

OF HOLIDAYS A TASTE OF  
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HOLIDAYS



Festive Recipes from the Avex Team

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# *Warm Wishes & Delicious Dishes from the Avex Family!*

Nothing says “happy holidays” like gathering with loved ones over food that makes everyone feel at home. We’re thrilled to present the Avex Holiday Cookbook—a curated collection of our team’s all-time favorite holiday recipes. These are the tried-and-true dishes we bring out each year, filling our tables with comfort, laughter, and joy.

From savory bites that warm the soul to indulgent desserts that make every gathering a little sweeter, each recipe has been lovingly chosen to bring the season's flavors into your home.

As you cook and share these dishes, know you’re also part of our story. This cookbook is a token of thanks for your part in our journey. So gather those you love, indulge in the season's flavors, and let’s celebrate all the reasons we’re grateful this year.

From all of us at Avex, happy holidays, and here’s to good food, great memories, and an even brighter year ahead!



# MORNING TREATS

Nothing says ‘holiday season’ like waking up to the smell of something amazing in the kitchen. These early morning treats are all about kicking off your day with a little extra butter—and of course, a whole lot of love!

So grab a spatula, pour the coffee, and let’s make some delicious memories.





# BERRY CROISSANT CAKE

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*A dreamy, fruity, croissant treat that's perfect for brunches, gatherings, or a little morning indulgence. Flaky, buttery layers meet sweet berries and a creamy filling for a dish that's sure to impress!*

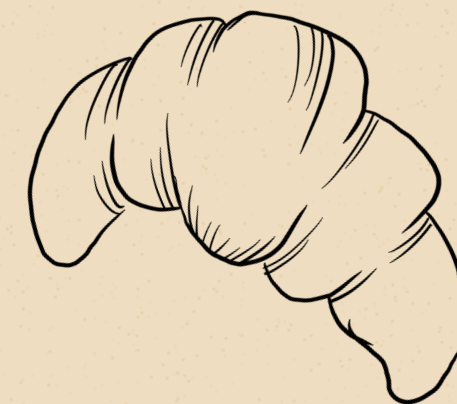


## ✦ Ingredients

- 4 LARGE BAKED CROISSANTS, BROKEN INTO BITE-SIZED PIECES
- 1 CUP SLICED STRAWBERRIES
- ½ CUP BLUEBERRIES
- ½ CUP RASPBERRIES
- 8 OZ (1 BLOCK) CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- ⅔ CUP GRANULATED SUGAR
- ¾ CUP MILK
- 2 LARGE EGGS
- 2 TSP VANILLA EXTRACT

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Preheat & Prep:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Lightly grease a 9x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
- 2. Layer It Up:** Spread the croissant pieces evenly in the baking dish. Sprinkle all the berries on top, ensuring they're spread out nicely.
- 3. Whip It Good:** In a mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese with an electric mixer until it's light and fluffy. Slowly add the sugar, milk, eggs, and vanilla, mixing until everything's well combined and creamy.
- 4. Pour & Chill:** Pour the cream cheese mixture evenly over the croissants and berries, making sure everything is coated. Cover the dish and place it in the fridge for at least 15 minutes (or up to 14 hours if you want to prepare ahead).
- 5. Bake:** Remove the cover and bake for 35–40 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and the bake is set.
- 6. Serve & Enjoy:** Serve warm, dusted with powdered sugar, or drizzled with syrup for a little extra sweetness.







# SAUSAGE BREAKFAST STRATA

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*This savory breakfast casserole is layered with flavor—perfect for brunch, lazy Sundays, or holiday mornings. With a cheesy, croissant-filled base and a hint of spice, it’s a crowd-pleaser that’s worth the wait!*

## ✦ Ingredients

- ½ LB PORK SAUSAGE
- ½ SMALL ONION OR 1 LARGE LEEK, DICED
- 1 CUP FRESH SPINACH, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- ½ CUP CHEDDAR CHEESE, GRATED
- ½ CUP MONTEREY JACK CHEESE, GRATED
- 3 LARGE CROISSANTS, CUT INTO 1-2 INCH CUBES (OR 6 SLICES OF BREAD, CUBED)
- 6 LARGE EGGS
- ¾ CUP WHOLE MILK
- ½ CUP HALF-AND-HALF
- ¾ TSP DRY MUSTARD
- ½ TSP SALT
- ½ TSP GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- ¼ TSP PAPRIKA
- ⅛ TSP GARLIC POWDER

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Cook & Combine:** In a large skillet over medium heat, brown the sausage until fully cooked, then transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to remove excess grease. Set aside in a medium mixing bowl.
- 2. Sauté & Add:** Wipe out the skillet, then sauté the onion until translucent. Add the spinach and cook just until it wilts. Add the onion-spinach mix to the bowl with the sausage, then toss in the grated cheeses and cubed croissants.
- 3. Layer It Up:** Spread this delicious mixture into the bottom of an 8x8-inch baking dish, ensuring even distribution.
- 4. Whisk & Pour:** In a separate mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, then add the milk, half-and-half, dry mustard, salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder. Pour this egg mixture over the croissant mixture, making sure to soak every piece.
- 5. Chill Out:** Cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or preferably overnight for maximum flavor infusion.
- 6. Bake:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Bake the strata uncovered for 45–50 minutes, or until the center is set and the top is golden. Let it rest for 10 minutes before serving.

## ❖ Notes

- **Doubling Up:** If making a larger batch, use a 9x13-inch baking dish and bake for 50–60 minutes.
- **Storing Leftovers:** Place leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.
- **Freezing:** Wrap the strata in plastic wrap and foil, then freeze for up to 3–6 months.
- **Reheating:** For frozen strata, thaw in the fridge overnight, then bake at 350°F (175°C) for 20–25 minutes until warmed through. For quick reheats, microwave individual portions for 1–2 minutes.



# CLASSIC CINNAMON ROLLS WITH MAPLE ICING

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*These gooey cinnamon rolls with maple-infused frosting are the ultimate indulgence! They're perfect for a cozy morning treat or a sweet pick-me-up any time of day.*



## ✦ Ingredients

FOR THE DOUGH & FILLING:

- 1-QUART WHOLE MILK
- 1 CUP VEGETABLE OIL
- 1 CUP SUGAR
- 2 (0.25 OZ) PACKETS OF ACTIVE DRY YEAST
- 8 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR (PLUS AN EXTRA CUP, RESERVED)
- 1 HEAPING TSP BAKING POWDER
- 1 SCANT TSP BAKING SODA
- 1 HEAPING TBSP SALT
- PLENTY OF MELTED BUTTER (FOR FILLING)

- 2 CUPS SUGAR
- GENEROUS SPRINKLE OF GROUND CINNAMON

FOR THE MAPLE FROSTING

- 1 (2 LB) BAG POWDERED SUGAR
- 2 TSP MAPLE FLAVORING
- ½ CUP MILK
- ¼ CUP MELTED BUTTER
- ¼ CUP BREWED COFFEE
- ¼ TSP SALT



## ✦ Instructions

1. **Prep the Dough:** In a medium saucepan, heat the milk, vegetable oil, and sugar over medium heat until just below a boil. Remove from heat and cool to warm (110–115°F). Sprinkle the yeast over the mixture, letting it sit for 1 minute.
2. **Mix & Rise:** Add 8 cups of flour to the mixture, stirring until combined. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rise in a warm place for 1 hour.
3. **Finish the Dough:** After 1 hour, add baking powder, baking soda, salt, and the reserved 1 cup of flour. Stir until fully combined. You can use the dough immediately or refrigerate it for up to 3 days (chilling makes it easier to handle).
4. **Roll & Fill:** Divide the dough in half. On a floured surface, roll out half into a 30x10-inch rectangle (it should be thin). Spread ¾ to 1 cup of melted butter over the dough, then sprinkle generously with cinnamon and 1 cup of sugar. (More butter and sugar = more gooey goodness!)
5. **Roll & Slice:** Starting from the long edge farthest from you, roll the dough tightly toward you. Once rolled,

pinch the seam to seal, then place the seam-side down. Slice the roll into ½-inch pieces (each roll yields about 20–25 pieces).

6. **Prep Pans:** Pour a couple of teaspoons of melted butter into disposable foil cake pans or 9-inch round pans, swirling to coat. Arrange rolls in each pan without overcrowding (7–9 rolls per pan). Repeat the process with the remaining dough.
7. **Rise & Bake:** Preheat the oven to 375°F. Cover the pans with a kitchen towel and let the rolls rise on the countertop for at least 20 minutes. Bake uncovered for 15–18 minutes or until golden but not overly brown.
8. **Maple Frosting Magic:** While the rolls bake, whisk together the powdered sugar, milk, melted butter, coffee, salt, and maple flavoring until smooth. Adjust as needed for a thick but pourable consistency.
9. **Frost & Serve:** Remove rolls from the oven and immediately drizzle the maple icing generously over the tops, making sure to coat every edge. Let the rolls absorb the icing for an extra gooey finish.





# PERFECT PANCAKES

/FOZIL ZAYNIDDINOV, SHOPIFY DEVELOPER/

*Fozil's pancake-flipping skills are legendary—seriously, they sometimes reach the ceiling! This recipe brings the joy of simple, fluffy pancakes with a playful touch. Roll them up with chocolate, jam, or butter for a delicious breakfast treat.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 300 ML MILK
- 2-3 EGGS
- ½ TSP SALT
- 2-3 TBSP SUGAR (ADJUST TO TASTE)
- 1 TBSP OLIVE OR SUNFLOWER OIL
- OPTIONAL TOPPINGS: CHOCOLATE, BUTTER, OR JAM

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Blend Away:** Pour the milk into a blender, add the eggs, salt, sugar, and oil, and blend until smooth.
- 2. Prep the Pan:** While blending, heat a pan over medium heat and lightly coat it with olive oil.
- 3. Pour & Swirl:** Once the pan is hot, pour a bit of the batter and tilt the pan to spread it evenly.
- 4. Cook & Flip:** Let one side cook until golden, then flip (Fozil style, if you dare!) and cook the other side. Stack each finished pancake on a plate.
- 5. Serve:** Roll up each pancake with your favorite filling—whether it's chocolate, butter, or jam—and enjoy!



# COCKTAILS

Set the mood for your holiday gathering with cocktails that celebrate the season! This collection has a mix of everything—warming drinks, celebratory bubbles, and flavors that capture the essence of the holidays. So grab your shaker, pour something festive, and let's toast to good times and great company.





# SPIKED & HOT APPLE CIDER

/MORGAN CURSCHMAN, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER/

*The holidays have a way of evolving as our lives do, transforming cherished childhood traditions into new celebrations that fit the present. While the details may change, the warmth and magic of the season remain, offering a chance to celebrate love and togetherness in ways that are both familiar and refreshingly new.*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 2 QUARTS FRESH APPLE CIDER
- ½ CUP BROWN SUGAR
- 2 TSP CARDAMOM
- 10 WHOLE CLOVES
- 1 APPLE, PEELED AND CUT IN HALF
- 1 ORANGE, SLICED
- 1 TSP ALLSPICE
- ¼ TSP NUTMEG
- 1 CUP SPICED DARK RUM
- 8 CINNAMON STICKS (2 FOR EACH MUG AS GARNISH)

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## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prep the Apple:** Stick 5 cloves into each half of the apple.
- 2. Combine Ingredients:** In a large saucepan, add all ingredients except the rum. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat.
- 3. Simmer & Add Rum:** Once simmering, lower the heat, add the rum, and let it simmer gently on low for 20-30 minutes, allowing the flavors to meld.
- 4. Serve & Garnish:** Spoon the cider into mugs, removing the clove-studded apple. Garnish each mug with two cinnamon sticks for a festive holiday touch.



# CRANBERRY ORANGE WHISKEY COCKTAIL

/ALEX HRISTOPOULOS, SENIOR STRATEGIC PROGRAM MANAGER/

*Not typically a whiskey fan? This cocktail might just change your mind. I first whipped it up on a chilly New York night during the pandemic, and its cozy blend of tart, sweet, and spiced flavors instantly made it a winter favorite. Simple to make, it's a perfect addition to any holiday gathering—guaranteed to have guests coming back for seconds!*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 OZ UNSWEETENED CRANBERRY JUICE
- 3 OZ ORANGE JUICE (FRESHLY SQUEEZED, IF POSSIBLE)
- 2 OZ WHISKEY
- ½ OZ COINTREAU
- ½ OZ FRESHLY SQUEEZED LEMON JUICE
- ½ OZ SIMPLE SYRUP
- 2 SPRIGS OF THYME
- 2 OZ GINGER BEER

## ✦ Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients, except ginger beer, in a cocktail shaker filled with ice.
2. Shake vigorously for 30 seconds, then strain into a chilled glass.
3. Top with ginger beer and garnish with an orange peel and a sprig of fresh thyme, if desired.





# PEPPERMINT ESPRESSO MARTINIS

/MORGAN CURSCHMAN, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER/

*Who says parents can't pick up new favorites from us? Case in point: Espresso Martinis! Dad's so hooked that on every trip, he insists we bring the mini espresso maker and beans. After who-knows-how-many rounds, we decided it was time to shake things up with this holiday twist!*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 4 OZ VODKA
- 2 OZ KAHLUA
- 3 OZ FRESHLY BREWED ESPRESSO, COOLED
- 2 OZ HALF & HALF (OR NUTPODS OR CALIFIA FARMS PEPPERMINT MOCHA CREAMER FOR DAIRY-FREE)
- ¼ TSP PEPPERMINT EXTRACT
- CHOCOLATE SYRUP
- CRUSHED CANDY CANES
- 6 ESPRESSO BEANS

## ✦ Instructions

1. Dip the rim of two martini glasses in chocolate syrup to coat, then dip in crushed candy canes for a festive garnish.
2. Fill a cocktail shaker halfway with ice. Add vodka, Kahlua, espresso, cream, and peppermint extract.
3. Shake vigorously for 60 seconds, then divide the mixture evenly between the two glasses.
4. Top each glass with three espresso beans for a classic garnish.



# MUDSLIDE COCKTAIL

/TOMMY HARRIS, CHANNEL SALES MANAGER/

*For anyone who loves a dessert-style drink, this Mudslide Cocktail is an absolute must! With a blend of vodka, Irish cream, and coffee liqueur, it's sweet, creamy, and packed with flavor. Add chocolate syrup, a cherry, and a hint of cinnamon, and it's like a grown-up milkshake that's as fun to make as it is to drink!*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 8 CUPS CRUSHED ICE
- ¾ CUP (6 OUNCES) VODKA (SUCH AS ABSOLUT)
- ¾ CUP (6 OUNCES) COFFEE LIQUEUR (SUCH AS KAHLÚA), PLUS MORE FOR SERVING
- ¾ CUP (6 OUNCES) IRISH CREAM LIQUEUR (SUCH AS BAILEYS)
- CHOCOLATE SYRUP (OPTIONAL)
- MARASCHINO CHERRIES
- GROUND CINNAMON

## ✦ Instructions

1. **Blend the Ingredients:** In a blender, combine the crushed ice, vodka, coffee liqueur, and Irish cream liqueur. Blend until smooth, about 15 to 30 seconds.
2. **Prepare the Glasses:** If desired, drizzle chocolate syrup around the inside rim of each tumbler.
3. **Serve:** Pour the blended drink evenly into the prepared tumblers. Top each with a maraschino cherry and a dash of cinnamon. For an extra kick, drizzle 1 tablespoon of coffee liqueur into each straw before serving.





# YUZU COCKTAIL

/SORRA LEE, SENIOR DESIGNER/

*Looking for a drink that's crisp, citrusy, and a little unexpected? This Yuzu Cocktail has you covered! With the unique flavor of yuzu honey and the smooth kick of vodka, it's a cocktail that's light and refreshing.*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 1½ OZ VODKA
- 1 TBSP YUZU HONEY (ADJUST TO TASTE)
- ICE CUBES
- SPARKLING WATER (OPTIONAL)
- LEMON PEEL (FOR GARNISH)

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## ✦ Instructions

1. Combine yuzu honey and vodka in a shaker, shaking well until the honey is fully mixed with the vodka.
2. Fill a glass with ice cubes and pour the yuzu cocktail over the ice.
3. Add sparkling water if desired for a little fizz.
4. Garnish with a lemon peel for extra citrus.



# SOJU WATERMELON COCKTAIL

/SORRA LEE, SENIOR DESIGNER/

*For those moments when you need a refreshing break from holiday indulgence, this Soju Watermelon Cocktail is just the thing! Light, fruity, and served in a watermelon bowl, it's a cool contrast to heavier dishes and brings a little burst of summer into your holiday celebrations.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 LARGE WATERMELON (TO SERVE AS BOTH JUICE AND BOWL)
- 1 ½ CUPS SOJU
- ¼ CUP FRESH LIME JUICE
- 1 CUP SPARKLING WATER (OPTIONAL, FOR A LITTLE FIZZ)
- ICE CUBES
- LEMON OR LIME SLICES, FOR GARNISH (OPTIONAL)

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prepare the Watermelon Bowl:** Cut the watermelon in half. Scoop out the flesh from one half, reserving the juice and flesh to use in the cocktail, and set the empty watermelon shell aside as a serving bowl.
- 2. Mix the Cocktail:** In a large pitcher, combine the watermelon juice, soju, lime juice, and sparkling water (if using). Add ice cubes and stir well.
- 3. Serve:** Pour the mixture back into the hollowed-out watermelon half. Garnish with lemon or lime slices, if desired. Scoop and sip straight from the watermelon bowl!





# APPETIZERS

Holiday gatherings always seem to start around the appetizer table, where the food is small but the stories are anything but! As guests hover and mingle, there's a sense of excitement—someone's sharing a story from a holiday past, another's giving a laugh-out-loud travel tale, and suddenly, these little bites are sparking conversations that'll last all night.

These appetizers are crafted to be easy to eat but hard to forget, setting the stage for moments where food, laughter, and a good story make for the perfect holiday kickoff.







# SPICY GLAZED PECANS

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*These crunchy, sweet, and spicy pecans bring a little extra heat to your holiday snack spread! Perfect as a festive appetizer, a snack with drinks, or even as a thoughtful homemade gift, they're a crowd-pleaser that's sure to disappear quickly.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 TSP KOSHER SALT
- ½ TSP GROUND CUMIN
- ½ TO ¾ TSP CAYENNE PEPPER (ADJUST TO YOUR HEAT PREFERENCE)
- ½ TSP GROUND CINNAMON
- ½ TSP DRIED GROUND ORANGE PEEL
- ½ TSP SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1 LB PECAN HALVES
- 4 TBSP UNSALTED BUTTER, CUT INTO SMALL PIECES
- ¼ CUP + 2 TBSP PACKED BROWN SUGAR
- 3 TBSP WATER

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prep the Spice Mix:** In a small bowl, mix the cumin, cayenne, cinnamon, smoked paprika, and orange peel. Set aside.
- 2. Toast the Pecans:** Place the pecans in a 10-inch cast iron skillet over medium heat. Toast, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon or spatula, for 4–5 minutes until the pecans are fragrant and begin to brown.
- 3. Add the Flavor:** Sprinkle the spice mix over the pecans, stirring for 15–30 seconds until aromatic. Add the butter and stir until melted, then add the brown sugar and stir until combined.
- 4. Glaze It Up:** Pour in the water and stir for 2–3 minutes until the sugar dissolves and the nuts look shiny and glazed. Sprinkle with kosher salt, then remove from heat.
- 5. Cool & Store:** Spread the pecans evenly on a large piece of parchment paper or foil so they don't clump as they cool. Once completely cooled, transfer them to an airtight container.

## ✦ Storage Tips

Store these spicy pecans at room temperature for up to 3 weeks, or freeze them (tightly wrapped) for up to 3 months. Chances are they'll be gone before then!



# SOURDOUGH PRETZEL BITES

/MORGAN MULLOY, STRATEGIC ACCOUNT DIRECTOR/

*If these sourdough pretzel bites don't remind you of warm pretzels from the local bakery or a holiday carnival, nothing will! With a soft, chewy center and a golden crust, each bite is like a little trip down memory lane. Perfect for sharing—and sparking a few 'remember when' stories.*



## ✦ Ingredients

### FOR THE DOUGH:

- ½ CUP + 1 TBSP WARM WATER
- ½ TSP BROWN SUGAR
- ⅝ TSP ACTIVE DRY YEAST
- 100 GRAMS SOURDOUGH DISCARD (UNFED, AT ROOM TEMPERATURE)
- 2 CUPS FLOUR
- 1 TSP SALT
- 2 TBSP MELTED UNSALTED BUTTER

### FOR BOILING:

- 10 CUPS WATER
- ⅓ CUP BAKING SODA

### FOR TOPPING:

- 1 EGG, BEATEN WITH A SPLASH OF WATER (FOR EGG WASH)
- TOPPING OPTIONS: FLAKY SEA SALT, EVERYTHING BAGEL SEASONING

### MATERIALS:

- STAND MIXER WITH DOUGH HOOK (OPTIONAL)
- LARGE POT
- BAKING SHEET(S) LINED WITH PARCHMENT PAPER OR BAKING MAT

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Activate the Yeast:** In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine warm water and brown sugar. Add the yeast and let sit for at least 5 minutes, until the yeast looks foamy.
- 2. Make the Dough:** Add the sourdough discard, flour, and salt to the bowl, and mix on low speed. Pour in the melted butter while mixing. Once combined, increase to medium speed and knead until the dough is smooth. (You can also knead by hand if you prefer!)
- 3. Adjust Dough Consistency:** If the dough is too sticky, add flour 1 tbsp at a time. If it's too dry, add warm water 1 tbsp at a time. The dough should be sturdy and smooth, not sticky or hard.
- 4. First Rise:** Transfer the dough to a large, oiled bowl (tip: you can use the mixing bowl if you want to avoid extra dishes). Cover with plastic wrap and let rise for 60–90 minutes, until it has doubled in size.
- 5. Prep for Boiling and Baking:** Preheat the oven to 450°F. Bring 10 cups of water and ⅓ cup baking soda to a boil in a large pot. Line baking sheet(s) with parchment paper or a baking mat.
- 6. Shape the Pretzel Bites:** Turn the dough onto a clean work surface and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a 1-inch-thick rope, then cut into 1–1.5-inch pieces.
- 7. Boil the Pretzel Bites:** Working in small batches, drop the pretzel pieces into the boiling water for 20–30 seconds each. Use a slotted spoon to remove them and place them on the baking sheet.
- 8. Top & Bake:** Brush each pretzel bite with the egg wash and sprinkle with your chosen topping. Bake for 13–15 minutes, or until golden brown.
- 9. Serve:** Let cool slightly, then serve warm with mustard, queso, or any of your favorite dipping sauces!





# SPICY ROSEMARY ROASTED NUTS

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*If you need a snack that's festive, flavorful, and a little fancy, these spicy rosemary nuts are your holiday hero! They're easy to make, hard to resist, and make every gathering feel a little warmer and cozier.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- ¼ CUP FRESH ROSEMARY LEAVES, FINELY CHOPPED
- ½ TSP CAYENNE PEPPER
- PINCH OF RED PEPPER FLAKES (ADJUST TO YOUR HEAT PREFERENCE)
- 4 TSP FLAKY SEA SALT
- ¼ CUP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- 5 CUPS MIXED NUTS (UNSALTED; A MIX OF ALMONDS, PECANS, PISTACHIOS, ETC.)

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Preheat Oven:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and arrange the rack in the middle position.
- 2. Mix & Coat:** In a large bowl, combine the mixed nuts, chopped rosemary, cayenne pepper, red pepper flakes, sea salt, and olive oil. Stir well to ensure the nuts are evenly coated with the spices and oil.
- 3. Spread & Roast:** Spread the nuts in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the nuts are lightly browned and fragrant.
- 4. Cool & Serve:** Let the nuts cool on the baking sheet, then transfer to a bowl for serving.

## ❖ Storage Tips

Store any leftover nuts in an airtight container at room temperature to keep them fresh and crunchy.





# CRANBERRY-BASIL SPREAD

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*This creamy, savory, and slightly sweet spread is a holiday must-have! With the festive red of cranberries, fresh herbs, and a hint of crunch, it's perfect for pairing with crackers, veggies, or anything that could use a little holiday flair. Make it ahead to let the flavors meld into a delicious, crowd-pleasing dip!*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 1/3 CUP OLIVE OIL
- 2 (8 OZ) PACKAGES OF CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 3 TSP MINCED GARLIC
- 3 TBSP CHOPPED FRESH BASIL
- 3 TBSP CHOPPED FRESH PARSLEY
- 2/3 CUP CHOPPED WALNUTS (OR PECANS FOR A RICHER FLAVOR)
- 2/3 CUP DRIED CRANBERRIES

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Cream Together:** In a mixing bowl, combine the olive oil, cream cheese, and minced garlic. Blend with a mixer until smooth and creamy.
- 2. Add the Flavor:** Stir in the basil, parsley, walnuts (or pecans), and cranberries until evenly mixed.
- 3. Chill:** Cover and refrigerate for several hours or, ideally, overnight to let the flavors blend and develop.
- 4. Serve:** Serve with fresh veggies, and crackers, or even spread it on crostini for a festive appetizer.

## ❖ Pro Tips

Making this dip a day ahead enhances its flavor, so it's ready to go when the party starts!







# COKE WINGS

/SHEILA CHENG, ART DIRECTOR/

*Take your wings to the next level with this sweet and sticky Coke glaze! Marinated in scallion and ginger for a flavor-packed base, these wings are then simmered in Coke for that iconic caramelized finish. The result? A finger-licking appetizer that'll keep everyone coming back for more.*

## ✦ Ingredients

### FOR THE MARINATE:

- CHICKEN WINGS (AS MANY AS YOU LIKE)
- 2SCALLIONS, CHOPPED
- 3 THIN SLICES OF GINGER
- OYSTER SAUCE (TO TASTE)
- RICE WINE (TO TASTE)
- WHITE PEPPER FLAKES (TO TASTE)

### FOR THE SAUCE:

- 1 CAN OF COKE
- 1 TBSP SOY SAUCE
- 1 TBSP DARK SOY SAUCE (OR "OLD" SOY SAUCE FOR EXTRA RICHNESS)
- 1 TBSP SUGAR
- 1 TSP SALT

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prep the Wings:** Slice three shallow cuts on each side of the wings to help them soak up the marinade.
- 2. Marinate:** In a bowl, combine the wings with scallions, ginger slices, oyster sauce, rice wine, and white pepper flakes. Marinate for at least 20 minutes.
- 3. Sear the Wings:** Heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Fry the marinated wings until golden on both sides.
- 4. Add the Sauce:** Pour in the can of Coke, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, and salt. Cook on medium heat for about 30 minutes.
- 5. Caramelize:** Turn the heat high and cook until the sauce thickens and the wings are coated in a glossy, sticky glaze.

## ❖ Serving Tips

These wings are best enjoyed warm and can be garnished with fresh scallions or sesame seeds for extra flavor and a festive look!





# FESTIVE CHARCUTERIE TREE

/SAMANTHA LOPEZ, STRATEGIC PROGRAM MANAGER/

*This easy yet eye-catching charcuterie tree brings all the holiday cheer to your table! With layers of cheese, salami, and tasty extras arranged in the shape of a holiday tree, it's a fun way to serve up everyone's favorite savory bites. This simple appetizer is guaranteed to impress—even though it's surprisingly quick to make!*



## ✦ Ingredients

- CHEESES: OPT FOR HARD CHEESES FOR BETTER STRUCTURE—TRY A MIX OF COLORS AND FLAVORS LIKE SHARP CHEDDAR, COLBY JACK, GOUDA, AND MINI MOZZARELLA BALLS.
- SALAMI: MINI SAMPLER PACKS WORK WELL, OR FOLD LARGER SLICES BEFORE PINNING FOR A COMPACT LOOK.
- EXTRAS: OLIVES, MINI PICKLES, OR ANY FAVORITE CHARCUTERIE ADD-ONS.
- STYROFOAM CONE (MEDIUM SIZE)
- TOOTHPICKS

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prep the Base:** Wrap the Styrofoam cone in plastic wrap to keep any Styrofoam bits out of the food.
- 2. Cut & Skewer:** Cut cheeses into small square pieces, then skewer each piece of cheese, salami, olive, or extra onto a toothpick.
- 3. Assemble the Tree:** Start from the base of the cone, working in columns or rows up the cone. Pin each toothpick into the cone, angling slightly upward as you move up to create a “tree” effect. Group each type of food together for a neat, colorful pattern!
- 4. Top it Off:** Cut one piece of cheese into a star shape and place it at the top for that festive finishing touch!

## ❖ Pro Tips

Making this dip a day ahead enhances its flavor, so it's ready to go when the party starts!





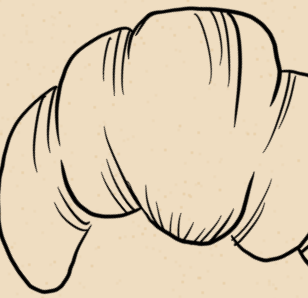
# PIZZA DIP

/MORGAN MULLOY, STRATEGIC ACCOUNT DIRECTOR/

*All the best parts of pizza... in dip form! This melty, cheesy pizza dip is loaded with gooey mozzarella, savory sauce, and just the right hint of seasoning. Whether you're dipping crostinis, crackers, or classic chips, every bite brings you that warm, comforting pizza flavor we all love.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 8 OZ CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 1 TSP ITALIAN SEASONING
- ½ TSP GARLIC POWDER
- 2 CUPS SHREDDED MOZZARELLA CHEESE
- ¼ CUP GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE
- 1 CUP PIZZA OR MARINARA SAUCE
- PEPPERONI SLICES (OPTIONAL)



## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Preheat & Prep:** Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a pie dish or baking dish with cooking spray.
- 2. Creamy Base:** In a mixing bowl, combine the softened cream cheese, Italian seasoning, and garlic powder until smooth. A handheld mixer works well for this step!
- 3. Layer It Up:** Spread the cream cheese mixture evenly over the bottom of the baking dish. Sprinkle about 1 cup of mozzarella cheese over the cream cheese layer. Then, evenly spread the pizza or marinara sauce over the cheese layer. Finish with the remaining mozzarella and Parmesan cheese.
- 4. Top It Off:** If you're adding pepperoni, cut the slices into quarters and sprinkle them over the top. (Or just cover half for a mix of options.) For maximum flavor, aim for a piece of pepperoni in every bite!
- 5. Bake & Serve:** Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Let it cool for a few minutes, then dive in! Serve with homemade crostinis, baguette slices, crackers, or chips for dipping.







# SUGARED PECANS

/MADDIE THUMMA, STRATEGIC PROGRAM MANAGER/

*Meet the holiday snack that disappears faster than you can say ‘sugar and spice’! These sugared pecans are crunchy, sweet, and perfect for snacking, sharing, or topping off your favorite holiday treats. Put them out for guests, wrap them up as gifts, or keep them all to yourself—we won’t judge!*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 CUP SUGAR
- ½ CUP BROWN SUGAR
- ¼ CUP MILK
- 1 TBSP BUTTER
- 2 TSP VANILLA
- APPROXIMATELY 3 CUPS OF PECANS

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Combine Ingredients:** In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, brown sugar, milk, and butter.
- 2. Bring to a Boil:** Heat the mixture until it reaches a full rolling boil. Let it boil for 1½ minutes.
- 3. Add Vanilla & Thicken:** Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Beat the mixture until it begins to thicken.
- 3. Coat the Pecans:** Add the pecans, stirring continuously until the mixture is creamy and coats the pecans evenly.
- 4. Separate & Cool:** Pour the pecans onto wax paper. Use two forks to separate them carefully, as they’ll be hot. Let cool before enjoying!





# BLACK EYED PEAS

/MADDIE THUMMA, STRATEGIC PROGRAM MANAGER/

*Ready to start the new year with a big scoop of Southern charm and good vibes? This black-eyed peas dish is said to bring luck, but even if it doesn't, it's still a win with its tender veggies, juicy tomatoes, and a hint of basil. Cozy, tasty, and maybe even lucky—now that's a recipe for a great start!*

## ✦ Ingredients

- BELL PEPPER – AMOUNT, TYPE, & VARIETY TO TASTE
- ONION – AMOUNT, TYPE, & VARIETY TO TASTE
- GARLIC – AMOUNT, TYPE, & VARIETY TO TASTE
- BASIL – AMOUNT, TYPE, & VARIETY TO TASTE
- 1 CAN OF TOMATOES
- 2 CANS OF BLACK-EYED PEAS
- ¼ CUP OLIVE OIL
- ¼ CUP BUTTER OR MARGARINE

## ✦ Instructions

1. **Sauté the Veggies:** Chop the bell pepper, onion, garlic, and basil. Sauté them in olive oil and butter until tender and fragrant.
2. **Add Tomatoes and Season:** Add the canned tomatoes, basil, and salt to taste.
3. **Simmer the Peas:** Add the black-eyed peas and let the mixture simmer on low heat until everything is warm and the flavors meld together.



# *SALADS*



As we wrap up the year and gather around the table, a fresh salad is a welcome contrast to the hearty holiday dishes we love. Winter salads bring a unique blend of flavors—think sweet and tangy citrus, crunchy nuts, roasted veggies, and dark, leafy greens. These salads add balance and brightness to any meal, celebrating the season while giving everyone a refreshing bite between festive treats.





# FALL SALAD

/SAMANTHA LOPEZ, STRATEGIC PROGRAM MANAGER/

*This colorful, flavorful salad brings together the best of fall with crisp apples, crunchy pepitas, and crispy prosciutto. Topped with a touch of balsamic and olive oil, this salad is perfect as a side dish or a light main that's packed with seasonal flavor.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 BAG OF BABY KALE
- 1 CONTAINER OF POMEGRANATE SEEDS
- ½ CUP PEPITAS (PUMPKIN SEEDS)
- ⅓ CUP HONEY OR MAPLE SYRUP
- SPRINKLE OF SALT
- 2 APPLES, CUBED
- 4 SLICES PROSCIUTTO, TORN INTO PIECES
- ¼ CUP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
- ¼ CUP OLIVE OIL

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prep for Roasting:** Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2. Arrange Ingredients:** On one half of the baking sheet, spread out the torn prosciutto. On the other half, mix the pepitas with honey or maple syrup and a sprinkle of salt, then lay them flat on the sheet.
- 3. Roast & Crisp:** Roast for 10–15 minutes, or until the prosciutto is crispy and the pepita mixture has hardened. You may need to remove the prosciutto first if it crisps up quickly. Let the pepita mix cool slightly, then break it into clusters.
- 4. Assemble the Salad:** In a large serving bowl, add the baby kale as the base. Top with cubed apples, crispy prosciutto, pomegranate seeds, and the pepita clusters.
- 5. Dress & Serve:** Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and olive oil, then toss gently to combine. Serve and enjoy!



# EGGPLANT AND BELL PEPPER SALAD

/ZAIN ALAMI, MARKETING MANAGER/

*This eggplant and bell pepper salad is all about big flavors and beautiful colors. With caramelized eggplant, juicy bell peppers, and a zingy balsamic dressing, every bite is a delightful balance of savory, sweet, and tangy. It's ideal for serving chilled as a refreshing side dish that adds a pop of color and flavor to any table.*



## ✦ Ingredients

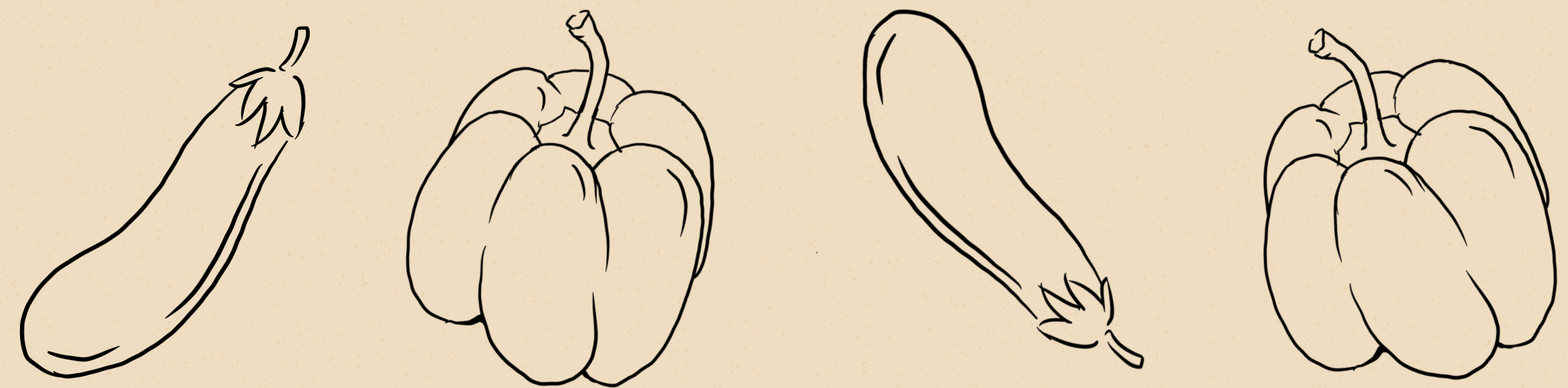
- 1-2 MEDIUM EGGPLANTS, PEELED IN STRIPES AND CUT INTO 1-INCH CUBES
- 1 RED BELL PEPPER, CUT INTO SQUARES
- 1 ORANGE BELL PEPPER, CUT INTO SQUARES
- 1 YELLOW BELL PEPPER, CUT INTO SQUARES
- 1 LARGE RED ONION, SLICED THINLY
- 2-3 HANDFULS WALNUTS, BROKEN INTO SMALLER PIECES

### FOR THE DRESSING:

- ¼ CUP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
- ⅓ CUP OLIVE OIL
- 2 TBSP MUSTARD
- 1 TBSP DRIED MINT (OPTIONAL)
- SALT AND BLACK PEPPER, TO TASTE

## ✦ Instructions

1. **Roast the Eggplant:** Preheat the air fryer to 400°F. Lightly brush or dip the eggplant cubes in olive oil and air fry for about 20 minutes, flipping halfway through, until they're golden on the outside and tender on the inside.
2. **Prep the Veggies:** While the eggplant cooks, slice the bell peppers into squares, cut the walnuts into small pieces, and slice the red onion thinly.
3. **Make the Dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk together the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, mustard, salt, black pepper, and dried mint if using.
4. **Assemble the Salad:** In a large bowl, combine the roasted eggplant, bell peppers, walnuts, and red onion. Pour most of the dressing over the salad and gently toss to coat.
5. **Chill & Marinate:** Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 hours, allowing the flavors to meld.
6. **Serve:** About 30 minutes before serving, remove the salad from the fridge, add any remaining dressing, give it a final toss, and enjoy!







# CHICKEN & AVOCADO SALAD

/FOZIL ZAYNIDDINOV, SHOPIFY DEVELOPER/

*Add a touch of freshness to your holiday spread with this vibrant Chicken & Avocado Salad! Perfect for balancing out those hearty holiday dishes, this salad is a fresh twist that everyone will enjoy.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 2-3 EGGS
- 1 CHICKEN FILLET, CHOPPED INTO SMALL PIECES
- 1 TOMATO, DICED
- 1 CUCUMBER, DICED
- 1 AVOCADO, DICED
- A HANDFUL OF GREENS (SUCH AS LETTUCE, SPINACH, OR ARUGULA), CHOPPED
- MAYONNAISE, TO TASTE
- OLIVE OIL, TO TASTE
- SALT, TO TASTE

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prepare the Eggs:** Boil the eggs until hard-boiled (about 8-10 minutes). Remove the yolks and chop the egg whites into small pieces.
- 2. Cook the Chicken:** Season the chicken with salt, then chop it into small pieces. In a skillet, heat a little olive oil and fry the chicken until cooked through and golden brown. Set aside to cool slightly.
- 3. Chop the Vegetables:** Dice the tomato, cucumber, avocado, and greens into bite-sized pieces.
- 4. Combine Ingredients:** In a large bowl, add the chopped egg whites, cooked chicken, diced vegetables, and greens.
- 5. Season:** Sprinkle with salt and drizzle with olive oil.
- 6. Add Mayonnaise:** Add mayonnaise to taste, mixing everything together until well combined. Adjust mayonnaise based on preference for creaminess.
- 7. Serve:** Serve chilled or at room temperature for a fresh, hearty salad that's perfect for any meal.



# GRAPE SALAD

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*This Grape Salad brings all the festive flair without any fuss! With sweet grapes in a creamy dressing and a sprinkle of brown sugar and pecans, it's a refreshing yet indulgent side that's sure to get people talking. Serve it up as a light, fruity twist on the holiday table.*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 PACKAGE (8 OZ) CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 1 CUP (8 OZ) SOUR CREAM
- 1/3 CUP SUGAR
- 2 TEASPOONS VANILLA EXTRACT
- 2 POUNDS SEEDLESS RED GRAPES
- 2 POUNDS SEEDLESS GREEN GRAPES
- 3 TABLESPOONS BROWN SUGAR
- 3 TABLESPOONS CHOPPED PECANS

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prepare the Grapes:** Wash and stem the red and green grapes. Make sure they are thoroughly dry. Set aside.
- 2. Make the Creamy Mixture:** In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sour cream, sugar, and vanilla extract until smooth and well-blended.
- 3. Combine:** Add the grapes to the bowl and toss them in the cream mixture until evenly coated.
- 4. Chill:** Transfer the grape salad to a serving bowl. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve, allowing the flavors to meld.
- 5. Finish with Toppings:** Just before serving, sprinkle the top of the salad with brown sugar and chopped pecans for added sweetness and crunch.



# *MAINS*

Your holiday feast deserves a centerpiece as special as the season! This collection celebrates both the tried-and-true recipes you love and some fresh ideas to spark a little excitement. Whether you're craving a twist on a classic or ready for something completely different, these recipes bring variety and flavor to the holiday table.



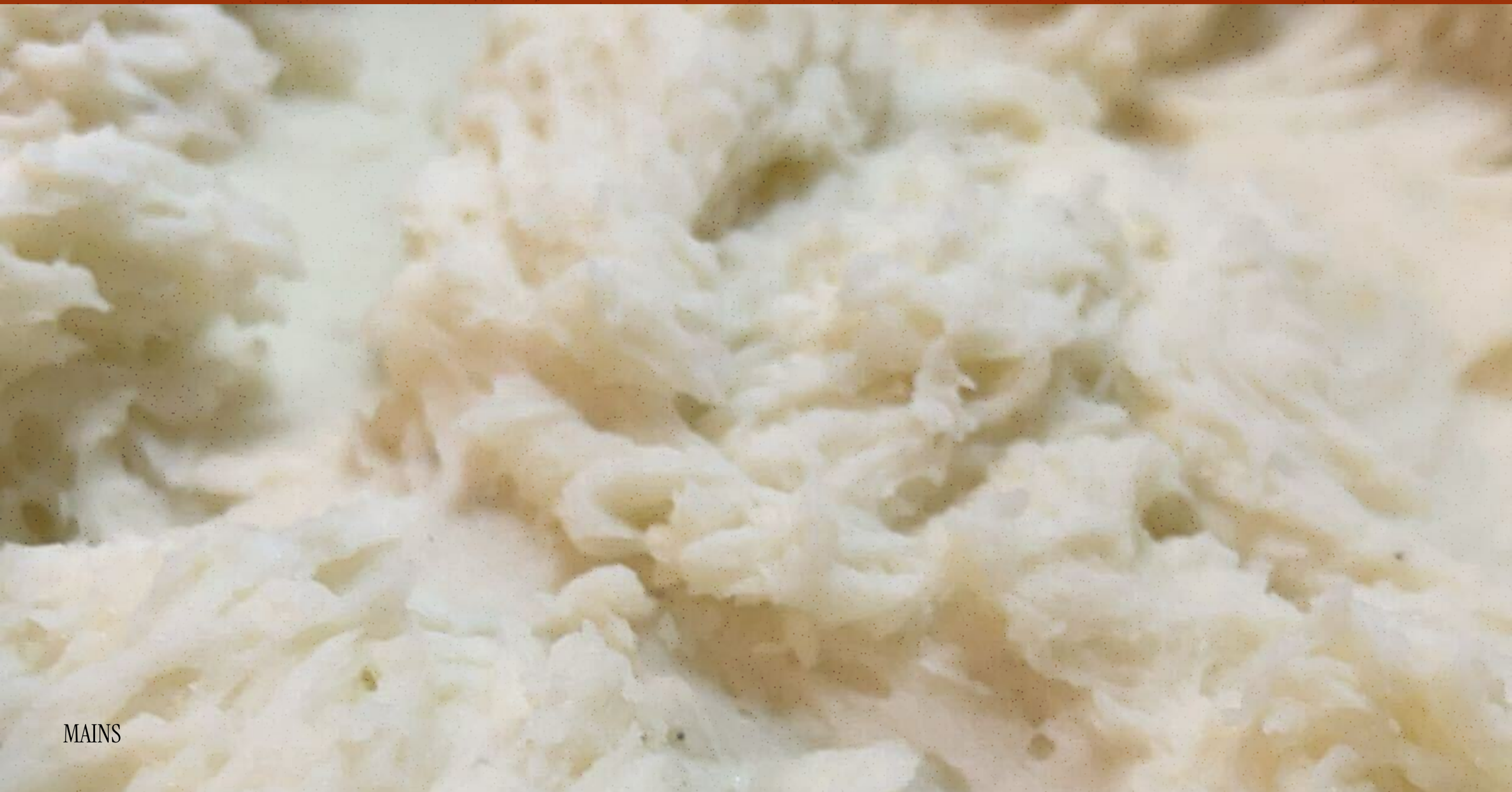


# MASHED POTATOES

/MORGAN MULLOY, STRATEGIC ACCOUNT DIRECTOR/

*What's a holiday table without mashed potatoes? This recipe is all about creating a delicious, creamy base that you can make your own. In our family, everyone has their twist—some like it cheesy, others with a hint of garlic or a dollop of sour cream.*

*And Grandma's rule? 'A potato per person,' always!*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 5 LARGE POTATOES (RUSSET OR GOLD)
- ¼ CUP MILK
- ¾ STICK OF BUTTER, CUT INTO SMALL CHUNKS
- SALT
- PEPPER
- OPTIONAL ADDITIONS: GARLIC POWDER, GARLIC SALT, PARMESAN CHEESE, SOUR CREAM, PARSLEY, FRESH GARLIC—GET CREATIVE!

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prep the Potatoes:** Clean and peel the potatoes. Cut each potato in half, then slice each half into halves or thirds lengthwise, depending on size. Finally, chop into 1-inch chunks for even cooking.
- 2. Cook the Potatoes:** Add the potato chunks to a large pot and fill with water until fully submerged. Salt the water generously. Bring to a boil and cook for about 10 minutes, or until a fork slides easily into the potatoes. (Pro tip: if your water starts bubbling up too high, lay a wooden spoon across the top of the pot to prevent overflow.)
- 3. Drain and Mash:** Drain the potatoes well. You can either keep them in the pot (fewer dishes!) or transfer to a mixing bowl. Add the milk and butter. Use a potato masher, handheld mixer, or stand mixer to blend until smooth. For chunkier mashed potatoes, blend a little less.
- 4. Season and Customize:** Now you have your base! Season with salt, pepper, and any optional add-ins, such as garlic salt, Parmesan cheese, or sour cream. As my mom always said, “You can add more, but you can’t take it away”—so add a bit at a time, taste, and adjust to find your perfect flavor.
- 5. Bonus:** For an extra-special finish, transfer the mashed potatoes to a baking dish, top with cheese, and bake at 400°F for about 20 minutes, or broil for a few minutes until golden and bubbly.





# PUMPKIN RISOTTO WITH BACON & PARMESAN

/VALENTINE COGET, HEAD OF DELIVERY/

*Pumpkin, bacon, and parmesan—what’s not to love? This Pumpkin Risotto with Bacon & Parmesan is a cozy, delicious twist on a classic that’s perfect for fall gatherings. I’m such a pasta and risotto lover that I could eat this year-round, but it’s especially perfect for Thanksgiving. It’s been a hit at my table for the last three years, and every bite is as delicious as the first time I made it!*

## ✦ Ingredients

- ½ LB BACON, DICED
- 1 SMALL ONION, FINELY DICED
- 1 QT VEGETABLE OR CHICKEN STOCK
- 1 CUP PUMPKIN PUREE
- 1 SMALL BUNCH FRESH THYME SPRIGS, TIED WITH KITCHEN TWINE
- KOSHER SALT, TO TASTE
- FRESHLY CRACKED BLACK PEPPER, TO TASTE
- 1 CUP ARBORIO RICE
- ½ CUP WHITE WINE
- 2 TBSP BUTTER
- 1 TBSP HONEY
- ¾ CUP FRESHLY GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE

## ✦ Instructions

1. **Cook the Bacon:** In a 5–6 qt Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot, spread the diced bacon in an even layer over medium heat. Cook for about 3 minutes, until it starts to release some fat and sizzle, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until bacon is crisp, about 12 more minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate.
2. **Sauté the Onion:** Add the diced onion to the hot bacon fat in the pot. Sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes, or until softened.
3. **Warm the Stock and Pumpkin:** In a separate small saucepan, heat the stock over medium-low heat until it’s just barely simmering. Whisk in the pumpkin puree, and keep the mixture warm over low heat.
4. **Toast the Rice:** Add the thyme sprigs, a pinch of kosher salt, and a few cracks of black pepper to the onions. Stir in the arborio rice and allow it to toast in the pot for about 1 minute.
5. **Deglaze with White Wine:** Add the white wine to the pot and stir until the rice has absorbed the liquid.
6. **Cook the Risotto:** Start off by adding the warm pumpkin stock to the pot, one ladleful (about ½ cup) at a time, stirring constantly until each addition is absorbed before adding more. Continue until all of the liquid is added, and the rice is tender and creamy. This process should take about 20–25 minutes.
7. **Finish the Risotto:** Remove the thyme sprigs from the pot. Stir in the butter, honey, and ½ cup of the parmesan cheese. Stir until the butter and cheese have melted and are fully incorporated.
8. **Serve and Garnish:** Serve the risotto immediately, garnishing with the crispy bacon, remaining ¼ cup of parmesan, and additional black pepper, if desired.





# BECHAMEL PASTA BAKE

/ZAIN ALAMI, MARKETING MANAGER/

*This Bechamel Pasta Bake holds a special place in my heart as one of the first dishes I ever cooked. It was a childhood favorite, so naturally, I thought I'd make extra for leftovers. But every time, no matter how much I prepare, it vanishes right off the table. Now I know better—this dish is too irresistible to last until the next day!*

*Yes, you'll use a few pots, but trust me—it's absolutely worth it.*

## ✦ Ingredients

### BECHAMEL SAUCE:

- 4 CUPS WHOLE MILK
- 6 TBSP UNSALTED BUTTER
- 6 TBSP FLOUR
- SALT & PEPPER, TO TASTE
- PINCH OF GROUND NUTMEG
- PINCH OF GROUND CINNAMON

### PASTA:

- 12 OZ PENNE PASTA, FUSILLI OR SHELLS, COOKED AL DENTE
- 1 CUP SHREDDED MOZZARELLA CHEESE

### MEAT SAUCE:

- 1 LB GROUND BEEF
- 4 TBSP TOMATO PASTE
- 1/2 CUP STOCK (VEGETABLE, CHICKEN, OR BEEF)
- 1 CUP DICED TOMATOES
- 1 ONION, DICED
- 4 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1.5 TBSP OREGANO
- CINNAMON TO TASTE
- SALT & PEPPER, TO TASTE
- 1 TBSP GARLIC POWDER
- 1 TBSP OLIVE OIL
- 3 TBSP PARMESAN CHEESE

## ✦ Instructions

### Preparing The Pasta:

1. **Cook the Pasta:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until al dente, following the package instructions.
2. **Drain:** Once cooked, drain the pasta in a colander and let it cool slightly.

### Preparing The Meat Sauce:

1. **Heat the Olive Oil:** In a large pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat.
2. **Sauté the Aromatics:** Add the minced onions and garlic to the pan, cooking for a few minutes until they're soft and fragrant.
3. **Add the Tomatoes:** Add the cherry tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, and stir. Let the tomatoes cook down slightly.
4. **Cook the Ground Beef:** Add the ground beef to the pan, breaking it apart into small pieces. Stir it together with the onions, garlic, and tomatoes until well combined.

3. **Season Slightly:** Season lightly with salt, pepper, and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.

5. **Season the Meat:** Season with salt, pepper, oregano, cinnamon, and garlic powder. Add the tomato paste, stirring to coat the meat, and blend the flavors.
6. **Simmer with Stock:** Pour in the stock and mix everything together. Allow the sauce to come to a gentle simmer, letting the flavors meld and the sauce thicken for about 5–7 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
7. **Set Aside:** Once the sauce is hearty and flavorful, set it aside until ready to assemble the pasta bake.



#### Preparing Béchamel Sauce:

1. **Melt the Butter:** In a pot over medium heat, add the butter and let it melt completely.
2. **Make the Roux:** Add the flour to the melted butter, stirring continuously until the mixture is smooth and well combined. Allow the roux to cook for a few minutes, until lightly caramelized but not too brown. (The secret to a perfect béchamel sauce is an equal amount of butter and flour.)
3. **Incorporate the Milk:** Gradually add 1 cup of room-temperature milk at a time, stirring constantly to prevent lumps and to avoid burning. Continue stirring throughout this process.

#### Assembly:

1. **Prepare the Pan:** Preheat the oven to 400°F. Spray a lasagna pan with cooking spray.
2. **Layer the Pasta:** Spread half of your cooked pasta evenly across the bottom of the prepared pan.
3. **Add Béchamel:** Spread over a thin layer of your white sauce over the pasta. Use your fork to mix into the pasta making sure all are coated.
4. **Add the Meat Sauce:** Spread the meat sauce evenly over the pasta layer.
5. **Add Layer 2 of Pasta:** Add the remaining pasta. You want to make sure the two layers are kind of even.

4. **Season:** Add salt, pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg to taste, and keep stirring over medium heat until the sauce starts to thicken. This should take a few minutes.
5. **Set Aside:** When the béchamel is ready, remove it from heat and set aside. Note that the sauce will thicken as it cools. There's is no right and wrong to the thickness, you'll just want a consistency that is easy enough to spread.

6. **Top with Béchamel Sauce:** Pour the béchamel sauce over your pasta. If the béchamel has thickened too much, warm it slightly on the stovetop until it reaches a pourable consistency.
7. **Final Seasoning:** Sprinkle the top with a bit more salt, pepper, and Mozzarella cheese.
8. **Bake:** Place the pan in the preheated oven and bake, uncovered, for about 30 minutes, or until the top is lightly browned.
9. **Cool Before Serving:** Remove from the oven and let the dish cool to room temperature for about 30 minutes to allow the béchamel to set before slicing and serving.







# STUFFED ARTICHOKEs

/NICOLE MURRAY, SENIOR SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT/

*Bring a little festive flair to your table with these Stuffed Artichokes!  
Filled with garlicky, cheesy breadcrumbs, each artichoke is like a  
holiday gift waiting to be unwrapped leaf by leaf.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 4 LARGE ARTICHOKEs
- A FEW SLICES OF BREAD, TORN INTO SMALL PIECES
- 2-4 CUPS ITALIAN BREADCRUMBS (PREFERABLY FROM A BLUE PROGRESSO CAN)
- A FEW CLOVES OF GARLIC, MINCED
- 1/4 CUP PARMESAN CHEESE
- LEMON JUICE (FOR DIPPING)
- OLIVE OIL
- SALT AND PEPPER

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prepare the Filling:** In a bowl, mix together the torn bread pieces, Italian breadcrumbs, minced garlic, Parmesan cheese, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, salt, and pepper. Adjust the amount of breadcrumbs and olive oil until the mixture holds together like play dough. If needed, add a small amount of water to soften the mixture.
- 2. Prepare the Artichokes:**
  - Cut off the bottom of each artichoke, leaving about 1-1.5 inches of stem so they can stand upright. Make sure the bottom is flat.
  - Trim the tops of the artichoke leaves, removing any sharp, spiky tips.
  - Rinse each artichoke under cold water, gently pulling the leaves open to create space for the filling.
  - Dip the cut bottom of the artichoke stem in lemon juice to prevent browning.
- 3. Stuff the Artichokes:** Place about 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of the bread mixture between each leaf of the artichoke, pressing gently to secure the filling.
- 4. Cook the Artichokes:** Stand the stuffed artichokes upright in a pot, with the leaves facing up. Add water to the pot until it reaches the bottom of the artichokes.
- 5. Steam:** Bring the water to a boil, then cover and reduce the heat to a simmer. Steam the artichokes for about 1 hour, checking occasionally and adding more water if needed.
- 6. Serve:** To eat, pull off each leaf and scrape off the bread mixture with your teeth; discard the leaves. Once all the leaves are removed, avoid eating the middle hairy part (the choke). Scrape off the hairs to reveal the artichoke heart, which you can enjoy.



# TTEOK-BOKKI

/SORRA LEE, SENIOR DESIGNER/

*Bring a taste of Korea to your holiday table with this delightful dish! Korean cuisine has a way of capturing elegance and comfort in every bite, making it a unique addition to any festive spread. With its balanced flavors and beautiful presentation, this dish is sure to impress and bring a joyful twist to your celebrations.*



## ✦ Ingredients

### FOR THE BROTH:

- 4 CUPS WATER
- 2-3 PIECES DRIED KELP

### FOR THE SEASONING:

- 2 TBSP GOCHUJANG (KOREAN RED PEPPER PASTE)
- 1 TBSP GOCHUGARU (KOREAN RED PEPPER POWDER)
- 1 TBSP SOY SAUCE
- 1 TBSP SUGAR

### MAIN INGREDIENTS:

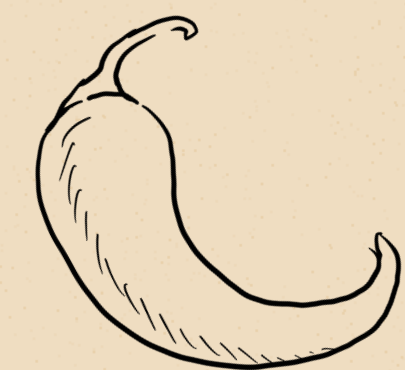
- 1 LB KOREAN RICE CAKES (TTEOK), SOAKED IN WARM WATER IF HARD
- 1/2 LB KOREAN FISH CAKES, CUT INTO BITE-SIZED PIECES

### OPTIONAL GARNISH:

- CHOPPED GREEN ONIONS
- BOILED EGG, HALVED

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prepare the Broth:** In a large pot, add 4 cups of water and the dried kelp. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 10 minutes. Remove the kelp and discard, leaving the broth in the pot.
- 2. Make the Seasoning:** In a small bowl, mix the gochujang, gochugaru, soy sauce, and sugar until well combined.
- 3. Cook the Tteok-bokki:** Add the rice cakes and fish cakes to the broth, then stir in the seasoning mixture. Bring the pot to a simmer, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, and cook until the rice cakes are soft and the sauce has thickened, about 10-15 minutes.
- 4. Add Garnishes:** If desired, add chopped green onions and halved boiled eggs to the pot, stirring gently to combine.
- 5. Serve:** Enjoy your Tteok-bokki hot, with extra green onions or eggs as garnish!







# UZBEK PLOV

/NODIRBEK VOSITOV, SHOPIFY DEVELOPER/

*This beloved dish brings together tender meat, fragrant rice, and sweet carrots in a symphony of flavor. Perfect for sharing, Plov is as comforting as it is impressive—a true centerpiece for any gathering.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 500 G LAMB OR BEEF, CUBED
- 500 G RICE
- 2–3 MEDIUM CARROTS, JULIENNED
- 2 MEDIUM ONIONS, SLICED
- 1/3 CUP (80 ML) VEGETABLE OIL
- 3 CUPS (750 ML) WATER
- SALT, TO TASTE
- OPTIONAL: HANDFUL OF RAISINS, BARBERRIES, OR POMEGRANATE SEEDS FOR A SWEET TOUCH

## ✦ Instructions

### Prep Work:

1. Wash the rice: Rinse the rice under cold water until the water runs clear. Soak in cold water while preparing the other ingredients.
2. Prepare the vegetables: Julienne the carrots and slice the onions.

### Cook the Plov:

1. Heat the oil: In a large, heavy-bottomed pot (or Kazan if you have one), heat vegetable oil over medium heat until shimmering.
2. Brown the meat: Add the cubed lamb or beef to the pot and fry until browned on all sides, about 5–7 minutes.
3. Sauté the onions: Stir in the sliced onions and cook until golden, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the carrots: Toss in the julienned carrots and cook for another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Season: Sprinkle salt over the mixture and stir well.
6. Simmer: Add 2 cups of water, cover, and let the mixture simmer for 20 minutes to tenderize the meat and blend flavors.

### Layer the rice:

1. Drain and layer: Drain the soaked rice and carefully layer it over the meat and vegetable mixture—do not stir.
2. Add water: Gently pour the remaining 1 cup of water over the rice, ensuring the surface is evenly covered. Level the rice with the back of a spoon.
3. Steam: Cover the pot with a lid, reduce the heat to low, and steam for 30–40 minutes until the rice is cooked and the water is absorbed. Resist the urge to stir during this time!

### Finish & Serve:

1. Fluff it up: Gently mix the rice with the meat and vegetables to combine.
2. Plate and garnish: Arrange the plov on a large serving platter and top with raisins, barberries, or pomegranate seeds if you like a touch of sweetness.



# *DESSERTS*

Bring on the sugar, spice, and everything nice! From timeless classics to fun new flavors, these recipes are all about bringing the holiday spirit to life.

The truth is, there's nothing quite like baking with friends, family, or a partner. The laughter, the flour-covered aprons, and the excitement of creating something delicious together make these desserts a tad bit sweeter.





# APPLE SLICE CAKE

/MADDIE THUMMA, STRATEGIC PROGRAM MANAGER/

*Apple Slice Cake is a dessert that's both simple and special! With layers of fresh apple, crunchy nuts, and a hint of cinnamon, it's a cake that brings out all the best flavors of fall. Easy to make and oh-so-delicious, it's perfect for everything from holiday dinners to weekday treats.*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 1¾ CUPS SUGAR
- 1 CUP OIL
- 3 EGGS
- 2 CUPS FLOUR
- 1 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
- 1 TEASPOON SALT
- 1 TEASPOON CINNAMON
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA
- 4 CUPS SLICED APPLES
- 1 CUP OF YOUR CHOICE OF NUTS (GENERALLY WALNUTS)

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Mix Wet Ingredients:** In a large bowl, mix the sugar, oil, and eggs until well combined.
- 2. Add Dry Ingredients:** Add flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and vanilla to the mixture. Stir until just combined.
- 3. Fold in Apples and Nuts:** Gently fold in the sliced apples and nuts until evenly distributed.
- 4. Bake:** Pour the batter into a greased and floured 13x9 pan. Bake at 350°F for 45 to 60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.



# NO-BAKE COFFEE CAKE

/ZAIN ALAMI, MARKETING MANAGER/

*For those who crave a little caffeine with their dessert, this cold dessert will hit all the right spots! Light, creamy, and layered with coffee-soaked biscuits, it's a refreshing treat with just the right hint of coffee flavor. Perfect for gatherings, this cake is a no-bake crowd-pleaser that's easy to make ahead and even easier to enjoy.*

## ✦ Ingredients

FOR THE CREAM LAYER:

- 1½ PINTS HEAVY CREAM
- 1½ TEASPOONS VANILLA
- ¾ CAN SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK
- ½ TABLESPOON INSTANT COFFEE

FOR THE BISCUIT LAYER:

- 4 TABLESPOONS INSTANT COFFEE
- 1½ CUPS HOT WATER
- 2½ SLEEVES TEA BISCUITS (ABOUT 600 GRAMS, GRAHAM CRACKERS ALSO WORK)

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Make the Cream Layer:** In a mixing bowl, combine the heavy cream, vanilla, sweetened condensed milk, and instant coffee. Use a hand or stand mixer to beat until soft peaks form. The cream should be thick but spreadable (not as stiff as whipped cream). Set aside.
- 2. Prepare the Coffee Mixture for Biscuits:** In a separate bowl, dissolve the instant coffee in hot water. Alternatively, use your coffee machine to make one long cup of coffee.
- 3. Allow Coffee to Cool:** Let the coffee mixture cool slightly before dipping the biscuits. This step is essential to keep the biscuits from dissolving and breaking when soaked.
- 4. Assemble the Cake:** Dip each tea biscuit into the coffee mixture briefly, shaking off any excess liquid. Arrange a layer of dipped biscuits on the bottom of a 9×13 pan. Spread a layer of cream over the biscuits, followed by another layer of dipped biscuits, then more cream. Repeat for a total of three cream layers, ending with a final layer of cream.
- 5. Finish and Chill:** Dust the top with cocoa powder, cover, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours (overnight is best) to allow the flavors to meld and the cake to set.







# OSLO KRINGLE

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*Oslo Kringle is a Scandinavian pastry that combines a buttery crust, an almond-flavored filling, and a sweet almond glaze. Perfect for holiday gatherings or special breakfasts, this delicate pastry is sure to impress with its crisp crust, soft filling, and smooth frosting.*

## ✦ Ingredients

### CRUST:

- 1 CUP FLOUR
- 1/2 CUP BUTTER
- 2 TBSP WATER

### FILLING:

- 1 CUP WATER
- 1/2 CUP BUTTER
- 1/4 TSP SALT
- 1 TSP ALMOND EXTRACT
- 3 EGGS

### FROSTING:

- 1½ CUPS POWDERED SUGAR
- 2 TBSP BUTTER, SOFTENED
- 1/2 TSP ALMOND EXTRACT
- 2 TBSP WARM MILK OR WATER

### FOR TOPPING:

- SLICED ALMONDS (OPTIONAL)

## ✦ Instructions

### 1. Prepare the Crust

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- In a bowl, cut the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the water and mix until a dough forms.
- Divide the dough into two portions. Pat each portion into a 12" x 3" strip on an ungreased baking sheet.

### 2. Make the Filling

- In a saucepan, bring the water and butter to a rolling boil. Remove from heat and add the salt and almond extract.
- Stir in the flour, mixing until the dough forms a ball.
- Add the eggs one at a time, blending each egg until the mixture is smooth and shiny.
- Spread the filling evenly over each crust strip.

**3. Bake:** Bake for 60 minutes, or until golden brown and puffed. Let the kringlers cool completely on the baking sheet.

**4. Prepare the Frosting:** In a mixing bowl, combine powdered sugar, softened butter, almond extract, and warm milk (or water). Stir until smooth.

**5. Finish and Serve:** Spread the frosting over the cooled kringlers and sprinkle with sliced almonds, if desired.



# HERSHEY KISSES SNOWBALL COOKIES

/MORGAN CRUSHMAN, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER/

*Growing up, my best friend's mom had this tradition of baking us treats on our birthdays, and her snowball cookies were always the star! I missed them so much that a few years ago, I tracked down the recipe. Now, these cookies are on my must-bake list every year—a delicious reminder of the sweet memories they hold.*



## ✦ Ingredients

- 1 CUP (2 STICKS) BUTTER, SOFTENED
- 1½ CUPS POWDERED SUGAR, DIVIDED
- 2 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1 TSP PURE VANILLA EXTRACT
- 1 CUP WALNUTS, VERY FINELY CHOPPED
- ½ TSP KOSHER SALT
- 2 TBSP WATER
- 24 CHOCOLATE KISSES, UNWRAPPED

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Preheat Oven:** Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- 2. Make the Dough:** In a large mixing bowl, use a hand mixer to cream together the butter and ½ cup powdered sugar until smooth. Fold in the flour, vanilla, finely chopped nuts, salt, and water until well combined.
- 3. Wrap Kisses in Dough:** Scoop 1 tablespoon of dough and mold it around each chocolate Kiss, rolling it into a ball. Repeat until all cookies are formed. Place the cookies on a tray and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
- 4. Bake the Cookies:** Transfer the cookies to the prepared baking sheets and bake for 20–25 minutes, or until they appear dry but not browned.
- 5. Cool & Coat with Powdered Sugar:** Let the cookies cool for about 20 minutes. Roll each cookie in the remaining 1 cup powdered sugar to coat.



# GINGERSNAPS

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*These classic Gingersnaps are a must-have for the holiday season! With warm spices like ginger, cinnamon, and cloves, they're perfectly chewy and packed with flavor. Roll them in sugar for a sweet, sparkling touch, and enjoy the cozy, nostalgic taste that makes these cookies a holiday favorite.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 2 ¼ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1 CUP PACKED BROWN SUGAR
- ¾ CUP BUTTER, SOFTENED
- ¼ CUP MOLASSES
- 1 EGG
- 1 TSP BAKING SODA
- 1 TSP GROUND GINGER
- 1 TSP GROUND CINNAMON
- ½ TSP GROUND CLOVES
- ¼ CUP GRANULATED SUGAR (FOR ROLLING)

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Prepare the Dough:** In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, brown sugar, butter, molasses, egg, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. Mix until well blended.
- 2. Shape the Cookies:** Roll the dough into 1-inch balls or use a small cookie scoop for uniformity. Roll each ball in granulated sugar to coat.
- 3. Arrange on Baking Sheet:** Place the coated balls 2 inches apart on an ungreased baking sheet.
- 4. Bake:** Bake at 375°F for 8 minutes for a softer, chewier texture. Avoid overbaking for best results.
- 5. Cool the Cookies:** Cool the cookies on the baking sheet for 1 minute before transferring them to waxed paper or a wire rack to cool completely.







# OLD-FASHIONED SPRITZ COOKIES

/LAUREN SHORT, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER/

*These Old-Fashioned Spritz Cookies are a holiday classic that bring back the nostalgia of simpler times! Buttery, lightly sweet, and perfectly crisp, these cookies are fun to make and even more fun to decorate.*

## ✦ Ingredients

- 1½ CUPS UNSALTED BUTTER, SOFTENED
- 1 CUP SUGAR
- 1 EGG
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
- ½ TEASPOON ALMOND EXTRACT
- 3½ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1 TEASPOON BAKING POWDER
- ½ TEASPOON SALT

FOR DECORATING:

- ASSORTED SPRINKLES
- GEL FOOD COLORING (OPTIONAL)
- MELTED WHITE CHOCOLATE (OPTIONAL)

## ✦ Instructions

- 1. Preheat Oven:** Preheat your oven to 400°F.
- 2. Cream Butter and Sugar:** In the bowl of a stand mixer (or using a hand mixer), beat the softened butter and sugar on medium speed for about 2 minutes, until light and fluffy.
- 3. Add Wet Ingredients:** Add the egg, vanilla extract, and almond extract. Beat until well combined, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.
- 4. Add Dry Ingredients:** Add the flour, baking powder, and salt. Beat on low speed until just combined. Add food coloring if desired, mixing until the color is evenly distributed.
- 5. Prepare for Baking:** Transfer the dough to a cookie press. Pipe the cookies onto an ungreased baking sheet, pressing them close together as they don't spread much. Top with sprinkles, if desired.
- 6. Bake:** Bake for 7–9 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden brown.
- 7. Decorate:** Once the cookies have cooled, you can drizzle them with melted white chocolate if you'd like an extra touch of sweetness.



# AVEX

With each recipe, we hope to add a little extra joy to your holiday season. Thank you for letting us share in your celebrations, bringing flavors both familiar and new to your table. May these dishes spark laughter, warmth, and togetherness with those you hold dear. Wishing you a season filled with unforgettable meals, joyful gatherings, and plenty of holiday magic.

Happy Holidays,

The Avex Team.



# FLAVOR ARCHITECTS



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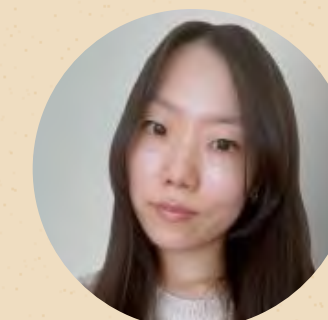
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