tops with Easter candies as desired.





CHOCOLATE CHUNK

HAZELNUT BARS

These are a great make-ahead dessert. They are wonderfully moist and gooey the first day they are baked, then get slightly crispy the second day.

1 cup (2 sticks) cold salted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes, plus more for greasing

1/4 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup granulated sugar

3/4 cup packed light brown sugar

2 large eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup hazelnuts, toasted and lightly crushed

2 cups dark chocolate chunks

2 pints of your favorite vanilla ice cream (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a rimmed quarter-sheet pan or a 9 by 13-inch baking dish with parchment paper and rub the parchment with a light coating of butter.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the baking soda, baking powder, and flour and set aside.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium-high speed until blended together into one large, smooth ball. Add the granulated sugar and brown sugar and beat until completely combined and the mixture has the texture of wet sand, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until well combined (there may be pebble-size pieces of butter visible in the mixture, which is okay). Reduce the speed to medium-low, add half the flour mixture, and beat until just combined. Add the remaining flour mixture and beat until the dough just comes together, about 30 seconds. Reduce the speed to low, add the hazelnuts and chocolate chunks, and mix until just combined.

4. Transfer the dough to the prepared pan and use your hands or a rubber spatula to lightly press the dough evenly into the pan. Bake until the edges are lightly golden and the top is dry to the touch, 16 to 18 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through the baking time. Remove from the oven, set the pan on a wire rack, and cool completely (it's okay if it is slightly underbaked when it comes out of the oven; it will continue to firm up as it cools).

5. To serve, preheat the oven to 350°F. Using a bench scraper or straight-sided metal spatula, cut the cookie block into 24 equal bars. Place the pan in the oven and cook until the chocolate has melted and the cookie bars are warmed through, about 5 minutes. The cookie bars can also be removed from the pan and reheated in the microwave. Use a metal spatula to transfer the cookie bars onto individual plates, and serve with vanilla ice cream, if desired.

MAKES
24 BARS

PREP TIME
15 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
35 minutes

TOTAL TIME
35 minutes

EASY

These bars are at their best when they're nice and **soft** in the middle, so it's better to **err on the side of underbaking**.



MEDITERRANEAN CHICKEN

- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 dried bay leaves, broken in half
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 (6³/₄-ounce) jar pimiento-stuffed Spanish olives, drained
- 1 (3¹/₂-ounce) jar capers in brine, drained
- 4 ounces dried cranberries (1 cup)
- 4 ounces dried apricots (1 cup), torn in half
- 6 ounces dried pitted prunes (1 heaping cup)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 4 pounds total), patted dry
- 1 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, for garnish

When I first arrived in LA, I worked as a waiter for Tom Peters, an art-world caterer. He taught me to make this dish, inspired by the legendary chicken marbella in *The Silver Palate Cookbook*. He showed me how to throw the chicken in Tupperware to marinate, then roast it in a baking dish. It always got rave reviews! It's flavorful, simple, and a favorite of mine to this day.

1. In a large plastic storage container with a lid, stir together the oregano, bay leaves, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, olives, capers, cranberries, apricots, prunes, salt, and pepper. Add the chicken, then use clean hands to gently coat the chicken in the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.
2. Remove the chicken from the refrigerator and let it rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
4. Using your hands, transfer the chicken to a large skillet or 9 by 13-inch baking dish, tucking under the sides of each chicken breast so it looks like a ball. Spoon the fruit and any remaining marinade into the pan.
5. Sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the chicken pieces, then drizzle with the wine. Bake until the juices run clear and the skin on the chicken is lightly browned, about 1 hour, rotating the pan from front to back halfway through the cooking time.
6. Transfer the chicken to a serving platter and spoon the fruit and liquid from the pan over the chicken (discard the bay leaves). Garnish with the parsley before serving alongside the Rice Pilaf (page 117).

SERVES 8

PREP TIME
10 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
1 hour 10 minutes

TOTAL TIME
25 hours
10 minutes
(includes marinating time)

EASY



GRILLED TOFU SKEWERS

WITH COCONUT-PEANUT DIPPING SAUCE

The crispy outside and gooey center make these skewers a vegan dream come true! Take the extra time to really press out as much water as possible; it allows the tofu to take on maximum flavor. And mop that grill generously with olive oil so the tofu doesn't stick.

FOR THE COCONUT-PEANUT DIPPING AND GRILLING SAUCE

1 (13.5-ounce) can full-fat, unsweetened coconut milk

1 garlic clove, finely grated on a Microplane

1 (2-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated on a Microplane

3 tablespoons soy sauce

6 tablespoons smooth natural peanut butter

Juice of 1 lime (2 tablespoons), plus more to taste

FOR THE GRILLED TOFU

2 (14-ounce) packages extra-firm tofu (not silken)

Vegetable oil, for grilling

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

6-inch wooden skewers, preferably the flat kind, soaked in water for 30 minutes; outdoor grill or grill pan

1. Make the sauce: In a food processor, combine the coconut milk, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, peanut butter, and lime juice and process until smooth, about 1 minute.

2. Make the grilled tofu: Drain the tofu, then cut each block widthwise into 6 even slices. Stack a few sheets of heavy-duty paper towels or clean kitchen towels on a clean work surface, place the tofu slices in a single layer on top of the towels, and gently press on the slices to remove excess moisture. Repeat once more with fresh towels until the tofu is fairly dry (this step helps the tofu become extra crisp!).

3. Arrange the tofu in a shallow baking dish and coat with half the sauce. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to overnight.

4. Transfer the remaining sauce to a small saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the sauce thickens slightly and darkens a bit in color, 10 to 11 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool.

5. Heat an outdoor grill to medium-high or heat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, scrape down the grates with a grill brush and use a rag and a set of tongs to carefully coat the grates with a generous amount of vegetable oil. Coat the grates a second time with oil, then carefully place the tofu slices on the grill and grill until the tofu develops deep grill marks and is lightly charred and crispy, about 12 minutes, then flip and grill for 4 minutes more.

6. Remove the tofu slices, let cool slightly, then cut each piece in half widthwise and insert a wooden skewer lengthwise, about three-quarters of the way through the tofu. Arrange the skewers on a platter and serve with the peanut dipping sauce on the side.

SERVES 4

PREP TIME
10 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
45 minutes

TOTAL TIME
1 hour 20 minutes
(includes marinating time)

EASY

PECAN STREUSEL-TOPPED
BAKED APPLES

My daughter, Harper, doesn't love apples, but she can't resist these! You can prestuff them, then cook them before school for a great (and relatively healthy) breakfast. The bigger the apple, the better—that means more room for filling!

- 6 medium Honeycrisp apples (about 3 pounds)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons old-fashioned rolled oats
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup apple cider



1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Cut 1/2 inch off the top of each apple. Use a small spoon to scoop out the flesh of the apples, leaving 1/4 inch on all sides and the bottom so you have an empty apple "cup." Put the scooped apple flesh in a medium bowl and set aside. Place the apple cups in a 7 by 11-inch baking dish.
3. Turn the apple flesh out onto a cutting board and remove and discard the seeds and cores. Finely chop enough of the scooped apple flesh to equal 1 cup (save any remaining apple flesh for another use) and return it to the bowl. Stir in 1/4 teaspoon of the cinnamon, the ginger, 1/4 teaspoon of the salt, 2 tablespoons of the brown sugar, the almond milk, and 3/4 cup of the oats. Fill the apples almost to the top with the filling.
4. In a small skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat and cook the melted butter until it starts to bubble and foam, swirling the butter in the pan occasionally, about 2 minutes. Cook, stirring continuously, until the foam subsides and brown flecks start to appear, about 1 minute more. Pour the browned butter into a medium bowl (set the pan aside for later) and stir in the pecans, flour, and the remaining oats, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Divide the streusel topping evenly over the apples.
5. Cut the remaining 2 tablespoons butter into small cubes and scatter them around the apples in the baking dish, then pour in the apple cider. Bake, uncovered, basting the apples (but not the streusel) with the cider sauce and rotating the baking dish every 15 minutes, until the apples are completely tender and the streusel is golden brown, about 45 minutes. If the streusel browns before the apples are tender, cover the dish loosely with a piece of aluminum foil.
6. Remove the apples from the oven and transfer to a large serving platter.

7. Pour the juices from the baking dish into the reserved skillet and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook until the mixture has reduced slightly and is the consistency of thin gravy, about 5 minutes. Drizzle the sauce over the apples and serve.

SERVES 6

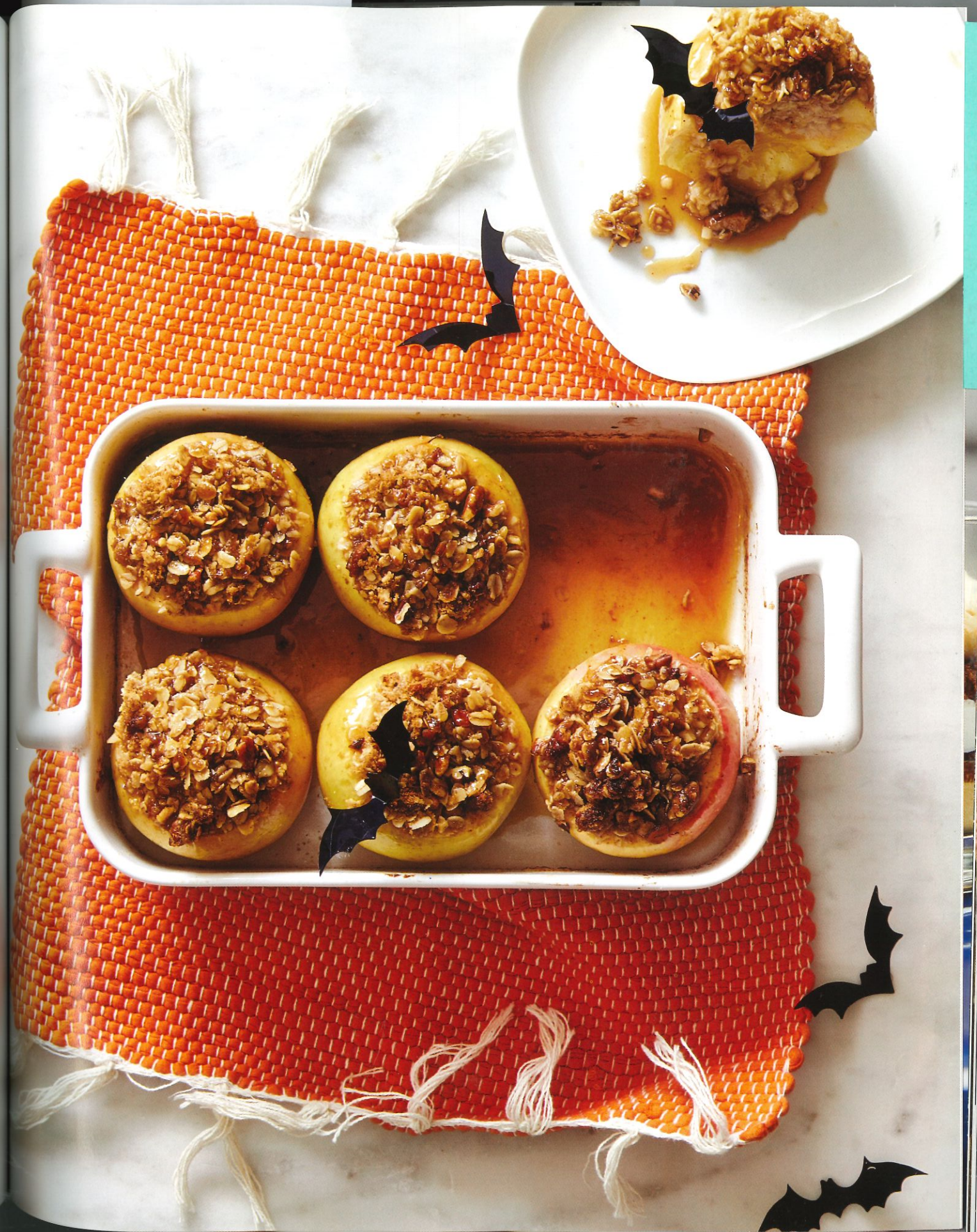
PREP TIME
10 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
35 minutes

TOTAL TIME
1 hour 30 minutes

MODERATE

Choose apples with **flat bottoms** so they stand well when filled. **Honeycrisp** and **Fuji** apples work well here, too.





HAM, EGG, AND CHEESE CALZONES

- All-purpose flour, for dusting
- 4 ounces thinly sliced black forest ham (about 8 slices), diced
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (8 ounces)
- 3 large eggs
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound prepared pizza dough, at room temperature
- Olive oil, for brushing
- Hot sauce and/or salsa, for serving

1. Set one oven rack in the bottom third of the oven and one rack in the upper third and preheat the oven to 450°F. Line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Set out another piece of parchment paper, lightly floured, on a flat work surface.

2. Combine the ham and cheese in a medium bowl and set aside. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs with a large pinch each of salt and pepper.

3. Place a bowl of room-temperature water on the counter. Place the dough on a lightly floured work surface and divide it into 8 equal pieces. Cover all but one piece of dough with a damp dish towel.

4. Place the uncovered piece of dough on the floured parchment paper. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough into a very thin 8-inch round and carefully transfer the round to one of the prepared baking sheets. Use a pastry brush (or your finger) to dab water on the edge of half the circle. On that same water-brushed side, place a heaping ¼ cup of the ham-cheese mixture on the center of the dough. Form a well in the center of the ham-cheese mound and spoon in 1½ to 2 tablespoons of the seasoned eggs, to come up right below the top of the ham-cheese mixture. Carefully fold the unfilled side of the dough over the filling and use your fingers to press the edges together, then fold them over so that the calzone is tightly crimped. Repeat the process with the remaining pieces of dough and the filling so that you end up with 4 calzones on each baking sheet (if any egg seeps out of the calzones, that's okay; you can trim it off after baking).

5. Brush the calzones with olive oil and bake until they're golden brown and crispy, rotating the baking sheets from top to bottom and front to back once halfway through baking, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let the calzones cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to a platter and serve with hot sauce and/or salsa.



**MAKES 8
CALZONES**

PREP TIME
10 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
20 minutes

TOTAL TIME
45 minutes
(includes cooling time)

MODERATE

◆ Another great **make-ahead recipe!** Keep the baked calzones in the fridge, then pop them into the oven at 350°F for 10 minutes and serve with salsa and/or hot sauce.

SWEET POTATO SKINS

I like these better than regular potato skins—they combine sweet and savory flavors so well! These do require a little bit of planning because you have to make sure you save the skins from your roasted sweet potatoes... but then again, who doesn't have sweet potatoes somewhere on their Thanksgiving menu? Hopefully you see this recipe before you throw out your skins, because this is a much better fate for them than the garbage pail.

6 large sweet potatoes, roasted and cooled (see box)

3 tablespoons canola oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1½ cups grated sharp cheddar cheese (6 ounces)

8 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled (about ¾ cup)

¾ cup sour cream

2 tablespoons sliced fresh chives

1. Adjust the oven racks to the upper-third and lower-third positions and preheat the oven to 400°F.

2. Halve the roasted sweet potatoes lengthwise and scoop most of the flesh out, leaving a ⅛-inch-thick shell (save the flesh for another use). Divide the sweet potatoes between two rimmed baking sheets. Brush the shells on all sides with the canola oil and generously season with salt and pepper. Turn the shells scooped-side up and bake until the edges start to brown, about 15 minutes. Use tongs to turn the potatoes over, and rotate the baking sheets from top to bottom. Bake until the shells become crispy, 12 to 15 minutes more.

3. Remove the sweet potatoes from the oven and turn them over again so they're scooped-side up. Evenly sprinkle them with the cheese and bacon, then return them to the oven and bake until the cheese just begins to melt, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a platter and serve each topped with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkled with some chives.

HOW TO ROAST SWEET POTATOES

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Scrub the sweet potatoes and stab them with a fork or a knife in several places. Place the potatoes on a baking sheet and roast for about 1 hour, until the potatoes are very soft on the inside and may even be oozing where you punctured the skins. Remove from the oven and let cool.

MAKES 12
POTATO SKINS

PREP TIME
25 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
20 minutes

TOTAL TIME
1 hour

MODERATE

Save the sweet potato centers for your favorite sweet potato pie, dumpling, or gnocchi recipe.



LEFTOVER MASHED POTATO BISCUITS

WITH CRANBERRY BUTTER

FOR THE BISCUITS

2³/₄ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for shaping

3 tablespoons sugar

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, frozen

2 cups leftover mashed potatoes or sweet potatoes

2/3 cup buttermilk, plus more for brushing

1 large egg

FOR THE CRANBERRY BUTTER

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1/3 cup leftover cranberry sauce

1. Make the biscuits: Adjust an oven rack to the upper third of the oven and preheat the oven to 450°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt (add more or less salt depending on how salty your mashed potatoes are), and pepper.

3. Set a box grater into the dry ingredients and grate the frozen butter on the large holes directly into the flour mixture. Use your fingers to rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs and any butter pieces are no larger than a pea. Add the mashed potatoes and use a fork to mix until they're evenly incorporated and the mixture resembles clumpy wet sand.

4. Make a well in the center of the mashed potato mixture and add the buttermilk and egg. Use the fork to mix until the dough loosely comes together and there aren't any dry spots, but take care not to overmix.

5. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead a few times, just until the dough comes together (do not overmix). Pat the dough into a 9-inch square about 1 inch thick, then cut it into 16 squares. Place the biscuits on the prepared baking sheet at least 2 inches apart and brush them all over with buttermilk. Bake the biscuits until the tops are lightly browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes.

6. While the biscuits cool, make the cranberry butter: In the bowl of a small food processor, combine the butter and cranberry sauce and process until the mixture is completely blended and smooth (a few visible bits of cranberry are okay). Scrape the butter into a small bowl and serve it alongside the warm biscuits.

MAKES 16 BISCUITS and about 1 cup cranberry butter

PREP TIME
15 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
35 minutes

TOTAL TIME
1 hour 5 minutes

MODERATE

◆
Use extra cranberry sauce in this a-snap-to-make butter. Cranberry sauce is the one thing there is always extra of!

MEATBALL SLIDERS

ON HOMEMADE PRETZEL ROLLS

FOR THE PRETZEL ROLLS

1 cup warm water (105 to 115°F)

2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast (one ¼-ounce packet)

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

2½ cups bread flour, plus more for dusting

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

Vegetable oil, for greasing

¼ cup baking soda

Pretzel salt (available at Walmart or on Amazon or Nuts.com) or other coarse salt, for sprinkling

FOR THE MEATBALLS

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 garlic cloves, minced

2 medium shallots, finely chopped

Kosher salt

3 slices stale white bread, crusts removed

¾ cup buttermilk

1 large egg, beaten

1 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 ounce)

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 pound 80% lean ground beef

1 pound sweet or spicy Italian sausage, casings removed

2 cups of your favorite marinara sauce

8 slices Provolone cheese, quartered

1. Make the pretzel rolls: Pour the warm water into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook and sprinkle in the yeast. Set aside until the yeast starts to foam, about 5 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk together the sugar, kosher salt, and bread flour. Add the flour mixture and butter to the bowl with the yeast and turn the mixer to low speed. Mix until the dough is shaggy, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed, 1 to 2 minutes. Increase the speed to medium and mix until the dough is smooth and elastic, 6 to 7 minutes.

3. Lightly oil a large bowl. Shape the dough into a ball and place it in the bowl, turning the dough to coat with the oil. Cover with a damp kitchen towel and let rest in a warm place until doubled in size, 30 to 40 minutes.

4. Line a large baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or a large piece of parchment paper (if using parchment, heavily grease it with oil).

5. Lightly dust your work surface with flour. Transfer the dough to the floured surface and punch it down to deflate it. Knead the dough until it is smooth and no longer sticky, about 5 minutes. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces, then cut each piece into quarters to make 16 pieces total. Roll each piece of dough into a small ball, then place it on the prepared baking sheet, seam-side down, making sure to leave enough space between the rolls to allow the dough to double in size. Cut a large "X" about ¼ inch deep into the top of each roll. Cover with a damp kitchen towel and set aside in a warm place until the rolls have nearly doubled in size, about 20 minutes.

6. Set one oven rack in the top position and another in the bottom position and preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with a clean kitchen towel.

MAKES 16 SLIDERS

PREP TIME
25 minutes

ACTIVE TIME
45 minutes

TOTAL TIME
2 hours
40 minutes
(includes rising and resting time)

MODERATE

RECIPE CONTINUES



S L I D E R S

If baking your own pretzel buns feels like too much work, seek out **store-bought**. Or prep them on a quiet weekend, put them in the **freezer**, and take them out to thaw when party time rolls around.

7. Bring 8 cups water to a boil in a large, deep, straight-sided skillet and stir in the baking soda. Carefully add half the rolls to the boiling water and cook for about 30 seconds, flipping halfway through. Use a slotted spoon or spider to transfer the rolls to the towel-lined baking sheet to dry for 1 to 2 minutes. Repeat with the remaining rolls. When they've dried, transfer all the rolls back to the silicone mat- or parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle the tops of the rolls generously with the pretzel salt.

8. Bake the rolls on the top rack of the oven until golden brown, 10 to 11 minutes. Move the pan to the bottom rack and bake until the rolls are deep golden brown and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes more. Remove from the oven and let the rolls cool on the baking sheet while you prepare the meatballs.

9. **Make the meatballs:** Switch the oven to broil.

10. In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic, shallots, a pinch of salt, and a splash of water and cook until the shallots are soft, 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and let cool slightly.

11. Put the bread in a large bowl and pour the buttermilk over it. Set aside until the bread has soaked up most of the buttermilk, about 5 minutes. Add the egg, Parmesan, parsley, cooked shallot mixture, and 1 teaspoon salt; use your hands to stir the mixture together until combined with no large pieces of bread visible. Add the ground beef and sausage and gently combine all the ingredients with your hands until just combined (avoid overworking the mixture or the meatballs will be tough).

12. Using a 1/4-cup measure to scoop the meat mixture, form it into 16 meatballs, gently patting and rolling each portion into a ball. Transfer to a large baking sheet and broil the meatballs until browned all over, 5 to 10 minutes (browning time depends greatly on the intensity of your broiler; you're just browning the meatballs—they will cook through in the sauce). Remove the meatballs from the oven and set the oven temperature to 425°F.

13. In a large saucepan, bring the tomato sauce to a low simmer over medium heat. Gently nestle the browned meatballs into the sauce, cover, and cook until the meatballs are just cooked through, about 10 minutes.

14. Cut each pretzel roll in half and place them cut-side up on a large baking sheet. Spoon a bit of sauce onto the bottom half of each roll, then top each with 1 meatball. Layer 2 pieces of provolone on each meatball. Bake until the cheese has just melted, 4 to 5 minutes. Close the sandwiches and serve immediately.

POPCORN BAR:

POPCORN WITH CURRY BUTTER,
BACON FAT POPCORN, AND
SWEET-AND-SALTY POPCORN WITH MINI MERINGUES

Bacon Fat Popcorn

Makes 12 cups • Prep time: 5 minutes
Active time: 10 minutes • Total time: 10 minutes • Easy

3 tablespoons bacon fat
2/3 cup popcorn kernels
Kosher salt
Bacon bits (optional)

1. In a large heavy-bottomed stockpot or Dutch oven, melt the bacon fat over medium-high heat. When the fat starts to shimmer, add the popcorn kernels and stir to coat in the bacon fat. Cook, stirring continuously, for 1 minute, then cover the pot with a lid; you should hear the kernels start popping after 30 seconds to 1 minute. Cook, shaking the pot often to prevent the kernels from burning, until the sound of the popping kernels slows down significantly, 3 to 4 minutes. Turn off the heat but keep the lid on until the popping stops completely.

2. Remove the lid, season liberally with salt, then cover the pot again and give it a few good shakes, preferably turning it completely over with the lid on to evenly distribute the salt. Serve in a large bowl. Sprinkle with bacon bits, if desired.

Who knew you could make popcorn with **bacon fat**? I am addicted—I could eat a **bowl every day**.

Popcorn with Curry Butter

Makes about 12 cups • Prep time: 5 minutes
Active time: 10 minutes • Total time: 15 minutes • Easy

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon curry powder
3 tablespoons canola oil
2/3 cup popcorn kernels
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1. In a small saucepan, combine the butter and curry powder and cook over low heat, stirring frequently, until the butter has completely melted, about 2 minutes. Turn off the heat and set aside.

2. In a large heavy-bottomed stockpot or Dutch oven, heat the canola oil over medium-high heat. When the oil starts to shimmer (this should take about 3 minutes), add the popcorn kernels and stir to coat in the oil. Cook, stirring continuously, for 1 minute, then cover the pot with a lid; you should hear the kernels start popping after 30 seconds to 1 minute. Cook, shaking the pot often to prevent the kernels from burning, until the sound of the popping kernels slows down significantly, 3 to 4 minutes. Turn off the heat but keep the lid on until the popping stops completely.

3. Remove the lid and drizzle the curry butter over the popcorn, then season with the salt. Put the lid back on (wipe it off first if it's wet with condensation) and give the pot a few good shakes so the popcorn gets evenly coated with the butter and salt. Serve in a large bowl.

RECIPE CONTINUES