



DISHING IT OUT

Heading to a potluck?
We've got your contribution covered

TO THE DELIGHT of their hungry, inspired readers, food bloggers—everyday folks with a knack for cooking and a mind to share it—are spicing up the Web with droolworthy photos of their culinary accomplishments and personal accounts from the kitchen. We invited some of our favorites to an imaginary potluck and asked them to share the tastiest eats they would bring, from finger food and veggie sides to a fabulous dessert and cocktail. Lucky for you, the recipes are totally real.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARAH ANNE WARD // STYLING BY STEPHANIE HANES // FOOD STYLING BY LAUREN LAPENNA



Savory Asparagus Pie

Makes one 9-inch pie

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CRUST:

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 10 Tbsp. cold unsalted butter, cut to cubes
- 1 Tbsp. cold water

FOR THE FILLING:

- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 8 oz. crème fraîche
- 3½ oz. chèvre
- 1 egg
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 large bunch asparagus, ends trimmed; reserve 4 good-looking long stalks and chop the rest into ½" bias-cut slices

This savory pie is a favorite of mine and it's always a real eye-catcher when I bring it to potlucks. Despite its fancy looks, however, it's a simple recipe involving raw asparagus, a bit of goat cheese, and crème fraîche baked together in a buttery pie crust.

INSTRUCTIONS

To make the crust, combine the flour, sugar, and salt. Cut in butter with a pastry cutter until mixture resembles fine crumbs with the butter chunks no larger than peas. Add the cold water a little bit at a time until mixture just clumps together. Shape dough into one large ball and another ball about ¼ its size. Cover with plastic and chill for 30 minutes (or up to overnight).

Heat butter in a heavy-bottomed pan over very low heat. Add onion and let sweat for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Once onion is translucent and slightly caramelized, let cool. In a large bowl, combine crème fraîche and chèvre. Add the egg, and whisk until fully blended. Add salt, pepper, nutmeg, chives, and lemon juice. Add chopped asparagus and onion, and mix with spatula.

Roll out the large ball of chilled dough on a lightly floured surface. Transfer to a greased 9-inch pie pan. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Roll the smaller ball of dough into a long, thin oval. Slice it into 5 – 8 strips for the lattice crust.

Halve the reserved asparagus stalks lengthwise. Pour the asparagus filling into the piecrust, and smooth top with a spatula. To create the lattice, lay one asparagus stalk in the center. Lay a pastry strip on top of the stalk, perpendicular to the middle. Lay an asparagus stalk on either side of the original stalk (so that the blunt ends and the flower tips alternate) over the pastry strip. Lay two pastry strips on either side of the first strip, gently tucking them underneath the middle asparagus stalk to create a basket weave. Continue weaving in this manner until you reach the ends of the pie. Arrange any left-over pastry along the pie's edge until it's well integrated and fairly even in bulk. Crimp or pinch edges. Brush top of pie with milk or egg wash (optional), and bake for about 40 – 45 minutes, or until top is just lightly browned. Cool 10 minutes before serving.



Cathy ERWAY

NOT EATING OUT IN NEW YORK

www.noteatingoutinny.com

Brooklyn

Day job: Outreach and communications at Sixpoint, a craft brewery in Brooklyn

Cooking inspiration: In terms of how I prepare things, I'm inspired by my mother's native Chinese techniques more than anything else.

Kitchen philosophy: I think cooking is something that can and should be done on an everyday basis by just about anyone, for their own well-being and that of the food system.

Best place to buy ingredients: N.Y.C.'s Union Square Greenmarket. Or better yet, the times I don't have to shop for food because my rooftop garden is overflowing with vegetables, and the chickens have laid plenty of eggs.

Favorite food quote: "Think about where the food came from and the amount of work necessary to grow the food, transport it, prepare and cook it, and bring it to the table."
—Buddha, *Five Contemplations While Eating*



Heidi SWANSON

101 COOKBOOKS

www.101cookbooks.com

San Francisco

Day job: I work for myself. Primarily on cookbooks, my Web site, and the occasional creative project/collaboration.

Cooking inspiration: I travel quite a bit, and that is always a source of inspiration—learning how other cooks use ingredients specific to their country or region. I find inspiration in books, trips to the market, the weather/seasons, and reader suggestions.

Kitchen philosophy: It's important to cook regularly. If you don't already, it's the sort of thing that will take you on a journey and change your life in ways you might not be able to imagine. Cooking is a way to share with others, treat yourself well, and bring people together.

I find cooking to be... a good metronome for my day-to-day life. If I get so busy that I don't have the time or inclination to cook, I try to make tweaks.

Guilty food pleasure: Salted pretzels dunked in crème fraîche.

Favorite album to cook to: Lee "Scratch" Perry's *Scratch Attack!*



Mostly Not Potato Salad

Serves 4 – 6

INGREDIENTS

- 4 small red-skinned potatoes, quartered
- Big handful of green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 Tbsp. whole-grain mustard
- 2 Tbsp. red-wine vinegar
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp. natural cane sugar or agave nectar
- Fine-grain sea salt
- ¼ cup finely chopped dill
- 1 small leek, white and tender green parts, trimmed and chopped
- 6 stalks celery, diced
- 1 cucumber, unpeeled, seeded, and cut into tiny cubes
- 6 oz. extra-firm tofu, cut into small cubes
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives

This is one of those no-fuss dishes that can handle a car or bike ride, is best served family-style, and tastes great at room temperature—in other words, perfect potluck fare. Generous amounts of green beans, celery, cucumber, and tofu are tossed with a dill-and-caramelized-leek base. For you traditionalists, there is just enough mustard and red-wine vinegar to give it that classic French potato-salad flavor.

INSTRUCTIONS

Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil. Salt generously, add the potatoes, and cook until tender but not falling apart, about 10 minutes. Thirty seconds before the potatoes are done cooking, add the green beans to the pot. Drain the potatoes and beans and set aside.

In the meantime, make the dressing by whisking together the mustard, vinegar, 1 Tbsp. olive oil, the sugar or agave nectar, and ¼ tsp. salt in a bowl. Taste and adjust if needed. In a large skillet, sauté the dill in a splash of olive oil over medium-high heat. Add a couple pinches of salt, stir in the leek, and sauté until golden and slightly crispy, 4 – 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, gently toss the potatoes and green beans, celery, cucumber, tofu, chives, and half of the leek with most of the dressing. Taste, and add a sprinkling of salt if needed. Turn out onto a platter, and finish with a final drizzle of dressing and the remaining leek. Serve chilled or at room temperature.



Coconut Meatballs with Coconut Rum Dipping Sauce

Makes 65 meatballs

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE MEATBALLS:

- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped fine

Extra-virgin olive oil

- 1 lb. ground beef (not lean)
- 1 lb. ground pork (not lean)
- $\frac{3}{8}$ cup plus $\frac{1}{8}$ cup coconut flour (unsweetened)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced parsley leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced fresh oregano
- 1 large egg

FOR THE SAUCE:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark rum
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 pinch red pepper flakes
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- Salt

Putting a twist on a classic dish is a surefire way to please (and impress!) a crowd. These coconut meatballs reinvent an old-fashioned potluck favorite with bold, Caribbean flavor that will have guests coming back for seconds.

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Heat 2 Tbsp. olive oil in a heavy cast-iron skillet, and add the onion and bell pepper. Cook over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened. Remove from heat, and let the mixture cool.

In a large glass bowl, combine the ground meat with the onion and pepper, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup coconut flour, salt, nutmeg, parsley, oregano, and the egg. Use your hands to form the mixture into 1- to 1½-inch meatballs. Roll each meatball in the remaining coconut flour, and set aside on a separate plate.

In the same skillet, heat 3 Tbsp. olive oil over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, and brown the meatballs in batches, adding oil as necessary. Transfer browned meatballs with a slotted spoon to a baking dish. Once all are in, place in the oven for about 20 minutes, or until cooked through.

While the meatballs are baking, bring the skillet up to medium heat and add the rum. Use a wooden spoon to stir and scrape all the bits of coconut and other good stuff into the sauce. Once the rum has reduced by about half, add the coconut milk, brown sugar, and red pepper flakes, and continue stirring. Let this reduce again to half, and add the butter. Let this cook down about a third, stirring continuously. You'll end up with an amazing, creamy, gold-colored sauce. Add salt to taste and remove from heat. Serve the meatballs over a bed of lettuce with the sauce on the side.



Alejandra RAMOS

ALWAYS ORDER DESSERT

www.alwaysorderdessert.com

New York City

Day job: Writer and editor

Cooking inspiration: Just about everything I see can lead to a dish. I recently made a cake based on the cover illustration of a novel I read (Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*), and I'm wild about new products with quirky labels.

Kitchen philosophy: I just make whatever it is that I'm craving. Sometimes that means rich stews and flavorful braises. Sometimes it's chocolate cake. Sometimes it's crisp salads or fruit sorbets. I rarely go wrong when I cook this way.

Most-used kitchen tool: I use my Le Creuset French oven and antique cast-iron skillet at least once a day.

Guilty food pleasure: Jet-Puffed marshmallows straight out of the plastic bag.

Most beloved cookbook: *Eat This... It'll Make You Feel Better!* by Dom DeLuise. I discovered this hilarious book in my mom's kitchen as a little girl, and I swear it's what made me fall in love with food.



Joy WILSON

JOY THE BAKER

www.joythebaker.com

Los Angeles

Day job: I'm currently finishing up my first cookbook, and I run a catering-and-events business called On the Lamb with my two best friends.

Cooking inspiration: The farmers' markets in California are the stuff dreams are made of. Those big stands of fresh produce are always an amazing inspiration.

Kitchen philosophy: Add sugar and make it good.

Best thing I've ever eaten: I love the house-cured meats at Salt's Cure in L.A.

I find cooking to be... the tits.

Most beloved cookbook: *The Gourmet Cookbook* edited by Ruth Reichl; it has everything—ever.

Favorite spice: Cinnamon, because it makes my coffee smell like heaven every morning.

Favorite meal of the day: Breakfast...and second breakfast.



Cucumber Raspberry Vodka Sparklers

Makes 4 cocktails

INGREDIENTS

- 2 English cucumbers
- Small ice cubes
- 1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
- 2 tsp. granulated sugar
- 12 fresh raspberries, rinsed
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lime juice (from 2–3 limes)
- 4 oz. (½ cup) vodka
- 1 oz. (2 Tbsp.) Cointreau
- 1 large bottle sparkling water (you can use lemon-lime soda if you'd like more sweetness)

No festive meal is complete without an adult beverage, and this cocktail is the perfect way to raise a glass. The fresh flavors of cucumber, mint, and raspberries celebrate the end of winter, and its not-too-sweet taste will spare you the post-potluck hangover.

INSTRUCTIONS

Cut 4 thin spears from one cucumber, and reserve for garnish (most of the cucumber will remain intact). Peel both cucumbers, and quarter them lengthwise. Scrape out seeds with a spoon and discard. Coarsely chop cucumbers, then purée in a food processor until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible.

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add mint, sugar, raspberries, and lime juice, and shake. Add ¾ cup cucumber juice, the vodka, and Cointreau, and shake. Strain into 4 glasses filled with ice. Finish with a splash of sparkling water in each glass and stir. Garnish each cocktail with a cucumber spear.



Banana-Split Whoopie Pies

Makes 12 very large or 24 not-so-small whoopie pies

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CAKES:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 4 Tbsp. butter, room temperature
- 4 Tbsp. non-hydrogenated vegetable shortening
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 3 very ripe bananas, mashed

FOR THE FILLING:

- 1½ cups Marshmallow Fluff
- 1¼ cups non-hydrogenated vegetable shortening
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ cup strained strawberry preserves (or spreadable fruit)

FINISHING TOUCHES:

- Dipping chocolate
- Maraschino cherries, drained
- Chopped peanuts

Let's be honest. A potluck is little more than a politely disguised culinary showdown. And nothing says "I win, bitches," like whoopie pies dressed up as an old-fashioned treat from your grandma's favorite soda shop: vanilla-and-strawberry-swirled marshmallow filling sandwiched between two fluffy banana cakes, dunked in chocolate, sprinkled with peanuts, and topped with a cherry.

INSTRUCTIONS

To make the cakes, preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. In a small bowl, sift flour, baking soda, and salt together. In another bowl, beat together the butter, shortening, sugars, and vanilla for about 3 minutes, or until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and beat 2 minutes more. Mix in bananas, then the flour mixture, until well incorporated.

For large whoopie pies, drop by the tablespoonful on your baking sheet. For smaller pies, use a ½ Tbsp. of batter. Bake for 10 minutes, or until edges begin to brown. Cool in pan on a wire rack for 5 minutes, then remove from pan to cool completely.

To make the filling, beat together the Marshmallow Fluff and shortening. After 3 minutes on medium speed, the mixture will be smooth and fluffy; reduce speed to low, and add the sugar and vanilla. Once incorporated, increase the speed to medium and beat until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Mix in the strawberry preserves.

To assemble the whoopie pies, use a spoon to plop a generous amount of filling on one cake. Top with another cake and repeat until finished. Pop the whoopie pies in the freezer while you melt your chocolate. Then dunk half of each cold whoopie pie, and place on a sheet of waxed paper. Before the chocolate hardens, sprinkle with chopped peanuts and top with a cherry.



Natalie SLATER

BAKE AND DESTROY

www.bakeanddestroy.net

Chicago

Day job: PR and community manager at Reuseit.com

Cooking inspiration: Music and pop culture, mainly. I've made desserts inspired by everything from pro wrestling to black metal.

Kitchen philosophy: Embrace your fails. Even Martha has a bad day once in a while and if you're lucky, you can eat your mistakes.

Favorite place to shop for ingredients: I get all my cute decorations and packaging supplies at www.bakeitpretty.com. I drop big money at Whole Foods, too. Avoiding hydrogenated oils and unethically sourced chocolate isn't cheap!

Most-used kitchen tool: My offset spatula. I think I frost things in my sleep.

Top three pantry staples: High-quality vanilla extract, pure maple syrup, and real butter.

Favorite album to cook to: The Cramps' *Bad Music for Bad People*