

with sardine flaked through it and ribbons of deep green. It should be full-bodied, so let it simmer a few minutes longer if it's at all watery. Check the seasoning and add a pinch of salt and extra chili flakes if needed, then add olives or capers if you want to.

4. Drain the pasta well, then mix with the sauce. Serve straightaway, and sprinkle with parsley if you have it.

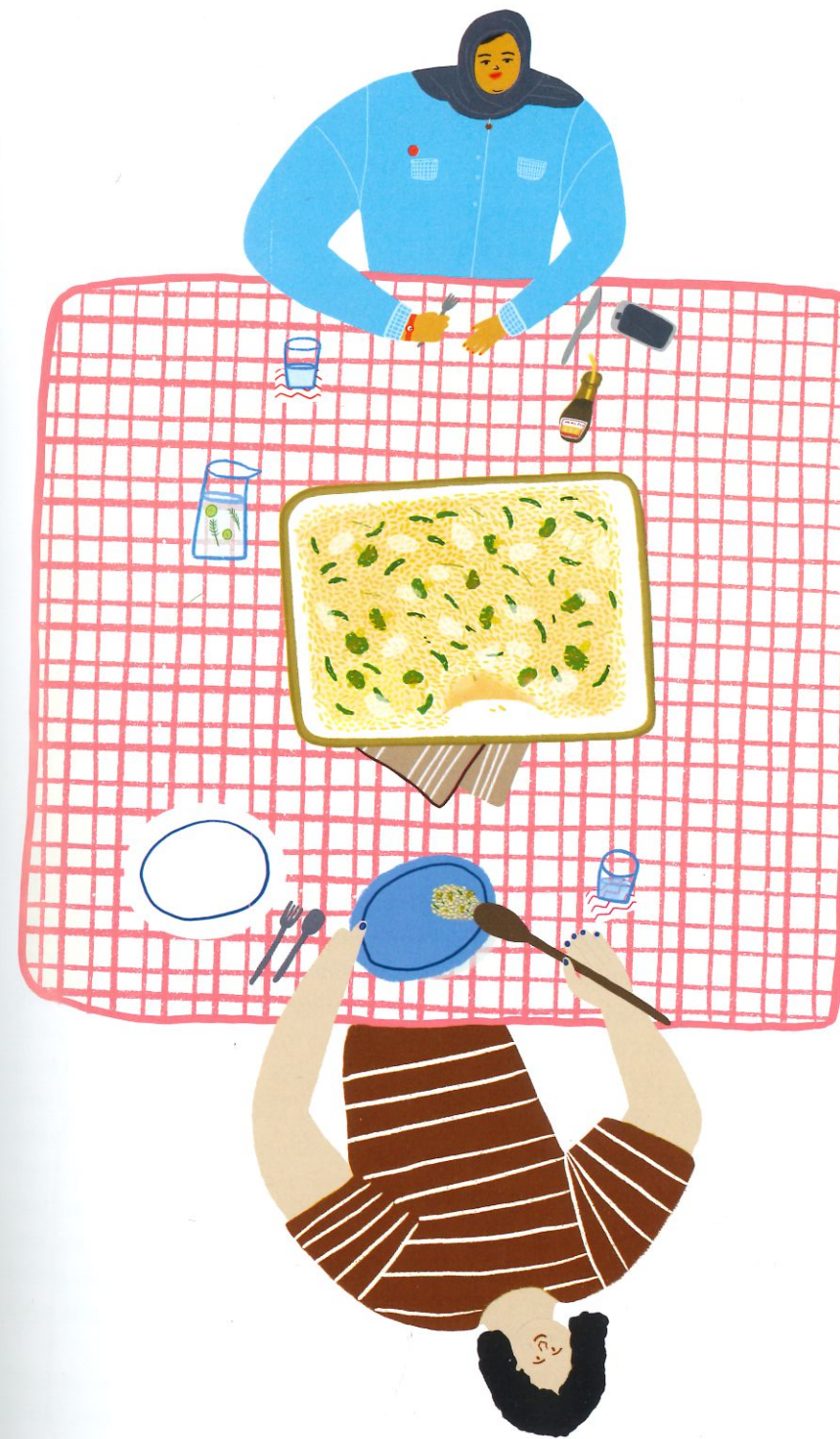
Variations and substitutions:

Defrosted frozen spinach can be used in place of the fresh spinach leaves. Alternatively, sauté a couple of handfuls of thickly sliced mushrooms in a little oil in a separate frying pan, then stir through the sauce once tender.

You can use a gluten-free pasta if required.

ROASTING-PAN ORZO WITH BROCCOLI AND MOZZARELLA

I have to credit my friend Rukmini with opening my eyes to the potential of the humble roasting pan. She's a magician in the kitchen—where other cooks (read: me) fuss, stir, season, fret and hover tethered to the stove, she just throws ingredients into a pan, puts the pan in the oven and lets heat and time do their thing. In all the time and headspace that these easy roasting-pan dinners free up, you could really *carpe diem*—seize the day—and make something of yourself. Or, if you're like me, you could just watch episodes of *Gilmore Girls* you've already seen a thousand times. You do you.



Serves: 4

Ready in: less than 45 minutes



1 broccoli head, cut into small florets
2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
2 medium zucchini (roughly 14 ounces/400g), coarsely grated
2 cups (500ml) vegetable or chicken stock, very hot
1½ cups (300g) orzo pasta
2 teaspoons Dijon or wholegrain mustard
4-ounce (125g) mozzarella ball, torn into pieces, or 1 cup (4 ounces/125g) grated mozzarella

Handful of fresh basil leaves (about ½ ounce/10–15g), roughly torn
1 tablespoon lemon juice (from ½ lemon)
Lots of freshly ground black pepper
Salt, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C) and get out a large roasting pan, roughly 13 x 9 inches (22 x 33cm).
2. Toss the broccoli florets with 1 tablespoon of the oil in your roasting pan. Roast in the preheated oven for 10 minutes.
3. Add the grated zucchini, stock, orzo and mustard to the broccoli in the roasting pan, and stir well to combine. Pat down the orzo to make sure it's pretty much all submerged in the stock. Scatter the mozzarella on top, then bake for 20 minutes.
4. Once the pasta is cooked (it may be slightly al dente, but shouldn't be crunchy or chalky), remove from the oven, scatter over the basil, drizzle with lemon juice and the remaining tablespoon of oil and season to taste with plenty of pepper and salt. Mix everything really well, then serve straightaway—this dish tends to set firmer as it cools, so isn't good for making ahead of time.

Variations and substitutions:

To make this a vegan dinner, use a non-dairy mozzarella or leave the cheese out altogether, and make sure you use a vegan stock cube. You can swap the broccoli for pretty much any vegetables you have on hand: tomatoes work really nicely, as does butternut squash (you will need to cut it into small cubes). If you're going for that green, earthy vibe, kale is good, but should be thrown into the dish at the same time as the orzo, etc. You can also swap the basil for mint or parsley.

A reminder about grilled cheese



Cooking can be a real drag. When the day has been long and life's many other demands are circling, the last thing I want to do is lovingly coax spring greens to life, or add to the already looming washing-up pile. I don't want to cook, I don't want to be mindful, I don't want to be told about how vegetables are nature's *real* fast food. Sometimes in these moments I can recognize myself being petulant, and I pull myself out of my funk and into the kitchen, trying to soar above my own bad mood. But often this exhaustion is just a fact of life. Not every meal can be special; not every moment needs to be suffused with magic, self-improvement or romance.

So, although it's my role as a cookbook writer to help you find your way in the kitchen, I also want to make clear that this isn't something you necessarily need to do all the time. Unless cooking from-scratch meals three times a day is your true love, your career or a non-negotiable fact of your life, there is no need to rise to dizzying culinary heights every time you feel your stomach rumble. This is what instant noodles are for. This is when those feather-soft supermarket chocolate chip brioche buns will come to your rescue. This is the evergreen value of kebab shops, fried chicken places, curbside burger vans and sushi delivered to your door. I know that not all of these things will translate for non-Brits, but you have to find your own shortcuts, the quick-fix eats that feel right for you, wherever you are. That flexibility is exactly the point. It's important that you cook as you are. When you do get in the kitchen, I want you to have the luxury of being there with confidence and hopefully even with joy. But for ordinary days and ordinary moods, sometimes grilled cheese will do.

P.S. I have loved the months spent recipe testing, writing and editing this book, and all the culinary lessons I've learned en route. But I have to be honest with you: I'm desperate for the day when all the recipes are perfected and the last pan has been washed up, and I can just relax into a plate of chicken nuggets and fries. This is cooking—and eating—for real life.

ROAST CHICKEN THIGHS WITH SPICED CAULIFLOWER, CRANBERRIES AND HERBS

This weeknight chicken dinner combines crisp-skinned roast chicken with cauliflower, sweet-sharp cranberries and the crunch of toasted nuts. What's more, it can all be cooked in a roasting pan, leaving you with more free time and less washing-up.

This recipe doesn't involve much chopping or other fiddly work, so may be useful if that stuff is ordinarily an issue for you. You can break the cauliflower roughly into florets if your knife skills aren't great. I wouldn't recommend using pre-cut frozen cauliflower florets though—they'll become mushy when roasted.

Serves: 4

Ready in: less than 45 minutes

Make-ahead and storage tips: page 323



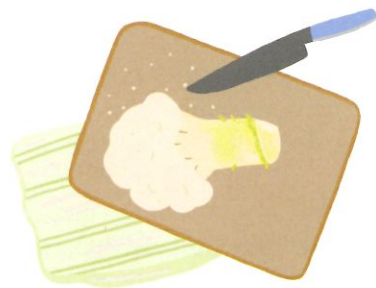
8 chicken thighs, skin on and bone in
1½ tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½–1 teaspoon chili powder, to taste
1 teaspoon dried thyme, oregano
or mixed herbs
Generous pinch of salt
1 medium or large cauliflower
3 tablespoons (25g) pine nuts

For the dressing:

1 garlic clove, crushed or finely grated
1½ tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar, rice
vinegar or white wine vinegar
2 teaspoons honey or maple syrup
Pinch of salt

To garnish:
Handful of fresh parsley leaves
(roughly ½ ounce/10–15g)
¼ cup (40g) dried cranberries

Serve with: flatbreads and yogurt



1. Start by preheating the oven to 400°F (200°C). Get out a large, deep roasting pan, at least 13 x 9 inches (22 x 33cm).
2. Add the chicken to the pan along with the oil, spices, dried herbs and salt, then roast in the preheated oven for 15 minutes.
3. While the chicken roasts, cut or break the cauliflower into medium florets. (Save the leaves and stalk for use in other dishes—like the **no-waste whole cauliflower and macaroni cheese** on page 123 or for blending into soups.)
4. Once the chicken has roasted for 15 minutes, add the cauliflower and the pine nuts options and toss everything together really well to distribute the oil and seasonings. Return the dish to the oven for a further 25 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through (the juices should run clear) and the cauliflower florets are tender and mottled brown.
5. While the chicken and cauliflower finish roasting, prepare the dressing: whisk together all the ingredients until smooth and emulsified. Have the parsley leaves and cranberries ready.
6. When the dish is cooked, toss it with the dressing while still warm, then scatter with the chopped parsley and cranberries. Check the seasoning, then serve with yogurt and flatbreads.

Variations and substitutions:

I love the sharp-sweet pop of dried cranberries here, but you could alternatively use goji berries or—a much cheaper option—golden raisins or raisins. The sweetness is really welcome against the earthy cauliflower. For a fresher pop, use juicy pomegranate seeds instead.

Almonds, hazelnuts or walnuts can be used in place of the pine nuts. Roughly chop them first if you're using chunkier ones like walnuts or almonds.

Swap the chicken thighs for drumsticks if you want: they won't need quite as long in the oven though, so decrease the first part of the roasting (when the chicken is in the oven alone) to just 5–10 minutes.

If you're vegetarian or vegan, you can just make a chicken-free version of this, reconfiguring it as a kind of warm dressed cauliflower salad. Just double the amount of cauliflower, toss it in the oil, spices and so on and roast in the preheated oven for 25 minutes. Finish with the dressing and garnishes as above (be sure to use maple syrup rather than honey in the dressing if you're vegan).

ROASTED FIVE-SPICE CARROTS WITH BROWN BUTTER AND SESAME

Carrots become perfectly sweet when roasted. The aromatics of Chinese five-spice powder (ordinarily including cinnamon, Sichuan pepper, fennel seeds, cloves and star anise) work perfectly alongside this sweetness, especially with the mellowing influence of brown butter. This easy side dish is a toss-it-in-the-oven job, so it's easy to pull together while the roast dinner cooks.

This dish is based on a recipe for glazed carrots with five-spice powder by Rhonda Parkinson published on *The Spruce Eats*—if you want to make this but can't face turning on the oven, Rhonda's stovetop version is a good bet.

Serves: 4–6 as a side or part of a spread

Ready in: less than an hour, over half of which is hands-off roasting time

Make-ahead and storage tips: page 324



- 1¼ pounds (800g) carrots
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon Chinese five-spice powder
- ½ teaspoon chili flakes
- Salt, to taste
- 2 tablespoons light soy sauce or tamari
- 3 tablespoons soft light or dark brown sugar
- 5 tablespoons (75ml) orange juice
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds



1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C) and get out a roasting pan roughly 13 x 9 inches (22 x 33cm) across its base.
2. While the oven heats, peel the carrots and cut into batons (for smaller carrots like Nantes carrots, you can just cut them in half along their length to give two long, thin pieces).
3. Add the butter to the roasting pan. Place in the preheated oven and cook until the butter is molten and sizzling, with light brown specks dotted through it (these spots are the toasted milk solids, which give browned

butter its nutty flavor). Exactly how long this takes will depend on the weight and thickness of your roasting pan, but it should take somewhere between 5 and 10 minutes.

4. Once the butter has browned, add the prepared carrots, five-spice powder, chili flakes and a pinch of salt, and toss to combine. Roast for 30 minutes, stirring halfway through, until the carrots are almost tender and beginning to brown at the edges.
5. Add the soy sauce or tamari, sugar, orange juice and sesame seeds to the roasting pan, and mix it all together, then return to the oven for a further 10 minutes or so, or until the glaze is reduced and syrupy. Exactly how long this takes will depend on the size of your pan, so keep an eye on it—if left too long, the glaze will burn. When the orange juice and soy sauce have turned from soupy mess to bubbling syrup, remove the pan from the oven and toss the carrots in this glaze.

Variations and substitutions:

If you want to make this vegan, swap the butter for olive oil and skip the step in which the butter is browned: just toss the carrots, five-spice powder, chili flakes and salt with the oil, then roast.

You can leave out the sesame seeds if you want to, or even replace them with roughly chopped hazelnuts, walnuts or pecans.

BOK CHOY WITH GINGER AND CLEMENTINE

This bok choy—browned in a pan with butter and garlic and brought to life with a squeeze of clementine juice—is exceptionally quick and works well as part of a vegetarian spread. I often serve this with the **roasted five-spice carrots with brown butter and sesame** opposite and the **charred Brussels sprouts with satay and crushed peanuts** on page 141.

FISH STICKS WITH JAPANESE CURRY AND RICE

The anatomy of a katsukarē, or katsu curry, is simple. First there is katsu—the breadcrumb cutlet element, usually pork or chicken. Then there is the curry or karē—thick, velvety and slightly sweet curry sauce, ordinarily cooked with chunks of carrot and potato. Finally, there's the steamed Japanese rice. Its origin story is less straightforward. Curries spiced with ground cumin and turmeric were transported from India to Japan by British colonial forces during the 1800s—one of the less disastrous instances of imperial meddling, but testament to the evergreen British compulsion to leave a heavy footprint wherever we go. Those curries were adapted, as foods so often are, to the tastes of the inhabitants of their adoptive country: Japanese cooks added a roux to thicken them (itself a French import, lending this thickener the name karēū) and, in another cross-cultural mishmash, even spiked them with Worcestershire sauce. The sauces became sweeter and more robust, and by the mid-twentieth century were beginning to gain popularity across Japan.

Not everyone was happy about this. In *Japanese Cooking: A Simple Art*, Shizuo Tsuji lamented the foreign influence on classic Japanese cooking. "Today the Japanese eat a mixture of Western, Japanese, and Chinese food . . . Japan must be the only country in the world where the everyday fare is such a hodgepodge." But when a food delights the palate, it captures hearts, and these kinds of protests couldn't do much to stop its progress. By the 1950s, these curries had found their way onto plates alongside tonkatsu—pork cutlets crusted with panko breadcrumbs and deep-fried—and katsukarē was born.

I approached this recipe with a degree of caution, keen not to continue the age-old tradition of culinary imperialism. But I humbly stand by this dish: fish sticks, breaded in golden crumbs, are a perfect easy swap for chicken or pork cutlets.

For this, I'd highly recommend using a store-bought Japanese curry roux block. This is the starch-thickened curry block, a bit like a massive stock cube, that will add thickness and flavor to your dish. You can get it in most big supermarkets, but if you go to an East Asian grocery store you should be able to find versions like S&B Golden Curry sauce mix. It's the most popular,

easiest and arguably the most delicious way of making Japanese curry at home. If you can't get the ready-made roux, you can make your own though. Skip to the recipe for **homemade curry roux** on page 131.

If you want to learn more about Japanese cooking, I found Namiko Chen's website, *Just One Cookbook*, incredibly useful. You could also consult Harumi Kurihara's excellent cookbooks.

Serves: 4

Ready in: less than an hour

Make-ahead and storage tips: page 325



1½ cups (300g) short- or medium-grain rice*
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 medium onion, thickly sliced
1 medium apple, peeled and grated
1 large potato (5–7 ounces/150–200g), peeled and cut into 1 inch/2–3cm chunks
1¼ cups (100g) mushrooms, sliced
2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced

3–3½ cups (700–800ml) water
1½ tablespoons honey
12 fish sticks
3½ ounces (100g) store-bought curry roux or 1 batch homemade curry roux, see following recipe
Light soy sauce, to taste

Serve with: pickles or pickled daikon

*Sushi rice is a good option here, but a short- or medium-grain rice will do. I made this recently with a Thai medium-grain jasmine rice and it worked well. What you're looking for is a rice with plump grains that become chewy and slightly sticky when cooked—not the long, fragile, fluffy grains of basmati rice.

If you're making the curry roux from scratch, do that first, following the recipe on page 131.

1. Start by preparing the rice. The method will vary depending on the type of rice you use, so I'd recommend googling the cooking time if you're not confident. This is how I cook sushi rice: Wash the rice really well in cold water, continuing until the water runs pretty much clear. Cover the rice with water and soak for 30 minutes. Drain, then put the soaked rice in a small or medium saucepan along with 1½ cups (400ml) water (if you're making a bigger or smaller batch, just weigh your rice and then add 1½ of that amount of water). Set over a medium heat and bring to a simmer.

Hidden in plain sight

JOLLOF RICE

No party is a party without jollof rice, although nothing can sour the mood of a party quite like people's arguments about which country's jollof is best. This fiercely fought-over West African rice dish is bright red and deeply spiced, and has a delicate smokiness—in this case from smoked paprika—running through it, though there are countless variations and riffs on this popular recipe. It's easy too: just cook basmati rice in a chili-spiked tomato sauce until the grains are fluffy and tender. This is good served with spiced and roasted chicken thighs or alongside the **smoky chicken, okra and chorizo casserole** on page 175.

Serves: 4

Ready in: 45 minutes

Make-ahead and storage tips: page 326



For the rice:

- 1½ cups (300g) basmati rice
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
- 1 red pepper, diced
- ½ medium onion, finely diced
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed or finely grated
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon mild or medium curry powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt, to taste



For the sauce:

- ½ medium onion, roughly chopped
- ½–1 Scotch bonnet chili, seeded, to taste
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 x 14 ounce (400g) can chopped tomatoes
- 1 chicken or vegetable stock cube

Special equipment: stick blender, food processor or blender

1. Start by soaking the rice: rinse it really well in a few changes of water, then cover with fresh cold water and leave to sit for 15 minutes or so.

2. Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat, then add the diced pepper and onion. Sauté for 8–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to soften.
3. While the onion and pepper are cooking, make the sauce. Combine the onion and Scotch bonnet (make sure it's seeded, and add less if you don't like heat) with the water, chopped tomatoes and stock cube. Blitz with a stick blender or in a food processor or blender to get a smooth sauce.
4. Return your attention to the sautéing onion and pepper now. Add the garlic, tomato paste, curry powder, smoked paprika and thyme. Sauté for a further minute or two until the garlic smells cooked, the tomato paste is deep red and the spices are fragrant. Add the sauce to the pan, then mix well and let simmer for 3–4 minutes.
5. Drain the rice really well, then add to the pan. Mix to combine everything, patting down the rice so that it's all at least partially submerged in the sauce.
6. Cook over a medium heat until the mixture begins to bubble and sputter, then turn the heat down as low as it'll go, cover the pan with aluminum foil and then put on a lid. (The foil is just to keep as much steam in as possible. If your pan lid is tight-fitting, and if you can cover any steam holes, you can skip the foil.) Cook for roughly 16–20 minutes, or until the rice is cooked and no longer chalky. Turn off the heat and leave to sit for 5 minutes with the lid still on. Uncover the pan, fluff up the rice, add salt if necessary and then serve.

Variations and substitutions:

In place of the Scotch bonnet, you can use ½–1 teaspoon chili powder.

Use a pound or so (400g) fresh tomatoes, roughly chopped, in place of the canned tomatoes if you want.

To add interest, you could add any of the following, stirring them in when you add the rice to the sauce in the pan: a couple of handfuls of shredded roasted or grilled chicken, thinly sliced okra, frozen mixed chopped veg or peas.

CHICKEN, BROWN BUTTER AND MUSHROOM PIE

This chicken pie feels special but doesn't involve too much stress or sweat. Skip to the end and you can find tips for preparing it in advance, making an easier single-crust version or replacing the homemade pastry with store-bought, although I have to say that even if you make the most elaborate version of this recipe, it's still not an ordeal. I made this for Christmas dinner last year and honestly had the most chill Christmas Day of my life so far.

Brown butter in this pie takes the place of the usual cream. It enriches the filling and adds a nutty, toasted flavor that I really love alongside the mushrooms and chicken.

Serves: 6

Ready in: less than 2 hours 30 minutes, most of which is idle time while the pastry chills and the pie bakes

Make-ahead and storage tips: page 327

For the filling:

½ cup (110g) salted or unsalted butter
1½ pounds (750g) chicken thigh fillets, cut into 1¼ inch (3cm) chunks
2 leeks, thickly sliced
9 ounces (250g) mushrooms, thickly sliced
3 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves or 2 teaspoons dried thyme
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
½ cup (120ml) white wine, optional
1¼–2 cups (300–450ml) chicken stock
1 tablespoon Dijon or wholegrain mustard
2 tablespoons sour cream or crème fraîche
Salt, to taste

For the pastry:

2 cups (250g) all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ cup (150g) unsalted butter, chilled
¼ cup (60ml) cold water

To glaze:

1 egg, lightly beaten

Serve with: *aligot* (page 188), *cloud mash* (page 97) or just boiled potatoes

Special equipment: ideally a 9 inch (23cm) pie plate, but an 8 x 8 inch (20 x 20cm) roasting pan would also work; food processor, optional



1. First, make the filling. In a large saucepan, melt just a couple of teaspoons of the butter. Add the chicken pieces to the pan in batches and fry over a medium-high heat for a few minutes, until lightly browned. The meat doesn't need to be cooked through: this stage is more about getting a fond—the brown, sticky residue at the bottom of the pan—that will add color and depth to your sauce. Once you've got a light fond, remove the chicken and set to one side.
2. Now you're going to make the brown butter. Add the remaining butter to the pan and set over a medium heat. Watch as it melts, then starts to sputter and fizz. After a couple of minutes, you'll notice the milky white pools in the molten butter start to color, speckling the gold with brown flecks. It should smell nutty and toasted at this point. Take care when doing this: if the butter cooks for too long or at too high a temperature, those milk solids will blacken and burn, making the mixture bitter.
3. Once the butter is browned, add the leeks, mushrooms and thyme. Turn down the heat slightly, then let the vegetable mixture sweat and soften for 10 minutes or so, stirring regularly.
4. Add the flour to the vegetables and mix well, then sauté for a minute or two. Pour in the wine, if using, then turn up the heat and stir constantly while the wine bubbles and the alcohol cooks off. After a couple of minutes, turn the heat down again and add the chicken stock (1¼–1¾ cups/300–400ml if you used white wine, or slightly more if you didn't), mustard and the browned chicken pieces. Bring the mixture to a simmer, then cook gently for 6–8 minutes, until the chicken pieces are cooked.
5. Add the sour cream or crème fraîche, then check the seasoning, adding a pinch of salt if necessary. Set the mixture aside to cool slightly while you prepare the pastry.
6. To make the pastry, combine the flour and salt in a large mixing bowl (or the bowl of a food processor if you have one). Get out your chilled butter—it really does need to be cold—and cut into small cubes. Add the butter cubes to the bowl and combine with the flour mixture, until the fat is almost completely worked into the flour and the mixture resembles a fine crumble. If you're doing this by hand, you just need to rub the flour and butter briskly between your fingertips. In a food processor, pulse until you have a very delicate, floury rubble. Add the water and mix briefly but assertively, until the floury crumble comes together into a smooth dough—you can knead or process it a little here, just to bring the mixture together, but it's important not to overdo it or the pastry will toughen.

7. Divide your dough into two portions, one twice the size of the other, and flatten each into a disc shape. Wrap each portion in plastic wrap or parchment paper and put in the fridge to chill for about 30 minutes.
8. By the time the pastry has chilled, your chicken filling mixture should also be cool enough to work with: time to assemble the pie. Turn on your oven to 350°F (180°C) and get out your pie dish.
9. Unwrap the larger piece of pastry and dust your work surface and the pastry with a little flour. Roll the pastry out until it's big enough to line the base and sides of your pie dish—it should be roughly ¼ inch (2mm) thick. If it cracks while you do this, don't panic: just press it back together firmly. Transfer the pastry to the pie dish and cut off any overhang, reserving these offcuts. Spoon the filling mixture into the pastry shell.
10. Unwrap the smaller portion of pastry and add any offcuts from the pie base, squeezing the dough together. On a floured surface, roll out the pastry until it's large enough to cover the pie, then drape it over the filling. Trim off any excess pastry and use a fork or your fingers to crimp the pastry together so that the base fuses with the lid. Glaze the pastry lid by brushing it with the lightly beaten egg, then cut a cross or small hole into the center of the lid, to let steam escape as the pie cooks.
11. Bake the pie in the preheated oven for roughly 40–50 minutes, or until the filling is bubbling and the pastry is tender and a deep gold.

For a weeknight, single-crust pie:

A from-scratch double-crust pie might be asking too much for a weeknight. If you switch the recipe to a single crust pie, it takes out some of the worry work and drives down the cooking time. Make half or a third of the pastry quantity specified in the recipe (or use 7–9 ounces/200–250g of store-bought shortcrust pastry), and use it to top the pie. Because you're not piling the filling on top of the pastry in this case, you don't need to wait for the filling to cool before assembling the pie: just fill, roll, top, glaze and go. Bake for around 25–30 minutes.

Variations and substitutions:

If you can't face making your own pastry, don't sweat it! You can use roughly 1 pound or so (500g) store-bought shortcrust pastry.

I find chicken thighs are most tender when cooked in this pie, but it's really a matter of preference. You can use pretty much any cut, as long as it's off the bone, skinless and suitable for cutting into decent sized chunks. Chicken breast will be firmer and slightly drier.

If you don't like mushrooms, just leave them out and add an extra leek and a little more chicken to make up for it.

Tarragon is a great alternative to the fresh thyme in this, if you like its aniseedy, grassy notes. Use the leaves from 3–4 sprigs, but instead of adding at the beginning, add as the filling finishes simmering to preserve their delicate flavor.



3. Spoon the mixture into your pan or ramekins and sprinkle with a little extra sea salt if you want. (If you're using table salt, don't sprinkle extra on top or the cookie pie will be too salty.) Bake a large one for 20–24 minutes in the preheated oven. Individual ramekins will take 12–14 minutes. Exactly how long you give it will depend on whether you want oozing, lava puddings or fudgy, semi-set cookie dough. I'll leave that judgment to you, but here's one thing you must do: let the dessert cool for at least 5 minutes before you eat it or you'll lose the skin off the roof of your mouth.

Variations and substitutions:

Superfine sugar can be used in place of the soft light brown sugar.

If you have self-rising flour, you can use this in place of the all-purpose flour, but leave out the baking powder.

White chocolate chunks also work well in this dough.

SALTED CHOCOLATE CHUNK COOKIES, THREE WAYS

Adapt this recipe however you see fit—this is just a basic (easily veganized) chocolate chunk cookie dough that can be respun to suit pretty much any craving. I give a few flavor ideas in the recipe to get you started. If you do want these to be vegan, make sure your dark chocolate doesn't contain dairy.



Makes: 16 cookies

Ready in: 30 minutes (set aside a few extra minutes to let them cool before eating)

Make-ahead and storage tips: page 328



For the basic dough:

¾ cup (150g) soft light brown sugar
 scant ½ cup (100ml) olive, almond or hazelnut oil
 ¼ cup (60ml) milk, dairy or non-dairy
 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
 1½ cups (200g) all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon flaky sea salt or
 ¼ teaspoon table salt

For simple chocolate chunk cookies:

scant 1 cup (5 ounces/150g) dark chocolate, chopped into small chunks

For rosemary, dark chocolate and sea salt cookies:

scant 1 cup (5 ounces/150g) dark chocolate, chopped into small chunks
 Leaves from 2 fresh rosemary sprigs
 Flaky sea salt, to sprinkle on top

For dark chocolate, orange and hazelnut cookies:

¾ cup (3½ ounces/100g) dark chocolate, chopped into small chunks
 ½ cup (50g) hazelnuts, roughly chopped
 Zest of 1 orange

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large mixing bowl, stir together the sugar, oil, milk and vanilla extract. Once the mixture is smooth, add the flour, baking powder and salt and mix until you have a cohesive dough. It won't be quite as firm as some cookie doughs, but it should be fudgy and thick.
3. Mix in whichever extras you want, following the suggestions I've given above or freestyling it with your own additions.
4. Spoon the cookie dough into 16 shaggy mounds on the baking tray, leaving space between each one (these will spread a bit). If you need to bake them in two or three batches, do that. Bake for 13–14 minutes in the preheated oven, until lightly browned, with firm edges but puffy centers. They'll sink and firm up as they cool, giving them a pleasing chewiness, so don't eat them straightaway.

Variations and substitutions:

Self-rising flour can be used in place of the all-purpose flour if that's all you've got, but I prefer the less vigorous lift that you get from using all-purpose flour and that small amount of baking powder. If you have to use self-rising flour, leave out the baking powder.