

REBA McENTIRE

Foreword by Garth Brooks

Not That Fancy

Simple Lessons on Living, Loving,
Eating, and Dusting Off Your Boots

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK



Not That Fancy

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Published by Harper Celebrate, an imprint of HarperCollins Focus LLC.

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Cover design by Sabryna Lugge
Interior design by Emily Ghattas
Lifestyle photography by Robby Klein Photography
Food photography by Kris D'Amico Photography

ISBN 978-1-4002-3827-9 (audiobook)
ISBN 978-1-4002-3826-2 (epub)
ISBN 978-1-4002-3825-5 (HC)
ISBN 978-1-4041-1967-3 (custom)

Printed in India

23 24 25 26 27 REP 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1









Introduction



Top Left: My younger sister, Susie, and me sitting down together on her porch, Chockie, Oklahoma, 2020

Top Right: Susie and me taking a sunset stroll on the family ranch, Chockie, Oklahoma, 2020

Bottom: My mama, Jackie, who loved to fish, showing off her catch of the day, Eastern Oklahoma





Relaxing in the sunshine during the pandemic at my home place, Eastern Oklahoma, 2020







1

A Lot of Hope and Hard Work



My grandpap, John McEntire, competing at the Cheyenne Frontier Days, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1934



My daddy, Clark McEntire



Helpful Henry



My older sister, Alice, my older brother, Pake, and me on one of Daddy's horses at our family ranch, Eastern Oklahoma, 1956



Riding on the family ranch alongside Daddy, Susie, Mama, Alice, and Pake during the filming of my Reba: Starting Over CBSTV special, Chockie, Oklahoma, 1995





Shelby and me celebrating together at the Kennedy Center Honors, Washington, DC, 2018

Hanging with Shelby at the race car track







2

Nature Is My Church



Left: Singing at president George H. W. Bush's funeral, Houston, Texas, 2018

Right: Susie, Mama, Alice, and me singing "I'll Fly Away" the first time I headlined the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee, 2017



*On the set of the "Back to God"
video shoot at the historic Tulip
Street United Methodist Church,
Nashville, Tennessee, 2017*



Running barrels at the family ranch during the Reba: Starting Over CBS TV special, Chockie, Oklahoma, 1995



Hugging the first horse I ever owned, Old Sonny, when I was just twenty-one years old, Eastern Oklahoma, 1976



Riding on the family ranch, Chockie, Oklahoma, 1995



Scenes around my home, Nashville, Tennessee





3

Wear What
You Want
(And Put Some
Fringe on It)





*Beltin' out the national anthem
at the National Finals Rodeo,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*



*Singing the national anthem at the National
Finals Rodeo, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*



*Josephine DiMarco and
me collaborating on my
Dillard's clothing line*





Locks of my curls lying on the beach after my big haircut, 1996



*The album cover of What If It's You ,
debuting my new short hair, 1996*



*A promotional shot from the
launch of my partnership
with Justin Boots, 2017*

Jack It Up to Jesus

My friend Dolly Parton is famous for saying, "The higher the hair, the closer to God." So if you want to get one of my signature looks, get your comb ready for some teasing.



80s: *It's not the eighties without a perm.*

1: Apply a generous amount of mousse to towel-dried hair. 2: Blow-dry and scrunch hair. 3: Select and apply heavy-duty hair spray.

00s: *Break out that flat iron.*

1: Blow-dry hair using a round brush to smooth and straighten. 2: Flat-iron random sections for a flippy style. 3: Finish with pomade for a wild and less structured look.

90s: *Plug in your hot rollers.*

1: Follow steps 1 and 2 of my style from the 1980s. 2: Add hot rollers to dry scrunched hair. 3: Pick out curls and tease to desired height and fullness. 4: Spray with mega-hold hair spray. I like Aveda Witch Hazel.

Now: *Less is more.*

1: Blow out hair with a medium round brush, and add styling cream for smoothness. 2: Curl hair with a 1.5-inch barrel curling iron for a soft, sophisticated style. 3: Spray with a light hair spray for desired height and fullness.





4

Curious People Are the Best People



*Striking a pose on set at the "Whoever's in
New England" music video shoot, 1986*

*Kicking back
in my dressing
room before a
performance
of Annie Get
Your Gun at
the Marriott
Marquis
Theatre, New
York City, New
York, 2001*



*Hanging out at the
National Finals
Rodeo with Red
Steagall, the man
who got the ball
rolling, Oklahoma
City, Oklahoma*

*I'd like
you to be a very special
friend and person
to me. Love you
Ted*



*Top Left:
Celebrating my
birthday backstage
during the run of
Annie Get Your
Gun, 2001*

*Top Right: In
the wings with
my costar and
good friend John
Schuck, playing
the role of Buffalo
Bill, 2001*

*Bottom: Larry
Storch, John
Schuck, and
me visiting with
president George
H. W. Bush and
Barbara Bush after
the show, 2001*



Melissa Peterman's son, Riley, on set giving Reba some genius notes to include more Barbra Jean in the script, Los Angeles, California, 2006



Reba and Melissa Peterman on set for "The Pageant of Grandmas" episode, which featured both of our real-life moms, Jackie and Pam, Los Angeles, California, 2005



Reba enjoying a hug from Melissa Peterman on set—she loves it, Los Angeles, California, 2002



The whole Reba cast—Scarlett Pomers, Melissa Peterman, Chris Rich, Reba, JoAnna Garcia Swisher, Steve Howey, and Mitch Holleman—shooting our "Thanksgiving" episode, Los Angeles, California, 2004





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You Gotta Be You





Having fun in the studio recording my box set Revived Remixed Revisited, Franklin, Tennessee, 2021



Sitting down with my good friend Vicki Lawrence on her popular talk show, Vicki!, 1994



Transforming to an eighty-two-year-old for "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia" music video





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Happiness Is
Found Where You
Least Expect It





*Performing onstage on a barstool
after my unexpected injury, 1996*



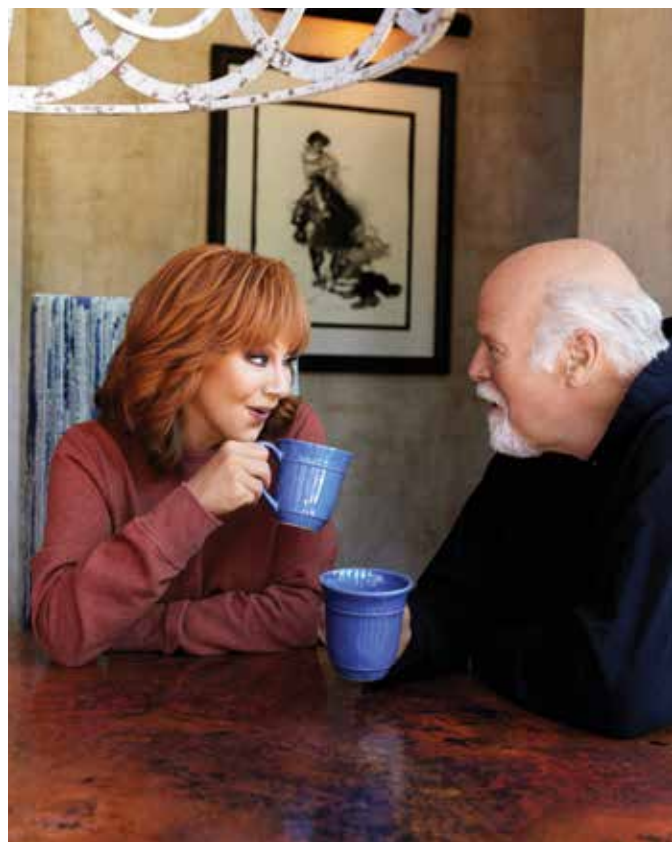
*Rex and me out on our first date
at the restaurant Mistral, Los
Angeles, California, 2020*



*A gift from
Cindy Owen*

*Rex and me enjoying golden hour at
the Celebrity Adventures retreat,
Brush Creek Ranch, Wyoming*





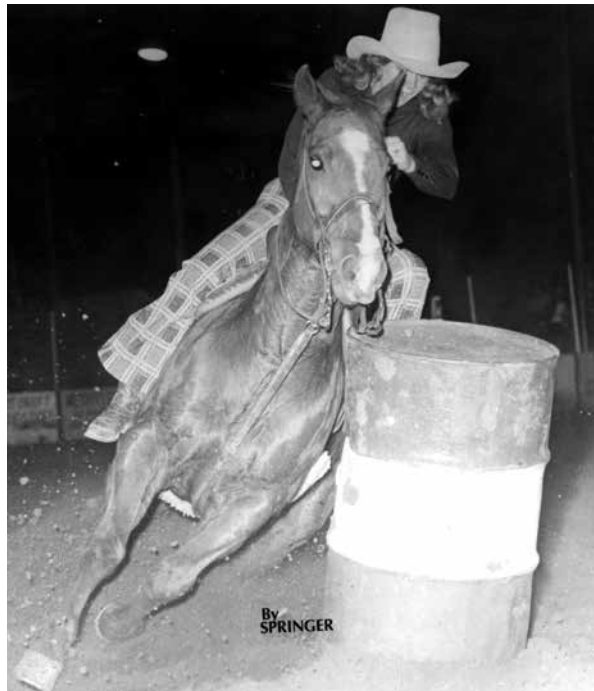




7

Nothing Like Some Healthy Competition





Running barrels as a teenager, Oklahoma, 1960s



Left: Red and me celebrating our Team Pinning win, Montana, 2018

Right: Fist bumping Rex after our big win, Montana, 2020





*Front Row: Marne McLyman, Neil Robison, Leslie Matthews,
Jim Kimball, Marci Fletcher, me, Rex Linn*

*Back Row: Marissa Blackstock, Shelby Blackstock, Justin McIntosh, Nathan McIntosh,
Matt Johnson, Jamie Adcock, Shane Tarleton, Rolf Zettersten, Johanna Zettersten*



*Marci and Nathan posing with their
participation trophies, 2022*



Shelby and Marissa joining in the fun, 2022



The Great Pepper deep in thought, 2022



*Matt "Catfish" Johnson winning Best Dressed
at the first Chili Cook-Off, 2022*





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Don't Forget
to Kick Back
and Enjoy





Performing with Brooks & Dunn during our first co-headlining tour together, 1997



Sugar Tot and me enjoying some s'mores by the fire, Brush Creek Ranch, Wyoming, 2022



Riddler • 2015-2022





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Betty



Left: Pake, Alice, and me trying out a new style together, Chockie, Oklahoma, 1958

Right: Me watching Pake practice his roping skills at a rodeo, 1959



The Singing McEntires consisting of me, Pake, and Susie,, 1971



Doofus Award-winning Marci showing off her leg after a round of target shooting





My friends Shane and Marci surprising me for my birthday, mid-air from Los Angeles to Nashville





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Nobody Does It Alone



*Singing "I'm
Checking Out"
at the Academy
Awards, Los
Angeles,
California, 1991*



Jim Hammon



*Back Row: Paula Kaye Evans, Michael Thomas,
Joey Cigainero, Terry Jackson
Front Row: Kirk Cappello, Tony Saputo*



Chris Austin

In Loving Memory





11

Do What You Love



*Hanging out
with my Tremors
onscreen
husband,
Michael Gross,
California,
1989*



Recording the Grammy award-winning "Back to God" music video at the Tulip Street United Methodist Church, 2017



The entire band and crew on my Reba: Live in Concert tour, including Terri Clark, who opened for me at my first headlining show at Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee, October 2022



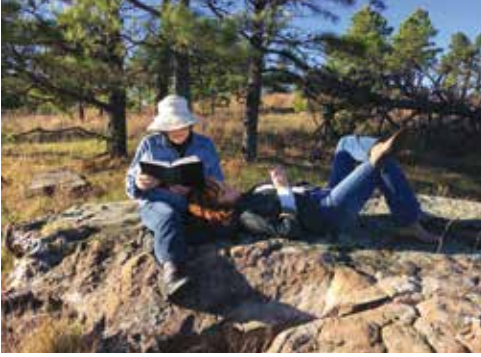


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Find Someone You Look Up To



Mama, Susie, and me



Mama and me



*Mama, Alice,
and me at
my home,
Nashville,
Tennessee*



Shelby and me







13

Live Out Your Legacy



The entire McEntire family, Chockie, Oklahoma



*My collection
of championship
belt buckles
on display in
my living room
coffee table*

*Hanging with
my kids Shelby,
Chassidy,
Brandon, and
Shawna*





Left: A young Alice and me unwrapping gifts together Christmas morning, Eastern Oklahoma, 1958

Right: Looking at Christmas lights around town with Rex, Marissa, and Shelby, Nashville, Tennessee, 2022



Santa Rex passed out by the fireplace after indulging in too many cookies





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Keep Dreaming Forward



On set with Dolly Parton filming our cover of "Does He Love You," Nashville, Tennessee, 2021



Mama's books on display from floor to ceiling at my restaurant, Reba's Place, Atoka, Oklahoma, 2023





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Here's Your One Chance





Promotional shot in costume as Colonel Sanders for my KFC commercial, 2018

On set as Trish in Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar, Mexico, 2019



Performing "She Thinks His Name Was John" in front of a replica of the world-famous AIDS Memorial Quilt, 1995



Renderings of CMA award costumes by Matt Logan, 2019



Belting out my signature closing song, "Fancy," at the CMA Awards, Nashville, Tennessee, 2019



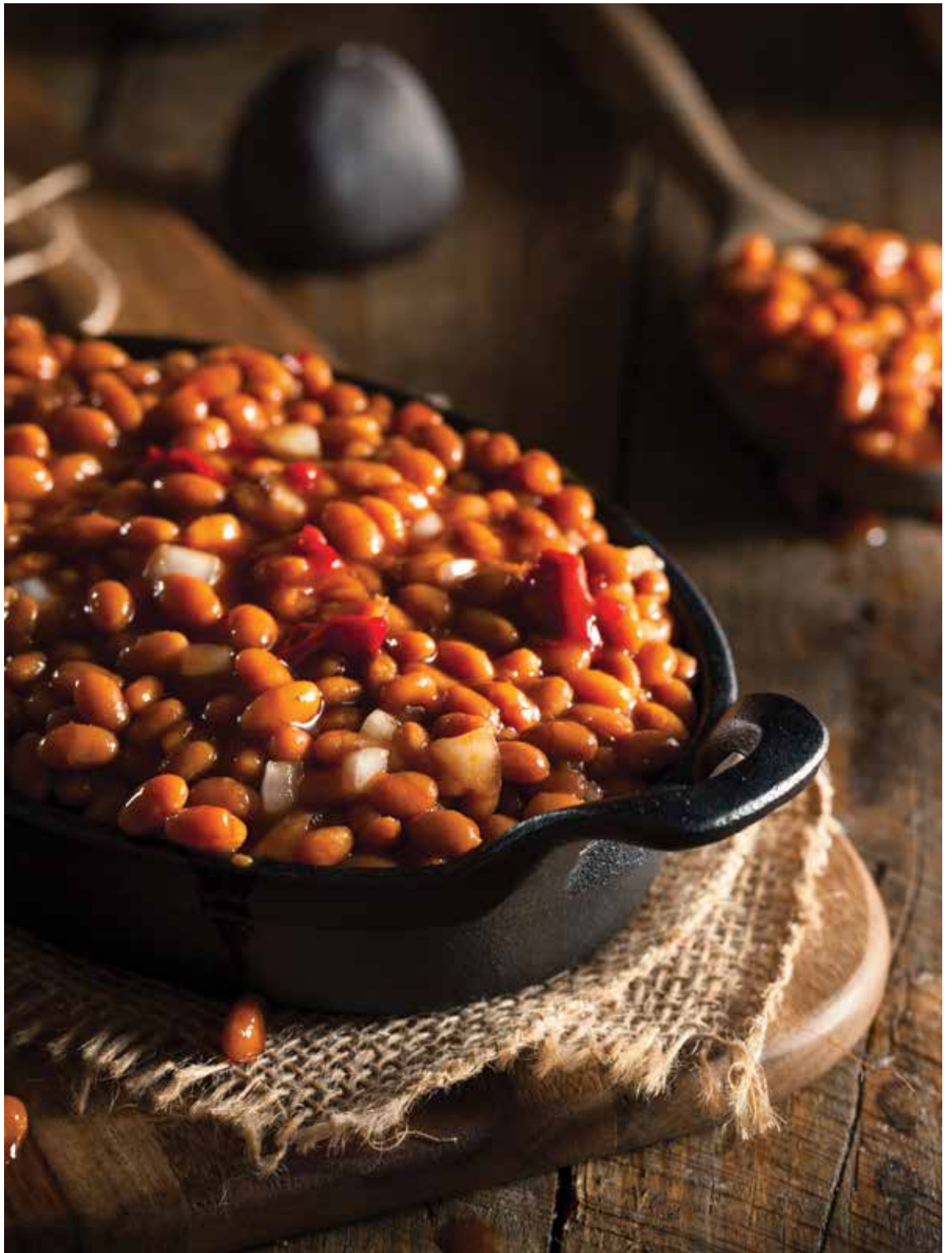




Scan here for Reba's albums, including her new release, *Not That Fancy*, which features thirteen stripped-down acoustic versions of her iconic hits, plus the brand-new song "Seven Minutes in Heaven."



Available now on vinyl, CD, and your favorite streaming platform.



Cowgirl Baked Beans

MAKES 12 TO 16 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

DIFFICULTY 

8 slices bacon, cut
in half crosswise

1 yellow onion,
finely chopped

6 (15-ounce) cans
pork and beans

1/2 cup Reba's Place Tangy
Barbecue Sauce (p. 163)

1/3 cup brown sugar, packed

2 tablespoons ketchup

1 tablespoon steak sauce

2 teaspoons yellow mustard

1 teaspoon
Worcestershire sauce

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

These quantities are perfect for a potluck. For a smaller crowd, halve the ingredients and bake in a 2-quart dish.

Baked beans were a staple in our house growing up. This is my little-bit-fancy version, and I think these beans go well with just about anything.

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Spray a 4-quart baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Set an extra-large skillet over medium-high heat and add the bacon. Fry until just browned but not fully cooked and crispy.
3. Transfer the bacon from the skillet to a plate. Add the onions to the bacon drippings in the skillet. Sauté until softened and lightly browned, about 5 to 6 minutes.
4. Pour the pork and beans into a large mixing bowl. Add the onions, Reba's Place Tangy Barbecue Sauce, brown sugar, ketchup, steak sauce, mustard, and Worcestershire. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Mix until the ingredients are thoroughly combined.
5. Pour the beans into the baking dish and lay the bacon slices on top. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
6. Bake for 1 hour, or until the beans are bubbling at the edges. Remove the dish from the oven. Allow to rest for 15 to 20 minutes, or until slightly thickened, before serving.

Lucchese's Pork Tenderloin

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

2 pounds pork tenderloin (1 large)

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1½ tablespoons olive oil, divided

1 stalk celery, roughly chopped

½ small yellow onion, roughly chopped

1 carrot, peeled and roughly chopped

2 cups beef or chicken broth

⅓ cup red wine

1 tablespoon water

1 teaspoon cornstarch

This melt-in-your-mouth pork tenderloin is courtesy of my niece Lucchese, Susie's daughter. It's easy to make, but no one would ever guess because it looks and tastes so fancy!

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Season the pork tenderloin liberally with salt and pepper. Set an extra-large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil.
3. Sear the pork until deeply golden, turning it to brown all sides, about 5 to 6 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat.
4. Arrange the celery, onion, and carrots around the pork. Drizzle with the remaining ½ tablespoon of olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Transfer the skillet to the middle rack of the oven.
5. Roast for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the pork reaches an internal temperature of 140°F. Remove the skillet from the oven.
6. Carefully lift the pork from the skillet and transfer it to a cutting board. Cover it loosely with foil to keep warm.
7. Return the skillet to the stove over medium-high heat. Sauté the vegetables for 2 to 3 minutes, then pour the broth and red wine into the skillet. Stir, scraping up any browned bits until the liquid simmers.
8. In a small bowl, whisk together the water and cornstarch. Pour the mixture into the skillet and stir it into the simmering broth.

9. Continue simmering until the sauce starts to bubble and thicken, about 2 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat. Lift the vegetables from the sauce with a fork and discard.
10. Slice the pork tenderloin $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick on a diagonal and transfer to a serving platter. Drizzle with the sauce and serve immediately with your favorite vegetable side.





Limestone Gap Old Fashioned

DIFFICULTY   

MAKES 1 DRINK
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 5 MINUTES
INACTIVE TIME: 12 HOURS

CINNAMON SIMPLE SYRUP

- 3 sticks cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water

OLD FASHIONED

- 2 ounces bourbon whiskey (like Angel's Envy Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey)
- 3 dashes bitters
- 1/2 ounce Reba's Place Cinnamon Simple Syrup
- 1 strip orange zest

There's nothing old-fashioned about an Old Fashioned! The simple syrup needs to be made twelve hours ahead and has many uses—a splash in your morning coffee, an addition to other spiced drinks, and a warm, welcome kick on top of oatmeal.

CINNAMON SIMPLE SYRUP

MAKES ABOUT 1 1/2 CUPS

1. Place the cinnamon sticks, sugar, and water in a small saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil.
2. Once boiling, turn the heat to medium-low. Simmer the liquid for 2 minutes, until fragrant. Remove the saucepan from the heat.
3. Remove the cinnamon sticks and discard. Pour the syrup into a heatproof glass container and refrigerate for at least 12 hours, until chilled. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 months.

OLD FASHIONED

1. Fill a short cocktail glass with ice. Pour in the bourbon, bitters, and Reba's Place Cinnamon Simple Syrup. Stir to mix.
2. Wring the strip of orange zest over the glass to release its natural oils. Rub the zest around the rim, then drop it into the drink. Enjoy!

Porch Day Lemonade

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

Not much beats sitting on the porch on a warm summer day, taking in the beauty of the outdoors, with an ice-cold glass of lemonade in hand.

1 cup water,
plus more
to fill the
pitcher

1 cup sugar

Juice from 6
to 8 lemons

Fresh basil
leaves for
garnish
(optional)

1. Place the water and sugar in a medium saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a low simmer.
2. Heat for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved. Remove the saucepan from the heat.
3. Pour the liquid into a 2-quart pitcher and allow to cool.
4. In the meantime, juice the lemons. Use 6 for a sweeter lemonade, or 8 if you like your lemonade tart.
5. Pour the lemon juice into the pitcher and stir to combine. Fill the remainder of the pitcher with cold water, and stir once more.
6. To serve, pour the lemonade into tall glasses of ice. For something a little different, garnish with fresh basil leaves.



Like It Fancy?

For an especially hot day, I recommend switching things up to create frozen lemonade. Replace half of the water with ice and pour into a blender. Blend on high until you have a nice slushy texture. Serve in chilled glasses for ultimate refreshment.



Shishito Peppers and Okra with Tequila Lime Vinaigrette

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



TEQUILA LIME VINAIGRETTE

1/2 cup fresh lime juice
(4 to 6 limes)

2 tablespoons tequila

2 tablespoons agave syrup

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 clove garlic, minced

2 tablespoons fresh cilantro
leaves, finely chopped

1/2 teaspoon kosher
salt, more to taste

1/2 cup canola oil

PEPPERS AND OKRA

3 cups shishito peppers,
rough stems removed
(about 12 ounces)

1 1/2 cups fresh okra,
sliced in half lengthwise
(about 6 ounces)

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

1/4 cup Reba's Place
Tequila Lime Vinaigrette

1 wedge each lime and
orange, for garnish

It's always good to have a little green on the plate! But what can I say, I prefer my greens fried!

TEQUILA LIME VINAIGRETTE

MAKES 1 1/4 CUPS

1. Place the lime juice, tequila, syrup, vinegar, mustard, garlic, cilantro, salt, and oil into a large shaker cup or dressing bottle. Secure the lid and shake vigorously until the dressing is emulsified. Refrigerate until ready to use.

PEPPERS AND OKRA

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the shishitos and okra in a colander and rinse under cool water. Drain on a few sheets of paper towels.
3. Place the okra in a mixing bowl and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Sprinkle liberally with salt and toss to coat. Spread the okra in a single layer on the baking sheet and transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
4. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, flipping halfway through, until the okra is tender and lightly browned. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and transfer the okra back to the mixing bowl.

5. While the okra roasts, set a cast-iron skillet over high heat and add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Once the oil is smoking, add the shishito peppers in single layer. Sprinkle liberally with salt.
6. Cover the skillet with a lid and allow the shishitos to blister for 15 to 25 seconds. Stir the peppers, cover, and cook for 15 to 25 seconds more, or until the peppers are well-charred. Remove the skillet from the heat.
7. Add the shishitos to the bowl of okra. Drizzle with vinaigrette and additional salt and pepper, to taste. Toss until the vegetables are evenly coated.
8. Transfer the shishitos and okra to a serving dish and garnish with a lime and orange wedge. Serve immediately.



Carrot Cake

MAKES 12 TO 16 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 35 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 3 HOURS

DIFFICULTY



This cake must be healthy with all the carrots in it, right? Keep any leftover carrots to treat your horses.

CAKE

- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 3/4 cup canola or vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups finely grated carrots (5 to 6 medium carrots)
- 1 cup chopped pecans (optional)

FROSTING

- 2 (8-ounce) bars cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 sticks (1 cup) salted butter, room temperature
- 4 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

CAKE

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray two 8- or 9-inch round cake pans with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place the sugars, oil, eggs, and vanilla in a large bowl and whisk vigorously to combine.
3. Add the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt to the bowl. Mix until it forms a smooth batter. Fold in the carrots and pecans (if using).
4. Divide the batter evenly between the baking pans. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
5. Bake for 33 to 37 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Remove the pans from the oven. Allow the cakes to rest in the pans for 10 minutes, then invert them onto a wire rack to cool completely before frosting.

FROSTING

1. Place the cream cheese and butter in a large mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium speed until smooth, about 3 minutes. Add the powdered sugar and vanilla. Beat on low speed until most of the sugar is absorbed into the cream cheese mixture, then increase the speed to medium-high and continue beating until the frosting is creamy, about 2 minutes.

2. To assemble: With a sharp knife, carefully slice the cooled cake layers in half crosswise, creating 4 layers. Place one layer on a serving platter and spread a 1/2-inch thick layer of frosting on top. Repeat with the remaining three cake layers. Frost the sides of the cake with the remaining frosting, then use the back of a spoon to create rustic swoops over the top and sides of the cake. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before slicing and serving.





Chicken Tenders

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

INACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR OR MORE

4 (6-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1½ cups bread-and-butter pickle juice

1 quart peanut oil (or vegetable oil), for frying

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup masa harina (also called "corn masa" or "corn flour")

1 cup finely ground low-sodium saltines (about 40 crackers)

1½ teaspoons seasoned salt (like Lawry's), or more, to taste

1 teaspoon chili powder

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon granulated garlic

1 teaspoon granulated onion

4 egg whites

1 tablespoon water

1 small handful fresh parsley, finely chopped, for garnish (optional)

½ cup Reba's Place Homemade Ranch Dressing, for serving (p. 43)

½ cup Reba's Place Cherry Coke Barbecue Sauce, for serving (p. 135)

Chicken tenders are my comfort food of choice when I'm performing out on the road, and I've been known to eat them immediately after getting offstage. Turns out they pair well with sweatshirts or sequins—up to you!

1. Slice each chicken breast into three long strips. Pound them lightly with a meat mallet to even out the thickness. Place the strips in a bowl with the pickle juice and let soak for at least 1 hour, preferably overnight.
2. When ready to fry the chicken, attach a thermometer to the side of a large Dutch oven and add the peanut oil. Heat the oil to 350°F and maintain the temperature within a range of 25°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set a cooling rack on top of a second baking sheet and place it next to the Dutch oven.
3. While the oil heats, place the flour, masa harina, saltines, seasoned salt, chili powder, pepper, garlic, and onion in a large bowl and whisk to combine. In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg whites and water until lightly frothy.
4. Drain the pickle juice from the chicken. Transfer the strips to the bowl of egg whites, and stir to coat. Dip the strips one at a time into the flour mixture, turning to coat evenly, and arrange them on the baking sheet.

5. Fry the chicken strips in batches of 4 until golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the strips from the oil with a slotted spoon and transfer to the cooling rack. Repeat with the remaining chicken.
6. Garnish the chicken tenders with fresh parsley and serve with Reba's Place Homemade Ranch Dressing and Reba's Place Cherry Coke Barbecue Sauce.



Homemade Ranch Dressing

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

- ¼ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
(I love Duke's)
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon dill
pickle juice
- 1 (0.4-ounce) packet
Hidden Valley Ranch
dressing mix
- 2 tablespoons
fresh parsley,
finely chopped
- 4 chives, finely
chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh dill,
finely chopped
- 1 small clove garlic,
minced (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon hot
sauce (optional)
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

For when you're feeling a little bit fancy and want to go the extra mile to impress your guests, I suggest trying this homemade ranch dressing from the restaurant. It adds that extra little kick that will take your meal to the next level. Thanks, Chef Kurtess!

1. Place buttermilk, heavy cream, mayonnaise, sour cream, pickle juice, dressing mix, parsley, chives, dill, garlic (if using), and hot sauce (if using) in a large mixing bowl. Whisk gently until combined. Add salt and pepper to taste.
2. Pour the dressing into an airtight container and keep refrigerated for up to 1 week.





Nikki Spalaris's White-Chocolate Cranberry Cookies

MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



2 cups (4 sticks)
salted butter, at
room temperature

1 cup granulated
sugar

4 cups all-
purpose flour

1 cup white
chocolate chips

1 cup dried
cranberries (or
dried cherries)

Nikki has been coming to my house to give me a mani-pedi and massage for eleven years. She started bringing these cookies over, and they've become a total hit with my family and friends. I'm so thankful to Nikki for her friendship, generosity, and delicious recipes!

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
2. Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of an electric stand mixer or a large mixing bowl. Beat on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Turn the mixer to medium-low and add the flour one cup at a time, waiting until each addition is incorporated before adding the next, until the ingredients are combined.
4. Add the white chocolate chips and dried cranberries and mix to incorporate.
5. Place the dough by 2 tablespoon spoonfuls onto the cookie sheets, spacing them at least 1 inch apart. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
6. Bake for 10 to 14 minutes, until the cookies are golden brown on the edges. Remove the baking sheets from the oven.
7. Allow the cookies to rest on the sheets for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before serving.



Chris Rich's Chicken and Vegetables

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 50 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

2 tablespoons olive oil

4 to 6 fingerling potatoes, scrubbed and cut in half lengthwise

1 large sweet potato, scrubbed and roughly chopped

1 small yellow onion, roughly chopped

1 small red onion, roughly chopped

1 yellow bell pepper, cut into 1-inch strips, then halved

1 green bell pepper, cut into 1-inch strips, then halved

1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch strips, then halved

1 cup fresh green beans, ends removed

4 to 6 cloves garlic, minced (or as many cloves as you want—I like a lot!)

1 cup baby carrots

1 cup broccoli florets

1 cup cauliflower florets

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

4 bone-in skin-on chicken breasts

1/4 cup salted butter, cubed

1/2 cup dry white wine

Chris played my ex-husband on *Reba*, and he's an excellent cook! Sometimes before a table read, I'd talk him into making me a breakfast sandwich or whatever he was eating at the time. It was always so good! Thanks, Chris, for always sharing and for teaching me how to cook vegetables!

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Drizzle the olive oil over the bottom of a large roasting pan.
2. Add the vegetables to the pan and toss to coat in the oil. Season liberally with salt and pepper.
3. Pat the chicken breasts dry and season liberally on all sides with salt and pepper. Arrange them evenly on top of the vegetables.
4. Scatter the cubed butter evenly over the chicken and vegetables. Pour the wine into the pan. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
5. Roast for 45 to 55 minutes, stirring the vegetables halfway through, until the potatoes are tender and chicken is golden brown with an internal temperature of 165°F.
6. Remove the pan from the oven. Allow to rest for 5 minutes, then serve.

You can substitute or exclude any of these vegetables. Just make sure you have roughly the same amount of colorful vegetables. It makes the dish look—and taste—better!

Reba's Mexican Cornbread

MAKES 16 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 30 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



1 tablespoon
salted butter

1 medium sweet
onion, chopped

1 pound lean ground
beef or turkey

1/2 teaspoon
kosher salt

1 teaspoon Reba's
Place Burger
Seasoning (p. 97)

2 (8.5-ounce)
packages Jiffy
Corn Muffin Mix

2 eggs

2/3 cup whole milk

8 slices American
cheese

1 (14.75-ounce) can
creamed corn

I've never been considered much of a cook. But when I make my beans and Mexican cornbread, no one ever complains! As my daughter, Chass, would say, "She loves beans!" True, and I love my Mexican cornbread too!

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Spray a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Melt the butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté until softened and translucent.
3. Add the ground meat to the pan. Cook, breaking up the meat with a spatula, until thoroughly browned. Season with salt and Reba's Place Burger Seasoning (if using). Carefully drain any excess fat from the pan and set aside.
4. Place the cornbread mix in a large mixing bowl. Add the eggs and milk and whisk until combined.
5. Pour half of the cornbread batter into the baking dish. Sprinkle evenly with the browned meat and onion mixture. Arrange the American cheese slices over the meat.
6. Mix the creamed corn into the remaining cornbread batter. Pour the mixture into the baking dish, covering the layer of cheese. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
7. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
8. Remove the baking dish from the oven. Allow to cool for at least 30 minutes before serving.



“Whoever’s in New England” Mule

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 1 DRINK
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

1½ ounces whiskey
 ½ ounce cranberry juice
 ½ ounce freshly
 squeezed orange juice
 ¼ ounce grenadine
 Dash of salt
 1 (6.8-ounce) bottle
 ginger beer
 1 slice orange, for garnish
 2 luxardo cherries,
 for garnish

While your special someone is up there with whoever’s in New England, I recommend kicking back and having a few of these.

1. Fill a copper mule mug with ice. Pour in the whiskey, cranberry juice, orange juice, and grenadine. Sprinkle in the dash of salt and stir to mix.
2. Top the drink off with ginger beer. Garnish with the orange slice and cherries. Enjoy!





Nashville Hot Chicken

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 24 HOURS

DIFFICULTY 

SEASONING MIX

- 2 tablespoons cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons sweet paprika
- 1 tablespoon granulated garlic
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar, packed
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt

CHICKEN

- 12 pieces bone-in skin-on chicken breasts, thighs, legs, and wings (or cut your own whole chicken)
- 2 cups buttermilk, plus more if needed
- 1 gallon peanut oil (or vegetable oil), for frying
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 4 egg whites
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
- 1 cup masa harina (also called "corn masa" or "corn flour")
- 1 cup cracker meal or matzo meal
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Sliced white bread and dill pickle slices, for serving

Nashville is known for hot chicken. So it seemed natural to include it on the menu at my restaurant. Ain't no hot like Nashville hot, but if you like it a little milder, use less cayenne. Like I said, you gotta be you.

SEASONING MIX

1. Place the cayenne, sweet paprika, garlic, brown sugar, and salt in a wide-mouthed glass jar and secure the lid. Shake to combine.

CHICKEN

1. Place the chicken in a large mixing bowl and pour in the buttermilk. Make sure the chicken is fully submerged. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 24 hours.
2. Attach a thermometer to the side of a large Dutch oven and add the peanut oil. Heat the oil to 350°F and maintain the temperature within a range of 25°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set it next to the Dutch oven. Set a cooling rack on top of a second baking sheet and place it next to the Dutch oven.



3. Place 1 cup of flour and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt in a shallow bowl. Whisk to combine. In a second bowl, whisk together the egg whites and water until lightly frothy. Place the remaining 1 cup of flour, masa harina, cracker meal, remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt, and pepper in a third shallow bowl. Whisk to combine.
4. Lift a piece of chicken from the buttermilk and shake off the excess. Dredge the chicken in the bowl of flour, turning to coat all sides, then submerge in the egg whites. Allow the excess to drip back into the bowl, then transfer to the cracker mixture. Press gently to adhere the breading and flip to coat both sides. Transfer the chicken to the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining pieces.
5. Fry the chicken 3 to 4 pieces at a time until the coating is deeply golden brown and the meat reaches an internal temperature of 165°F, about 12 to 15 minutes. Carefully lift the chicken from the oil using a deep fryer skimmer and transfer to the cooling rack.
6. Once all the chicken is fried, place the Seasoning Mix in a large mixing bowl. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the hot frying oil to the bowl and whisk to combine. Add the fried chicken to the bowl and toss until evenly coated.
7. Arrange sliced white bread in a single layer on a serving platter and place the fried chicken on top. Top with dill pickle slices and serve immediately.

Beer Cheese

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

1 tablespoon
unsalted butter

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup beer (brown
ale or lager)

4 cups shredded sharp
white cheddar cheese
(about 16 ounces)

1 tablespoon
Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon hot sauce

1/2 teaspoon Dijon
mustard

1 teaspoon dried mustard

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

Dash of cayenne
pepper (optional)

Pretzels, crackers, or
baguette slices, for
serving (optional)

Beer and cheese—what a combo! Use it as a spread or a dip, or eat it right out of the bowl. No judgment here.

1. Melt the butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Slowly pour in the beer. Remove the pan from the heat and allow to cool slightly.
2. Place the cheese, Worcestershire, hot sauce, mustards, salt, pepper, and cayenne (if using) in the bowl of a food processor. Carefully add the beer and garlic mixture.
3. Secure a lid on the food processor and pulse the mixture until smooth and creamy. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed in the process.
4. Add additional salt and pepper, to taste, then transfer to a serving bowl.
5. Serve with pretzels, baguette slices, or crackers. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Crispy Smashed Potatoes

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

DIFFICULTY



1 pound
baby yellow
potatoes

1/2 cup coarse
kosher salt,
plus more for
seasoning

2 tablespoons
salted butter

1 yellow onion,
sliced very thin

6 cloves garlic,
peeled and
smashed

3 tablespoons
olive oil

Freshly ground
black pepper,
to taste

These potatoes are great with a breakfast of sausage and eggs, at lunch alongside some hot chicken, at dinner with a fried pork chop, or leftover cold from the fridge with a glass of whiskey.

1. Place the potatoes and salt in a medium pot and fill with enough cold water to cover by at least 2 inches. Set the pot over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are softened enough to easily pierce with the tip of a knife. Drain the potatoes and set aside to cool slightly. Do not rinse.
2. Transfer the potatoes one at a time onto a cutting board and firmly smash with the bottom of a wide, heavy glass, to 1/2-inch thickness.
3. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and slightly caramelized, about 15 to 20 minutes. Add the garlic and continue cooking for another 8 to 10 minutes, or until the onions are very soft and deeply caramelized.
4. Add the smashed potatoes and olive oil to a large mixing bowl and toss to coat. Arrange the potatoes in a single layer in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet.
5. Set the skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, without moving the potatoes, until the bottoms are very crispy and browned, about 7 to 9 minutes. Flip and cook the other side of the potatoes to the same doneness, about 6 to 8 minutes more. Add the onions and garlic to the skillet and sauté until heated through.
6. Transfer the potatoes to a serving dish. Season with additional salt and pepper, to taste. Serve immediately.



Chicken Thighs with Vegetables and Beans

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 2 HOURS 15 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 12 HOURS

DIFFICULTY 

1¼ cups dried pinto or kidney beans (8 ounces) or 2 (15-ounce) cans

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided

1 large yellow onion, chopped, divided

1 carrot, peeled and chopped

1 stalk celery, chopped

8 bone-in skin-on chicken thighs (about 3 pounds)

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

¾ cup white wine

2¾ cups chicken broth

1 cup sugar snap peas, cut in half crosswise

1 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen

½ cup fresh basil leaves, sliced into thin ribbons

6 chives, finely chopped

Juice of ½ a lemon

This is a great go-to when having friends over. Making the dried beans from scratch takes more time, but the end result is worth it. Canned beans will do in a pinch!

1. Rinse the beans thoroughly with cold water, then transfer to a large bowl. Fill the bowl with enough fresh water to cover the beans by a few inches. Stir. Allow the beans to stand at room temperature for 12 hours.
2. Set a large pot over medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add half the onion and all the carrots and celery. Sauté until softened and lightly browned, about 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Drain the beans and add to the pot. Pour in enough fresh water to cover the beans and vegetables by 1 inch and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low so the liquid simmers. Cook for 1½ hours, or until the beans are tender. (If using canned beans, skip this step and simply add the drained beans to the sautéed vegetables.) Pour the beans and vegetables into a large bowl and set aside.
4. Season the chicken thighs liberally with salt and pepper.
5. Return the pot to medium-high heat and add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Place half of the chicken thighs skin side down in the hot oil. Cook without moving until golden brown and crispy, about

4 to 5 minutes. Flip and cook the skinless side until lightly browned, about 4 minutes more. Transfer to a plate and repeat with the remaining chicken thighs.

6. Add the bell pepper and remaining onion to the chicken drippings in the pot. Sauté until softened and lightly browned, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook just until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Season with salt and pepper.
7. Pour the wine into the pot and scrape up any brown bits from under the vegetables. Pour in the chicken broth and bring to a simmer.
8. Add the chicken back into the pot and cover. Simmer for 35 to 40 minutes until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 160°F. Add the beans, snap peas, and corn, and continue cooking for 5 to 10 minutes more, or until heated through.
9. Remove the pot from the heat. Stir in the basil, chives, lemon juice, and additional salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.





Tater Tots

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 2 SERVINGS
(UNLESS YOU EAT LIKE REX DOES.
THEN I SUGGEST GETTING YOUR OWN.)

Alright, y'all. Let's not mess around.

Fun fact: Rex and I spent our first Valentine's Day date at Sonic. Not that fancy, just like I like it. I'd say I've found my match. Mama would approve.

1. Get in your car.
2. Drive to Sonic.
3. Order the tots.
4. Just be happy.



Rex's Pecan-Smoked Beer-Can Chicken Tacos

MAKES 8 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 2 HOURS
INACTIVE TIME: 50 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



- 1/2 cup apple juice, plus more if needed
- 1 (5 to 6-pound) whole chicken
- 1/4 cup chicken rub or poultry seasoning, more if needed (Rex's favorite is SuckleBusters Clucker Dust Chicken Rub)
- 1 can beer
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 sweet onions, finely chopped
- 3 to 4 jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 to 3 cloves fresh garlic, finely chopped
- 6 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon hatch green chile powder, plus more if desired*
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 16 soft taco tortillas (corn or flour)
- Shredded Mexican cheese, diced avocados or guacamole, diced tomatoes, shredded lettuce, and barbecue sauce (like Reba's Place Spicy Hot Barbecue Sauce p. 108) for serving (optional)

*If this powder is unavailable at your store, substitute with canned hatch green chiles, drained, to taste.

I'm a get-in-there-and-throw-it-together-last-minute kind of cook, but Rex is a three- or four-day cook. These tacos take time, and there are no shortcuts (believe me, I've tried!), but it's always worth it whenever I take that first juicy, fall-off-the-bone bite. Here's the recipe, straight from Rex! He uses a smoker, but if you don't have one, a grill works too.

1. Preheat a wood smoker to 225°F. Rex uses pecan wood for this recipe, but you can use whatever kind of wood you like. If using a grill, set to medium-high heat. Fill a small spray bottle with apple juice and set aside.
2. Liberally rub the chicken on all sides and inside the cavity with poultry seasoning. (Seriously, don't hold back! Be bold!) Allow to rest for 30 minutes while the smoker preheats.
3. Open the beer can and take a big gulp (about 1/4 of the can). Sprinkle a touch of poultry seasoning into the can. Insert the can, open end up, into the chicken's cavity, sitting the bird right side up. If you

- have a metal beer can chicken stand, place the beer can into the stand, open end up, and sit the bird on top.
4. Carefully move the beer can chicken to the smoking rack. Smoke for 2 hours, using indirect heat, until the thighs reach an internal temperature of 155°F. Lift the lid of the smoker every 15 minutes, and spray the chicken liberally with apple juice.
 5. While the chicken smokes, add the olive oil to a large sauté pan and set it over medium-high heat. Add the onions and jalapeños and cook, stirring frequently, until softened and lightly browned, about 7 to 9 minutes. Add the garlic and continue cooking until fragrant, about 1 to 2 minutes more. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
 6. Place the mayonnaise, hatch green chile powder, to taste, and a pinch of salt in a small bowl and stir until combined and light green in color. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.
 7. Carefully slide the chicken over direct heat and cook until the skin is golden and thighs reach an internal temperature of 165°F, about 10 minutes.
 8. Take the chicken out of the smoker and carefully remove the beer can. Allow to rest for 20 to 30 minutes. Once cool enough to handle, remove every morsel of meat and skin from the bones and shred. (You don't want to miss a single bite! You're going to cuss Rex 'cause it's going to take some time!)
 9. When you're ready to eat, warm the tortillas in a lightly oiled skillet over medium heat, allowing the edges to slightly char.
 10. Assemble tacos with chicken, the sauteed onion mixture, and hatch chile mayonnaise.



Like It Fancy?

Add garnishes of all kinds. Try shredded Mexican cheese, avocado slices or guacamole, diced tomatoes, shredded lettuce, or barbecue sauce. Whatever strikes your fancy!



Black Bean and Corn Salsa

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

2 tablespoons olive oil
Juice of 1 lime
1 teaspoon agave
syrup or honey
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
Pinch of cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt,
plus more to taste
Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste
2 (15-ounce) cans black
beans, drained and rinsed
1 (15.25-ounce) can corn,
drained and rinsed (or
1 cup frozen corn, thawed)
2 large plum
tomatoes, diced
1/4 red onion, finely diced
2 avocados, pitted,
peeled, and diced
1 scallion, finely chopped
1 large handful fresh
cilantro, finely chopped
Fritos or tortilla
chips, for serving

My friend Terry Gordon makes a fantastic black bean salsa that pairs perfectly with Rex's tacos or is excellent all on its own as a midnight snack. Here's a version of that recipe, which you can adjust to your preferred heat level.

1. Place the oil, lime juice, agave syrup, cumin, garlic, cayenne, salt, and pepper in a large mixing bowl and whisk vigorously until combined.
2. Add the black beans, corn, tomatoes, onion, avocados, scallion, and cilantro to the bowl and mix until thoroughly combined. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.
3. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Serve with Fritos or tortilla chips.





Lise Davis's Heart- and Soul- Warming Chicken

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



INACTIVE TIME: 6 HOURS OR MORE

1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1/2 cup pitted prunes
1/2 cup Spanish green olives, pitted
1 (3-ounce) jar capers, drained
6 bay leaves
6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 2 pounds)
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1 handful fresh parsley, finely chopped, for garnish

Lise shared this recipe with me years ago, and I pull it out when I want something simple, elegant, and delicious!

1. Place the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, and oregano in a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Stir in the prunes, olives, capers, and bay leaves.
2. Season the chicken thighs moderately on both sides with salt and pepper. Add them to the bowl of marinade and toss gently to coat.
3. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.
4. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
5. Arrange the chicken thighs skin side up in a 3- or 4-quart baking dish. Pour the remaining marinade into the dish, allowing the prunes, olives, and capers to rest around the chicken. Sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the chicken thighs. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
6. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until the chicken thighs are golden brown and have reached an internal temperature of 165°F.
7. Remove the baking dish from the oven. Transfer the chicken thighs, prunes, olives, and capers to a serving platter. Drizzle with a few spoonfuls of pan drippings and garnish with chopped fresh parsley. Serve immediately.

Shane “Wild West” Tarleton’s Winning Chili

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 2½ HOURS

DIFFICULTY



Shane’s no chef and—full disclosure—he said he tried multiple concoctions before he landed this one successfully. But thanks to the Hillbilly Chili Cook-Off, we know it’s a winner!

2 pounds chuck roast beef,
cut into 1-inch cubes

Kosher salt

Black pepper

3 tablespoons ghee (or
unsalted butter), divided

1 large yellow onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 tomato, chopped

1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste

1 tablespoon chili powder

1 tablespoon ancho chili powder
(or additional chili powder)

½ teaspoons paprika

½ teaspoons cumin

Big pinch of cayenne pepper

½ small Carolina cayenne pepper,
seeded and finely chopped
(optional for very hot chili)

½ cups water

½ cup spicy Bloody Mary mix (optional)

½ teaspoons hot sauce (Shane uses
¾ teaspoon each of Don Julio Salsa
Picante and Valentina Salsa Picante)

-
1. Season the beef liberally with salt and pepper. Add 1 tablespoon of ghee to a large, wide-bottomed pot and set it over medium-high heat. Once hot, add half the beef. Sear, keeping the cubes spaced apart as much as possible, until browned on all sides, about 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer the cooked beef to a large bowl and repeat with another 1 tablespoon of ghee and the remaining cubed beef.
 2. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of ghee to the pot and add the onions. Cook, stirring frequently, until softened and lightly browned, about 5 to 6 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté just until fragrant.

3. Add the beef back to the pot, along with the tomatoes, tomato paste, spices, and Carolina cayenne pepper (if using). Stir to coat the beef and vegetables. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Pour the water into the pot. To make this like Shane's, add in the spicy Bloody Mary mix. (You'll be glad you did!) Stir to combine.
5. Bring to a low boil. Once boiling, turn down the heat to medium-low, so the liquid can simmer. Continue simmering for 2½ to 3 hours, stirring occasionally, until the beef is very tender.
6. Remove the pot from the heat. Stir in the hot sauce and add additional salt and pepper, to taste. Serve!



Rex awarding Shane Tarleton his championship trophy to commemorate his inaugural win at the first Hillbilly Chili Cook-Off at the Fork, Leiper's Fork, Tennessee, 2021





Southern Burger

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 4 BURGERS
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

- 4 potato buns
- 2 tablespoons salted butter, softened
- 2 pounds lean ground beef, shaped into 4 patties
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon Reba's Place Burger Seasoning (p. 97)
- 1 cup Reba's Place Pimento Cheese, divided (p. 158)
 - 1/4 cup Reba's Place Remix Sauce (p. 131)
- 4 large leaves green leaf lettuce
- 1 heirloom tomato, sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 12 slices dill pickles
- 3/4 cup Reba's Place Spicy Chow Chow Relish (p. 96)
- 8 Reba's Place Fried Green Tomato Slices (p. 171)

This burger is another winner—it is one of the tallest burgers you will ever see! Feel free to swap out store-bought pimento cheese, chow chow, burger seasoning, and burger sauce if you want to keep things simple in the kitchen.

1. Spread the cut sides of each bun evenly with softened butter and set aside.
2. Preheat the grill to 450°F.
3. Season the beef patties liberally with salt and pepper. Arrange them on the grill and cook for 9 to 12 minutes, flipping halfway through, until done to your liking. While the burgers cook, toast the buns on the other side of the grill.
4. Remove the patties from the grill and sprinkle with Reba's Place Burger Seasoning. Spoon 1/4 cup of Reba's Place Pimento Cheese onto each.
5. To assemble the burgers, spoon 1 tablespoon of Reba's Place Remix Sauce onto the bottom half of each bun, then top with a lettuce leaf, tomato slice, and 3 pickles. Place the burger patties on top. Spoon 3 tablespoons of Reba's Place Spicy Chow Chow Relish over the patties, then top each with 2 Reba's Place Fried Green Tomato Slices. Close the burgers with the top halves of the buns.

Spicy Chow Chow Relish

MAKES ABOUT 2½ CUPS

PREP TIME: 1 HOUR

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

DIFFICULTY



- ¼ small head of green cabbage,
diced small (about 1½ cups)
- 1 medium yellow onion,
diced small
- 1 green tomato, diced small
- 1 green bell pepper,
seeded and diced small
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded
and diced small
- ½ small red Fresno chili pepper,
seeded and diced small
- 1 tablespoon pickling salt
(or pure kosher salt)
- 2 cups ice cubes
- ½ cup water
- 6 tablespoons white sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon mustard seeds
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon dried
mustard powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon celery seed
- Dash of ground cloves

This recipe makes just enough to have a jar on hand for topping burgers, hot dogs, brats, and even potato salad. If preserving is your thing, you can double or triple the recipe and seal it in Ball jars.

1. Place the cabbage, onion, tomato, and peppers into a large bowl. Sprinkle evenly with salt and mix until thoroughly combined.
2. Add the ice cubes to the bowl and stir to distribute throughout the vegetables. Allow the mixture to sit for 1 hour, stirring every 10 minutes.
3. Transfer the vegetable mixture to a colander, discarding any unmelted ice cubes. Rinse thoroughly with cool water.
4. Place the water, sugars, vinegar, and spices in a large pot and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer. Add in rinsed vegetables.
5. Turn the heat to medium-low. Simmer for 1 hour, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are very tender. Add splashes of water as needed to keep the mixture from sticking to the pot.
6. Remove the pot from the heat and allow to cool to room temperature before serving. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

Burger Seasoning

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT $\frac{2}{3}$ CUP

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

2 tablespoons seasoned salt (like Lawry's)

2 tablespoons freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons kosher salt

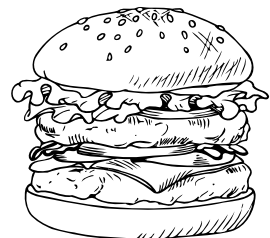
1 tablespoon granulated garlic

1 tablespoon granulated onion

1 tablespoon chili powder

Works for burgers, chicken, or my Mexican Cornbread!

1. Place the seasoned salt, pepper, salt, garlic, onion, and chili powder in a bowl and whisk to combine. Keep stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 6 months.





Chilled Curried Peach Soup

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
INACTIVE TIME: 2 HOURS

6 ripe peaches, peeled,
pitted, and diced

1/2 medium red onion, diced

1-inch piece fresh ginger
root, peeled and chopped

1 clove garlic, chopped

1 cup chicken or
vegetable stock

1 to 2 tablespoons
sweet chili sauce,
plus more to taste

Juice of 1/2 a lime

1 tablespoon rice vinegar

1 tablespoon curry powder

Kosher salt, to taste

3 green onions, finely
chopped, for garnish

2 tablespoons
Mexican crema, for
garnish (optional)

When Brooks & Dunn and I were performing at Caesar's in Las Vegas, we loved going to lunch at Veranda at the Four Seasons, mostly because of this amazing soup! Here's a version that captures the essence. I promise you won't regret trying this one. What I love most is that it tastes and looks fancy, but it's easy and can be made ahead. It's perfect for dinner parties.

1. Place the peaches, onion, ginger, and garlic in a blender and puree until mostly smooth.
2. Add the stock, chili sauce, lime juice, vinegar, and curry powder. Blend until the soup is completely smooth. Add salt to taste.
3. Transfer the soup to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.
4. Serve the soup cold, garnished with chopped green onions and a swirl of crema, if desired.

Memphis-Style Barbecue Bologna Sandwich

MAKES 4 SANDWICHES
PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

4 potato buns
4 tablespoons
salted butter,
softened
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste
4 extra-thick slices
smoked bologna
1/2 cup Reba's Place
Spicy Hot Barbecue
Sauce (p. 108)
1 cup Reba's Place
Creamy Coleslaw,
divided (p. 107)

This recipe is certainly fancier than the hotel-room bologna and Miracle Whip sandwiches we ate on the night of the CMAs. If you're in the mood for something hearty, try this version we make at Reba's Place. Double-smoked slab bologna is best for this recipe. Some deli counters will cut off a chunk of bologna that you can smoke on your home smoker if you have one.

1. Spread the cut sides of each bun evenly with softened butter and sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper.
2. Toast the rolls on a flat griddle or in an extra-large skillet until browned and crispy. Set aside and cover with a clean towel to keep warm.
3. In the butter remaining on the griddle, sear the slabs of bologna until deeply browned, crispy, and heated through, about 3 to 4 minutes on each side.
4. Spoon 1 tablespoon of Reba's Place Spicy Hot Barbecue Sauce on each slab. Allow the sauce to caramelize slightly on the bologna, turning each slab a few times.
5. Transfer the slabs of bologna to the bottom halves of the potato buns. Top each with an additional 1 tablespoon of Reba's Place Spicy Hot Barbecue Sauce, followed by a heaping 1/4 cup of Reba's Place Creamy Coleslaw. Close the burgers with the top halves of the buns, and have napkins handy!





Creamy Coleslaw

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 8 TO 12 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

- 1 small sweet onion, sliced into very thin strips
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise (I love Duke's)
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cups shredded green cabbage (about 8 ounces)
- 1 cup shredded red cabbage
- 3 to 4 kale leaves, sliced into thin strips
- 1 small carrot, shredded

This coleslaw is great on the Reba's Place Memphis-Style Barbecue Bologna Sandwich, but it also holds its own on a buffet table with baked beans, potato salad, and a rack of ribs.

1. Place the sliced onion in a small bowl and cover with cool water. Set aside while you prepare the dressing.
2. Place the mayonnaise, sour cream, vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper in a large mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth and combined.
3. Add the shredded cabbage, kale, and carrot to the bowl.
4. Drain the onions and pat dry with a sheet of paper towel. Add to the mixing bowl. Fold with a rubber spatula until the vegetables are evenly coated.
5. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Spicy Hot Barbecue Sauce

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

- 1½ (6-ounce) cans tomato paste (1 cup)
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup distilled white vinegar
- ¼ cup hot pepper vinegar*
- ¼ cup hot pepper sauce
- ¼ cup tomato juice
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon granulated onion
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- ½ teaspoon dried mustard powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

This is the barbecue sauce to use when you want a bit of a kick. It spices up the Reba's Place Memphis-Style Barbecue Bologna Sandwich or ribs or whatever needs a bit more heat.

1. Place the tomato paste, corn syrup, vinegars, pepper sauce, tomato juice, Worcestershire, onion, garlic, mustard, salt, and pepper in a large mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth and combined.
2. Use immediately, or transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

*You can substitute the hot pepper vinegar with ¼ cup of distilled white vinegar or champagne vinegar mixed with a big dash of cayenne pepper.



Kix's Hickory-Smoked Barbecued Baby Back Ribs

MAKES 2 TO 3 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 4 HOURS

INACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR OR MORE

DIFFICULTY



1/2 cup apple cider
vinegar, plus
more if needed

1/4 cup brown
sugar, packed

1/4 cup paprika

2 tablespoons
coarse kosher salt

1 tablespoon freshly
ground black pepper

2 teaspoons
garlic powder

1 teaspoon cayenne
pepper, more or
less to taste

1 rack pork back
ribs, trimmed (about
2 1/2 pounds)

1 to 2 tablespoons
vegetable oil

Kix's Straight-Up
Barbecue Sauce
(p. 110)

When Kix made these ribs from his cookbook, *Cookin' It with Kix*, I knew I had to get that recipe ASAP. Now we use it all the time.

1. Soak your smoking chips (hickory or mesquite is preferred) in water, beer, whiskey, or apple juice for at least 1 hour. Drain and place in a smoking basket or enclose in a packet of foil.
2. Fill a small spray bottle with vinegar and set aside.
3. Place the sugar, paprika, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and cayenne in a small mixing bowl and whisk to combine.
4. Brush the ribs on both sides with vegetable oil. Coat generously in the sugar rub. Wrap tightly in foil or plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
5. Preheat the grill to 225°F. Place the smoking chips on one side of the grill directly over the heat source and close the lid. Once smoking, place the ribs on the opposite side of the grill, so that they are in indirect contact with the heat.
6. Smoke for 4 to 5 hours, until the ribs are very tender. Every 30 minutes throughout cooking, lift the lid of the grill and spray the ribs with vinegar. When the ribs are 20 minutes from done, spread the meaty side with an even coat of Kix's Straight-Up Barbecue Sauce.
7. Remove the ribs from the grill. Allow to rest for 10 minutes, then cut into portions and serve.

Kix's Straight-Up Barbecue Sauce

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT 2½ CUPS
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

½ yellow onion, very finely chopped
2 cups ketchup
¼ cup light corn syrup
¼ cup dry red wine
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon whole-grain spicy mustard
1½ teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon brown sugar, packed
2 cloves garlic, grated
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, more or less to taste
Hot sauce, to taste

What I like about this homemade barbecue sauce is that it's super easy to make, and you don't have to cook it. This recipe makes about 2½ cups, so double it if you think you'll need more sauce than that. This sauce would be great on any recipe calling for barbecue sauce; I especially like it with Kix's ribs.

1. Place the onion, ketchup, corn syrup, wine, lemon juice, mustard, Worcestershire, brown sugar, garlic, salt, cayenne, and hot sauce (if using) in a large mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth and combined.
2. Use immediately, or transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 1 week.





Nikki Spalaris's Ban-Nutty Pup Cookies

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 2½ DOZEN COOKIES

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 15 MINUTES

1 cup creamy peanut butter
2 ripe bananas, mashed
2 cups old-fashioned oats

Here's a pup-friendly recipe that Nikki created for her dogs, Frankie and Geno. Riddler would devour these in no time. Shelby and Marissa's dogs, Watson and Belle, love them too.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Place the peanut butter and mashed bananas in a large mixing bowl and stir to combine. Add the oats and mix until thoroughly combined.
3. Drop the mixture by heaping tablespoons onto the cookie sheets. Gently press the tops of the cookies with dampened fingers to flatten slightly. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
4. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until the cookies are golden brown on the edges. Remove the baking sheets from the oven.
5. Allow the cookies to cool completely on the baking sheets before treating the pups!



Katy McEntire's Chicken-Fried Steak

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 25 MINUTES

4 beef cube steaks
(about 1 pound)

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

1³/₄ cup all-purpose
flour, divided

1 cups buttermilk

1 egg

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon
baking powder

1/2 teaspoon
baking soda

1/4 teaspoon
cayenne pepper,
plus more to taste

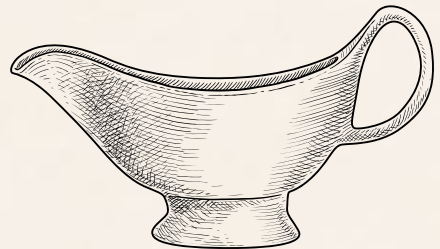
3 cups peanut
oil, for frying (or
vegetable oil)

3 tablespoons
salted butter

3 cups whole
milk, for gravy

When Pake and I hauled together rodeoing one summer, we would split a chicken-fried steak for lunch most days, mainly to save on money. My ex-sister-in-law, Katy, was sweet enough to help me out with her recipe. Her terrific chicken-fried steak takes me back to those long-ago diner steaks that Pake and I loved so much. It's also delicious with Susie's Green Bean Supreme (p. 156).

1. Place the steaks between 2 sheets of plastic wrap and pound with a meat mallet to 1/2-inch thickness. Season the steaks on both sides with salt and pepper.
2. Place 1 1/2 cups of flour in a shallow bowl and whisk in 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper.
3. In a second shallow bowl, add the buttermilk, egg, garlic, baking powder, baking soda, and cayenne. Whisk until smooth.



4. When ready to fry the steaks, attach a thermometer to the side of a deep skillet and pour in the oil. Heat to 325°F and maintain the temperature within a range of 25°F.
5. While the oil heats, coat the steaks. Dredge a steak in flour, shaking off the excess. Dip into the buttermilk batter. Allow the excess to drip back into the bowl, then return to the flour. Press gently and flip to coat both sides. Set the steak on a wire rack and repeat with the remaining steaks.
6. Once the oil is at temperature, fry the steaks until golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes on each side. Work in two batches, if necessary. Transfer the steaks to a paper towel-lined plate. Cover loosely with foil to keep warm while you make the gravy.
7. Carefully drain the oil from the skillet and return it to the heat. Add the butter and let it melt. Whisk the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of flour into the butter, scraping the bottom of the pan to incorporate the browned bits.
8. While whisking steadily, slowly pour in the milk. Increase the heat to medium and bring the gravy to a simmer. Cook, whisking frequently, until the gravy is thickened and bubbling, about 6 to 7 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat. Whisk in a big pinch each of salt and pepper, and a dash of cayenne, if desired.
9. Transfer the steaks to serving plates and spoon the gravy on top. Serve immediately.

Cowgirl V&T

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 1 DRINK
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

- 5 to 6 thin slices
seedless cucumber
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1½ ounces vodka
- ½ ounce St-Germain
Elderflower Liqueur
- 1 (6.8-ounce) bottle
Elderflower Tonic Water
(like Fever-Tree)

This is a light, refreshing drink—a perfect way to kick off a girls trip.

1. In a tall cocktail glass, layer ice with slices of cucumber. Stand the rosemary between the ice and the edge of the glass.
2. Pour the vodka and St-Germain into the glass. Top with tonic water. Garnish with a cucumber slice and enjoy!



Nikki Spalaris's Salted Chocolate Chip Shortbread Cookies

MAKES 2 DOZEN COOKIES

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 15 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 2 HOURS

DIFFICULTY



1 cup (2 sticks) salted butter, room temperature

1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed

1/4 cup white sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

3/4 cup semisweet or bittersweet dark chocolate (like

Ghirardelli), use one or both kinds of chocolate

Flaky sea salt

Nikki's cookies are seriously addictive and a great addition to any gathering with friends. There's no chance you'll have any leftovers, so make sure you save a few for yourself! They're so good that we decided to serve these at the end of every meal at Reba's Place.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Place the butter, sugars, and vanilla in the bowl of an electric stand mixer or a large mixing bowl. Beat on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Turn the mixer to medium-low and add the flour in two batches, waiting until each addition is incorporated before adding the next, until the ingredients are combined. Add the chocolate and mix to incorporate.
4. Divide the dough in half and place each half on a large sheet of plastic wrap. Shape the dough into 2 1/4-inch thick logs. Twist the ends of the plastic wrap and gently roll the logs to smooth the edges. Transfer to the refrigerator and chill until firm, at least 2 hours.
5. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
6. Slice each log into 1/2-inch-thick rounds. Arrange 1 inch apart on the prepared sheet pans. Sprinkle with flaky salt. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.

7. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, until the cookies are golden brown on the edges. Remove the baking sheets from the oven.
8. Allow the cookies to rest on the sheets for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before serving.

This dough can be made 1 week in advance and frozen for up to 1 month. Store baked cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for 2 days, or in the refrigerator for 1 week.



Louis Calabro's Mint, Lemon, and Ginger Iced Tea

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
INACTIVE TIME: 8 HOURS

DIFFICULTY



6 cups filtered water
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
1 thumb-sized knob
fresh ginger root, peeled
and thinly sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh mint leaves,
plus more for garnish
4 peppermint tea bags
(or 4 tablespoons loose
leaf peppermint tea)
1 cup fresh lemon juice
Sliced lemon, for garnish

As I mentioned, my friends and I love an iced tea. This one might not get you as tipsy as we were out there in Barbados, but it sure does taste a whole lot better. This is a re-creation of a recipe one of my friends, composer Louis Calabro, kindly brought to a party I had once. I usually double or triple this recipe and keep a pitcher chilled in the fridge for later.

1. Pour the water into a large saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved.
2. Remove the pan from the heat. Add the ginger, mint, and tea. Allow to steep for 12 to 15 minutes, then strain into a pitcher through a fine mesh sieve.
3. Stir the lemon juice into the tea. Transfer to the refrigerator and chill until cold, at least 8 hours.
4. To serve, pour the tea into tall glasses of ice. Garnish with lemon slices and fresh mint leaves, and enjoy!





Cherry Coke Barbecue Burger

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

My band and I have spent a lot of time together on the road over the years. In the early years, when I was traveling on a bus, we ate in truck stops and fast-food joints, especially in the eighties. And that meant burgers dripping with melty cheese and a side of crispy fries or, my personal favorite, tater tots, usually with a strawberry shake.

Nobody makes a cheeseburger like they do at truck stops. They remind me of those good old days on the road with some of my favorite people. When I get that craving, I try to go get the real thing, but when that's not possible, this burger hits the spot.

- 4 potato buns
- 2 tablespoons salted butter, softened
- 2 pounds lean ground beef, shaped into 4 patties
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon Reba's Place
Burger Seasoning (p. 97)
- 8 slices smoked cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup Reba's Place Remix Sauce (p. 131)
- 4 large leaves green leaf lettuce
- 1 heirloom tomato, sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 12 slices Reba's Place Bread-
and-Butter Pickles (p. 137)
- 8 slices Reba's Place Brown Sugar
Candied Bacon (p. 132)
- 1/4 cup Reba's Place Cherry Coke Barbecue
Sauce (p. 135), more to taste
- 8 Reba's Place Onion and
Jalapeño Haystacks (p. 134)

1. Spread the cut sides of each bun evenly with softened butter and set aside.
2. Preheat the grill to 450°F.
3. Season the beef patties liberally with salt and pepper. Arrange them on the grill and cook for 9 to 12 minutes, flipping halfway through, until done to your liking. In the last 3 minutes of grilling, season the patties with Reba's Place Burger Seasoning and top each with 2 slices of cheese. While the burgers cook, toast the buns on the other side of the grill.



4. Remove the burgers from the grill. To assemble, spread 1 tablespoon of Reba's Place Remix Sauce onto the bottom half of each bun, then top with a lettuce leaf, tomato slice, and 3 pickles. Place the burger patties on top, followed by 2 slices of Reba's Place Brown Sugar Candied Bacon. Drizzle with Reba's Place Cherry Coke Barbecue Sauce, then top with 2 Reba's Place Onion and Jalapeño Haystacks each. Close the burgers with the top halves of the buns.

Remix Sauce

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT 1¹/₄ CUPS
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

This sauce may look simple, but don't be fooled! Remix Sauce is the perfect accompaniment to so many of my favorite foods—burgers, fries, tots, fried okra, even on a baked potato if you're looking for a comforting kick.

1/2 cup ketchup
1/2 cup mayonnaise
(I love Duke's)
1/4 cup yellow
mustard
Kosher salt, to taste

1. Place the ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, and salt in a mixing bowl and whisk until smooth. Transfer to an airtight container and keep refrigerated for up to 1 week.



Brown Sugar Candied Bacon

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES

3 egg whites
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1/4 cup real maple syrup
1/4 cup bourbon whiskey
1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 pound thick-sliced applewood bacon (8 slices)

Don't leave this bacon out. People will gobble it up before you can get it on the burger! Just trying to keep you from having to make another batch.

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Place the egg whites in a large mixing bowl. Whisk vigorously until they become foamy.
3. Add the brown sugar, maple syrup, bourbon, Cajun seasoning, and paprika, and whisk until smooth and combined.
4. Separate the bacon slices and add them to the mixing bowl. Stir until the slices are evenly coated in the egg white mixture.
5. Lift the bacon slices from the bowl and lay them flat on the baking sheets. Spoon a few tablespoons of the remaining egg white mixture onto the slices. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
6. Bake for 35 to 37 minutes, or until the bacon is deeply caramelized. Watch carefully in the last few minutes of baking to make sure it doesn't burn.
7. Remove the baking sheets from the oven. Transfer the bacon slices to clean sheets of parchment paper and allow to cool for 10 minutes before using.



Onion and Jalapeño Haystacks

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 20 MINUTES OR MORE

DIFFICULTY



1 large yellow onion, very thinly sliced

1 large red onion, very thinly sliced

1 egg

1 cup whole milk

3 jalapeño peppers, seeded and very thinly sliced lengthwise

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 quart peanut oil (or vegetable oil), for frying

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning

I can sit and eat a whole platter of these. They are so good. You can serve these as an appetizer with a side of Reba's Place Homemade Ranch Dressing (p. 43) or Reba's Place Remix Sauce (p. 131), or put them on burgers to add some extra crunch and flavor.

1. Place the onions in a large colander and rinse under cold water for several minutes, until their smell is nearly gone. Pat thoroughly dry with paper towels or a clean kitchen towel.
2. Place the egg and milk in a large mixing bowl and whisk until smooth. Add the onions and jalapeños. Let them soak for at least 20 minutes, or up to 2 hours.
3. Place the flour in a separate large bowl.
4. Attach a thermometer to the side of a large Dutch oven and add the peanut oil. Heat the oil to 350°F and maintain the temperature within a range of 25°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set it next to the Dutch oven.
5. Using a large slotted spoon, lift a scoop of the vegetables from the milk mixture, allowing the excess to drip back into the bowl. Transfer to the bowl of flour and toss to coat.
6. Using a deep fryer skimmer or large fork, lift the vegetables from the flour and drop them into the hot oil. Fry just until golden brown and crispy, about 3 to 5 minutes.
7. Remove the vegetables from the oil and transfer to the baking sheet. Sprinkle immediately with a bit of Cajun seasoning. Repeat with the remaining vegetables, then serve immediately.

Cherry Coke Barbecue Sauce

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 40 MINUTES

- ¼ cup crystalized ginger,
roughly chopped
- 1 cup dried cherries
- 4 cups Coca-Cola
- 1 (6-ounce) can
tomato paste
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup distilled
white vinegar
- ¼ cup sherry vinegar
- 1 cup dark brown
sugar, packed
- ¼ cup Worcestershire
sauce
- 1 teaspoon
granulated onion
- 1 teaspoon
granulated garlic
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt,
plus more to taste
- ½ teaspoon freshly
ground black pepper,
plus more to taste

This sweet barbecue sauce can go on everything from brisket to burgers, ribs to hot dogs. Who knew Coca-Cola had so much to offer?

1. Place the ginger and dried cherries in a large pot and pour in the Coca-Cola. Set the pot over medium-high heat and bring the liquid to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat so the liquid simmers.
2. Add the tomato paste, corn syrup, vinegars, brown sugar, Worcestershire, onion, garlic, salt, and pepper to the pot and whisk to combine. Continue simmering, stirring occasionally, until the mixture has thickened and reduced down to slightly less than 2 cups. This may take anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes.
3. Remove the pot from the heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Once cool, pour the sauce into a food processor. Puree until very smooth.
4. Pour the sauce into a storage container. Adjust salt and pepper to taste. Keep refrigerated for up to 1 month.

Baked Macaroni and Cheese

DIFFICULTY



PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES
MAKES 12 TO 16 SERVINGS

1 (16-ounce) box large elbow noodles

9 tablespoons salted butter, divided

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

3 cups whole milk

1 cup half and half

1/2 teaspoon ground mustard powder

1/2 teaspoon paprika

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Dash of cayenne pepper, more to taste

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

3 ounces cream cheese, softened

8 ounces Velveeta, cubed

12 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, freshly shredded (about 3 cups)*

36 buttery round crackers, finely crushed (like Ritz)

*Or a mix of sharp cheddar and Gouda, Gruyère, Havarti, or Fontina cheese.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 4-quart baking dish.
2. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add the noodles, stirring occasionally, until not quite cooked, about 6 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water. Set aside.
3. Melt 6 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. Add the flour and whisk it steadily into the butter until the mixture turns golden, about 1 minute.
4. Slowly stream the milk and half and half into the pot while continuing to whisk, dissolving any lumps. Add the mustard, paprika, garlic powder, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Whisk steadily as the sauce heats, until it begins to thicken, about 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat.
5. Drop the cream cheese by the spoonful into the sauce and stir. Add the cubed Velveeta and stir until mostly melted. Add the shredded cheese, stirring slowly after each handful, until the sauce is smooth.
6. Add the noodles to the cheese sauce and fold until coated. Pour the mixture into the baking dish.
7. Place the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter in a large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for about 30 seconds, or until melted. Add the crushed crackers to the bowl and mix until evenly moistened.
8. Sprinkle the cracker crumbs over the macaroni and cheese. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
9. Bake for 20 to 23 minutes, until the topping is golden brown. Remove the dish from the oven. Allow to cool for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

Bread-and-Butter Pickles

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

PREP TIME: 1 HOUR

INACTIVE TIME: 5 DAYS

DIFFICULTY



PICKLES

1 pound cucumbers,
sliced 1/4-inch thick

1/2 cups kosher
salt, divided

5 cups ice cubes

1 yellow onion, thinly sliced

4 large stalks celery,
thinly sliced

BRINE

2 cups distilled
white vinegar

2 cups apple cider vinegar

1 cup water

1/4 cup kosher salt

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons
white sugar

1/2 cup honey

1 tablespoon celery seed

1/2 teaspoon red
pepper flakes

1/2 teaspoon
mustard seeds

1/2 teaspoon
fenugreek seeds

1/2 teaspoon whole cloves

1/2 teaspoon
allspice berries

1/2 teaspoon turmeric

I'll admit, these are some fancy pickles. They take longer to make than I'd like (you have to wait five days to eat them!), but good things come to those who wait.

1. Place the cucumber slices in a large bowl. Sprinkle with 1 cup of salt and add 2/3 of the ice cubes. Toss gently to coat.
2. Place the onion and celery in a separate bowl. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/2 cup of salt and add the remaining ice cubes. Toss gently to coat. Let the mixtures rest for 1 hour, stirring both every 10 minutes.
3. Rinse the cucumbers with cold water. Discard any unmelted ice cubes. Do the same for the onions and celery.
4. Layer the rinsed cucumbers with the onion and celery in an 8-quart storage container.
5. Place vinegars, water, salt, sugar, honey, celery, red pepper, mustard, fenugreek, cloves, berries, and turmeric in a large saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil. Once boiling, remove the pan from the heat.
6. Carefully pour the hot brine over the vegetables.
7. Place a square of parchment over the vegetables. Set a plate on top of the parchment, allowing the brine to rise over it as it weighs down the vegetables.

8. Cover the container and transfer to the refrigerator. Refrigerate for at least 5 days before using. Keep stored for up to 3 weeks.





Butter Lettuce and Pickled Peach Salad

MAKES 2 TO 4 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR OR MORE

DIFFICULTY



Paired with the Reba's Place Honey-Apple Vinaigrette, this salad is great to serve up in the summertime. Head to your local farmers market to grab some fresh locally grown peaches.

2 large yellow peaches, pitted and sliced 1/4-inch thick	1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
1/2 cup champagne vinegar	8 ounces burrata cheese (1 large or 2 small balls)
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar	2 heads butter lettuce (or Bibb lettuce), washed, dried, and leaves separated
1/4 cup sherry vinegar	1/2 cup Honey-Apple Vinaigrette (p. 144)
1/4 cup honey (use local honey if possible)	1/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted
1 cinnamon stick (or a pinch of ground cinnamon)	1/4 cup mixed fresh soft herbs, finely chopped (like chives, parsley, tarragon, or chervil)
3 whole cloves (or a dash of ground cloves)	Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3 allspice berries (or a dash of ground allspice)	

1. Place the sliced peaches in a medium bowl and set aside.
2. Place the vinegars, honey, spices, and salt in a saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer. Once simmering, remove the pan from the heat and pour the liquid over the peaches. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
3. Once the peaches are thoroughly chilled, break the burrata cheese into large pieces and divide them evenly onto serving plates.
4. Lift the peach slices from the liquid and place them in a large mixing bowl. Add the lettuce leaves. Drizzle with Honey-Apple Vinaigrette and toss gently to coat.
5. Divide the lettuce and peaches evenly over the serving plates, on top of the burrata. Sprinkle each salad with a heaping tablespoon of almonds, 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs, and a few cracks of pepper. Serve immediately.

Honey-Apple Vinaigrette

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

1 cup apple cider
2 tablespoons apple
cider vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon Dijon
mustard (I like Maille)
1/2 cup canola oil
Kosher salt, to taste

This dressing is marvelous on a summer strawberry salad or a harvest apple salad, but is especially good on the Reba's Place Butter Lettuce and Pickled Peach Salad.

1. Pour the apple cider into a small saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium-low so the cider simmers. Simmer until the cider is reduced to about 1/4 cup, about 15 to 20 minutes. It should look like thin syrup.
2. Pour the reduced cider into a mixing bowl. Add the vinegar, honey, and mustard, and whisk to combine.
3. Slowly stream in the canola oil while continuing to whisk steadily, until the dressing is smooth and emulsified. Add salt to taste.
4. Pour the dressing into an airtight container and keep refrigerated for up to 10 days.



Lori Turner's Spinach and Artichoke Dip

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained

1/2 (14-ounce) jar artichoke hearts, drained and roughly chopped

1 (8-ounce) bar cream cheese, room temperature (try garlic & herb or chive & onion flavor)

2 eggs

1 clove garlic, grated

1 cup shredded low-moisture mozzarella or Italian blend cheese

1/2 cup grated Romano cheese (or Parmesan)

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Tortilla chips, for serving

Salsa, for serving

Houston's was one of my favorite Nashville dinner spots. It was right on West End, and their food never disappointed. My favorite dish was their spinach and artichoke dip. I think it was everyone else in Nashville's favorite, as well! After Houston's closed, my friend Lori Turner sent this copycat recipe to me. Every time I make it, it takes me back to my first years living in Nashville.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 1½-quart baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place the spinach and artichokes in a large bowl. Using a clean kitchen towel or a few sheets of paper towels, press down to absorb any excess moisture.
3. Place the cream cheese, eggs, and garlic in a large mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium speed until smooth and combined, about 2 minutes. Add the spinach, artichokes, shredded cheese, grated cheese, salt, and pepper. Fold with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until thoroughly combined.
4. Spread the dip evenly into the prepared baking dish. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
5. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the dip is lightly golden on top and bubbling gently at the edges.
6. Remove the baking dish from the oven. Serve immediately with tortilla chips and a side of salsa.



Strawberry Shortcake

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 40 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 2 HOURS OR MORE

DIFFICULTY



This dessert is a classic for a reason! You can make each component from scratch, like we do at my restaurant, or mix and match with store-bought options. It's up to you to make this as simple or fancy as you'd like!

STRAWBERRIES

16 ounces strawberries, tops removed and quartered (about 2 cups)

1/4 cup sugar

1 vanilla bean, split (or 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract)

1 tablespoon Grand Marnier (optional)

WHIPPED CREAM

2 cups heavy whipping cream, very cold

1/3 cup sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon Grand Marnier (optional)

STRAWBERRIES

1. Place the strawberries in a large mixing bowl and sprinkle with the sugar. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean into the bowl (or add the vanilla extract), and pour in the Grand Marnier (if using). Stir gently to coat the berries in sugar.
2. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, and up to 8 hours.

WHIPPED CREAM

1. Pour the heavy whipping cream into a large mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium-high speed until the cream holds medium peaks, about 3 to 4 minutes.
2. Add the sugar, vanilla, and Grand Marnier (if using). Continue beating just until the cream holds stiff peaks, about 1 to 2 minutes more.
3. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.

CAKE

1³/₄ cups sugar
1¹/₄ cups cake
flour (sold in
the baking aisle
near the all-
purpose flour)
1/4 teaspoon salt

12 egg
whites, room
temperature
1¹/₂ teaspoons
cream of tartar

1 teaspoon
vanilla extract

1 tablespoon
Grand Marnier
(optional)

CAKE

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Have ready a 9-inch tube pan. Do not grease.
2. Place the sugar in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until very fine and powdery. Remove 1 cup of the sugar and set aside. Add the flour and salt to the food processor and pulse a few times to aerate.
3. Place the egg whites and cream of tartar in a very clean, completely dry mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium-high speed until foamy, about 2 minutes. With the mixer running, slowly add the reserved 1 cup of sugar to the bowl. Continue beating until the egg whites double in volume and begin to hold soft peaks. Add the vanilla and Grand Marnier (if using), and beat until the mixture holds medium peaks.
4. Sift the flour mixture into the egg whites in three additions, folding with a very light hand after each, until the batter is just combined.
5. Gently pour the batter into the tube pan and spread it into an even layer. Transfer to the lower-middle rack of the oven.
6. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. (Do not open the oven while the cake is baking, or it will deflate!)
7. Remove the pan from the oven. Turn the cake upside down onto a wire rack without removing the pan. Cool for at least 2 hours. Once cool, run a knife between the edges of the cake and the pan, then tap the bottom until the cake releases.
8. To serve, slice the cake into generous portions and arrange on serving plates. Spoon 1/4 cup of strawberries with their juices onto the cake, and top with a big dollop of the whipped cream.





Pineapple Mojito with Pineapple-Infused Rum

MAKES 1 DRINK

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 3 DAYS OR MORE

DIFFICULTY



PINEAPPLE- INFUSED RUM

1 ripe pineapple, crown and rind removed

1 vanilla bean, split in half lengthwise

1/2-inch piece fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced

750 milliliters silver rum (like Flor de Caña Blanco Four-Year Rum)

PINEAPPLE MOJITO

6 to 8 leaves fresh mint

1 slice lime, plus more for garnish

2 ounces Reba's Place Pineapple-Infused Rum

1/2 ounce fresh lime juice

1/2 ounce simple syrup

1 (7.5-ounce) mini can ginger ale

1 wedge rum-infused pineapple, for garnish

1 sprig fresh mint leaves, for garnish

If you're looking for a way to make your movie night a little more fun, try making a couple of these! You don't have to make your own pineapple-infused rum for these mojitos, but if you're feeling fancy, give it a try!

PINEAPPLE-INFUSED RUM

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

1. Core the pineapple and slice into 1/2-inch thick rings. Cut each ring into 3 wedges and stack them neatly in a large, wide-mouthed glass jar. Add the vanilla bean and ginger.
2. Pour the rum into the jar, fully covering the fruit.
3. Secure a lid on the jar and place it in a cool, dark place. Allow it to infuse for at least 3 days, but preferably 1 week, before using.

PINEAPPLE MOJITO

1. Place the mint leaves and lime slice in a tall glass and muddle together. Fill the glass with ice.
2. Pour the Pineapple-Infused Rum, lime juice, and simple syrup into the glass and stir to combine. Top with ginger ale.
3. Garnish the drink with a pineapple wedge left over from the Pineapple-Infused Rum, a sprig of mint, and a slice of lime. Enjoy!

Susie's Green Bean Supreme

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 25 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



4 (14.5-ounce)
cans whole green
beans, drained

4 tablespoons salted
butter (1/2 stick)

1 yellow onion,
finely chopped

1/4 cup all-
purpose flour

1 (16-ounce)
container sour cream

3/4 teaspoon
kosher salt

Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

1 cup shredded
Parmesan or
cheddar cheese

I had to include this classic. It's Susie's recipe from home economics class from the seventies. Talk about a blast from the past! It was the number one requested vegetable at Thanksgiving when we were growing up!

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 3-quart casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray, or grease with softened butter.
2. Drain the beans and set aside.
3. Melt the butter in a deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and sauté until softened and lightly browned, about 6 to 7 minutes.
4. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Sprinkle the flour over the onions and stir to coat. Add the sour cream, salt, and a big pinch of black pepper. Whisk steadily until the mixture is heated through.
5. Remove the skillet from the heat. Add the green beans and fold until thoroughly coated.
6. Pour the mixture into the baking dish and spread it into an even layer. Sprinkle evenly with shredded cheese. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
7. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the cheese is lightly browned and the dish bubbles gently at the edges.
8. Remove the baking dish from the oven. Allow to cool for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.



Mama's Pimento Cheese Sandwich

MAKES 1 SANDWICH
 PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
 INACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR

DIFFICULTY



It would tickle Mama to know that she inspired a sandwich in my restaurant. I love that her tradition lives on. And with fresh-made pimento cheese, it's even more special. At the restaurant, we prefer to grate blocks of cheese to avoid the additives used to prevent clumping in pre-shredded cheese. For this recipe, it's especially important.

PIMENTO CHEESE

4 ounces cream cheese, softened (1/2 bar)

1/2 cup mayonnaise (I love Duke's)

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon hot sauce (like Crystal)

1 teaspoon paprika

1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic

1/2 teaspoon granulated onion

1 cup sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded (about 4 ounces)

1 cup pepper jack cheese, shredded (about 4 ounces)

1 (4-ounce) jar diced pimento peppers, drained

Kosher salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

PIMENTO CHEESE SANDWICH

2 tablespoons salted butter, softened

2 slices sourdough bread

1 tablespoon Miracle Whip

1/2 cup Reba's Place Pimento Cheese

2 thick slices heirloom or beefsteak tomato

PIMENTO CHEESE

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS OF CHEESE FOR 6 SANDWICHES

1. Place the cream cheese, mayonnaise, Dijon, Worcestershire, hot sauce, paprika, garlic, and onion in a large mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium speed until smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes.
2. Fold in the shredded cheeses and pimentos with a rubber spatula until combined. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

PIMENTO CHEESE SANDWICH

1. Set a skillet or griddle over medium heat. Spread the butter onto one side of each slice of bread.

2. Grill the bread, buttered side down, until golden brown and crispy. Flip the bread to lightly toast the dry side, then transfer to a cutting board.
3. Allow the bread to cool for 1 minute, then spread the dry toasted sides with Miracle Whip. Place the Reba's Place Pimento Cheese onto one of the slices and gently spread it into an even layer. Top with the tomato slices, and close with the other slice of bread.
4. Cut the sandwich in half and serve.





Meatloaf

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 35 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

DIFFICULTY



At Reba's Place, we grind our locally sourced meat from our partners at the Choctaw Nation fresh each day. You can ask your butcher to grind it for you or use already-ground pork and beef. You can make this as fancy as you choose!

1 cup old-fashioned oats (not quick-cooking oats)	4 cloves garlic, minced
2 pounds lean ground beef	2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 pound ground pork	2 eggs
1 cup panko breadcrumbs	1 small handful fresh parsley, finely chopped
1/4 cup heavy cream	1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 slices white or sourdough bread, crusts removed	1 teaspoon hot sauce
2 cups cremini mushrooms, halved (8 ounces)	1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more to taste
1 yellow onion, roughly chopped	1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt (like Lawry's)
2 stalks celery, roughly chopped	1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 large carrot, peeled and roughly chopped	1/2 cup Reba's Place Tangy Barbecue Sauce (p. 217)
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) salted butter	

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Spread the oats onto a baking sheet in an even layer. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven. Toast until fragrant, about 12 to 15 minutes.
3. While the oats toast, place the ground pork and beef in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle evenly with the panko breadcrumbs, then pour in the heavy cream. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and transfer to the refrigerator.
4. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Increase the temperature to 375°F.

5. Transfer the oats to the bowl of a food processor along with the sliced bread. Pulse until very fine. Sprinkle the crumbs over the meat and cream mixture, then return the bowl to the refrigerator.
6. Place the mushrooms, onions, celery, and carrot in the bowl of the food processor. Pulse until finely chopped, to roughly the same size as the ground meat.
7. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the vegetables and sauté until softened and lightly browned, about 6 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and tomato paste. Cook for an additional 2 minutes, stirring to coat the vegetables. Remove the skillet from the heat and allow the vegetables to cool.
8. Add eggs, parsley, Worcestershire, hot sauce, salts, and pepper to the meat mixture. Begin to mix gently with gloved hands or a large wooden spoon. Add the cooled vegetables and continue mixing until all the ingredients are just combined.
9. Press the meat mixture firmly into the loaf pan, ensuring there are no air pockets. Invert the loaf onto a parchment-lined baking sheet and carefully lift off the pan. Gently round and smooth the edges of the loaf with clean, damp hands. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven.
10. Bake for 45 minutes, or until the meatloaf reaches an internal temperature of 155°F. Brush the top of the loaf with Reba's Place Tangy Barbecue Sauce. Continue baking for 15 to 20 minutes, until the sauce is slightly caramelized.
11. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Allow the meatloaf to rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

Like It Fancy?

At Reba's Place, we serve this meatloaf as an open-faced sandwich on our home-made sourdough bread with Reba's Place Onion and Jalapeño Haystacks (p. 134), but it's also great with Baked Macaroni and Cheese (p. 136) and green beans or mashed potatoes and mushroom gravy!

Tangy Barbecue Sauce

DIFFICULTY



MAKES ABOUT 2½ CUPS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

1½ (6-ounce) cans
tomato paste (1 cup)

½ cup dark brown
sugar, packed

½ cup light corn syrup

¼ cup apple juice

¼ cup molasses

¼ cup distilled
white vinegar

¼ cup sherry vinegar

¼ cup Worcestershire
sauce

1 teaspoon granulated onion

1 teaspoon granulated garlic

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon freshly
ground black pepper

At the restaurant, we like our Reba's Place Meatloaf with this tangy sauce, but you can just use plain ol' ketchup if you prefer.

1. Place tomato paste, brown sugar, corn syrup, apple juice, molasses, vinegars, Worcestershire, onion, garlic, salt, and pepper in a medium saucepan, and whisk to combine.
2. Set the pan over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 2 minutes, then remove the pan from the heat.
3. Allow the sauce to cool completely, then pour it into a storage container. Keep refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.



Mama's Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

MAKES 8 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



TOPPING

1/4 cup (1/2 stick)
unsalted butter

1/2 cup brown
sugar, packed

1 (8-ounce)
can pineapple
rings, drained
and patted dry

CAKE

1 1/2 cups all-
purpose flour

1 teaspoon
baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

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

3/4 cup white
sugar

2 eggs

2 teaspoons
vanilla extract

1/3 cup sour
cream

1/3 cup whole
milk

Mama loved to make this. But instead of making it in a baking dish, she would use her cast-iron skillet. As a kid I thought this was the height of fancy cooking!

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. To make the topping, set a 10-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat and add the butter. Once melted, add the brown sugar. Stir steadily until the sugar is dissolved. Remove the skillet from the heat.
3. Slice all but 1 pineapple ring in half. Arrange the pineapple in the skillet on top of the butter and sugar mixture, starting with the whole ring in the center and building the half-rings around it.
4. To make the cake, place the flour, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine.
5. In a separate bowl, place the melted butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla, and sour cream. Whisk until smooth and combined.
6. Create a well in the center of the flour mixture. Pour in the wet mixture. Mix the dry and wet ingredients together with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon. When the batter starts to come together, pour in the milk. Continue mixing until the batter is smooth.
7. Pour the batter into the skillet over the pineapple rings. Gently smooth the top with a rubber spatula so it's even. Transfer the skillet to the middle rack of the oven.
8. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean.

9. Remove the skillet from the oven. Allow the cake to rest for 15 minutes—no more, no less, or the topping will stick!
10. Hold a serving plate facedown over the skillet, then swiftly flip the skillet to invert the cake on the plate. Allow the cake to cool completely before serving.





Fried Green Tomato Slices

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

We top burgers at Reba's Place with these crisp, warm traditional Southern delights. But I like them alongside a big ol' bowl of pinto beans and cornbread as well.

1 quart peanut oil (or vegetable oil), for frying

4 large green tomatoes (very firm), sliced 1/2-inch thick

1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided

1 cup all-purpose flour, divided

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided

2 egg whites

1 tablespoon water

1/2 cup masa harina (also called "corn masa" or "corn flour")

1/2 cup fine yellow cornmeal

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning, divided

1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic

1/2 teaspoon granulated onion

1/2 teaspoon celery salt

1/2 cup Reba's Place Pimento Cheese (p. 158), for serving

1/2 cup Reba's Place Spicy Chow Chow Relish (p. 96), for serving

2 chives, finely chopped, for garnish

1. Attach a thermometer to the side of a large Dutch oven and add the peanut oil. Heat the oil to 350°F and maintain the temperature within a range of 25°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set a cooling rack on top of a third baking sheet and place it next to the Dutch oven.
2. While oil is preheating, arrange the tomato slices in a single layer on a cutting board and sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon of salt.
3. Place 1/2 cup of flour, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of pepper in a shallow bowl. Whisk to combine. In a second bowl, whisk together the egg whites and water until lightly frothy. Place the remaining 1/2 cup of flour, masa harina, cornmeal, Parmesan, 2 teaspoons of Cajun seasoning, garlic, onion, celery salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon of pepper in a third shallow bowl. Whisk to combine.

4. Pat the tomatoes dry with a few sheets of paper towels. Dredge a slice in the flour mixture, flipping to coat both sides. Submerge the slice in the egg whites. Allow the excess to drip back into the bowl, then transfer to the cornmeal mixture. Press gently to adhere the breading and flip to coat both sides. Transfer the tomato slice to the parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining slices.
5. Fry the tomato slices 4 at a time until deeply golden brown, about 2 minutes on each side. Carefully lift them from the oil using a deep fryer skimmer and transfer to the cooling rack. Sprinkle immediately with a bit of Cajun seasoning. Repeat with the remaining tomato slices.
6. To serve, arrange the fried green tomatoes on a serving plate and spoon Reba's Place Pimento Cheese and Reba's Place Spicy Chow Chow Relish over the top. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve immediately.

Carolyn's Panko- and Parmesan-Crusted Chicken with Lemon-Vinaigrette Arugula Salad

MAKES 4 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 15 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY 

On special occasions, my dear friend Carolyn Berry and her family come to my home to cook for us. Most of the ingredients she uses come from their family garden. So fresh and tasty! I'm so grateful her family legacy has become part of mine.

LEMON VINAIGRETTE

Juice of 1½ lemons
2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
⅔ cup canola oil

CHICKEN

1 cup plus 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour, divided
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 egg
1 tablespoon buttermilk or whole milk
1 cup panko breadcrumbs

⅔ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup peanut oil (or vegetable oil), for frying
4 small chicken breast cutlets, pounded to ¼-inch thickness (about 4 ounces each)

SALAD

2 (5 ounce) containers baby arugula
2 cups grape or cherry tomatoes, halved
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
½ cup shaved Parmesan cheese



1. Place the lemon juice, vinegar, honey, sugar, Dijon, salt, pepper, and oil into a large shaker cup or dressing bottle. Secure the lid and shake vigorously until the dressing is emulsified. Refrigerate until ready to use.
2. Place 1 cup of flour and the salt and pepper in a shallow bowl and whisk to combine. In a second bowl, whisk together the egg and buttermilk. Place the panko, Parmesan, and remaining 2 teaspoons of flour in a third shallow bowl. Whisk to combine.
3. Set a wide skillet over medium heat and add the peanut oil. Heat to 350°F and maintain the temperature. Drop a pinch of panko in the oil to test that it's hot enough. The crumbs should sizzle immediately but not burn.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set a cooling rack on top of a second baking sheet and place it next to the skillet.
5. Dredge a chicken cutlet in the flour mixture, flipping to coat both sides. Submerge it in the egg. Allow the excess to drip back into the bowl, then transfer to the panko mixture. Press gently to adhere the breading and flip to coat both sides. Transfer the chicken to the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining cutlets.
6. Fry the chicken, 2 cutlets at a time, until deeply golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to the wire rack.
7. Place the arugula and tomatoes in a large mixing bowl and drizzle with your desired amount of dressing. Toss until thoroughly coated.
8. Divide the salad between four serving bowls and season with salt and pepper to taste. Top each with a chicken cutlet and a few tablespoons of shaved Parmesan. Serve immediately.





Katy McEntire's Smoked Brisket

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 4 HOURS 30 MINUTES

DIFFICULTY



4 to 5 pounds beef
brisket, trimmed

Kosher salt,
to taste

Freshly ground
black pepper,
to taste

2 teaspoons garlic
powder, plus
more to taste

Reba's Place Spicy
Hot Barbecue
Sauce (p. 108)
or Reba's Place
Cherry Coke
Barbecue Sauce
(p. 135), for
serving

Every time I have a party at my house, I try to get Katy, my former sister-in-law, to cook for us because she's just that good in the kitchen. This is her recipe for a tender, moist, and succulent brisket. And I mean it. Rex and I sometimes like to make it for our Easter meal.

1. Preheat a wood smoker to 225°F.
2. Bring the brisket to room temperature. Season liberally with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
3. Place the brisket fatty side down on the smoker grate.
4. Smoke for 2½ to 3 hours, or until the meat reaches an internal temperature of 165°F. Carefully remove the brisket and wrap it tightly in foil. Return it to the grate and continue smoking until the internal temperature reaches 205°F, about 1½ to 2 hours more.
5. Remove the brisket from smoker and allow it to rest for 30 minutes. Slice and serve with lots of Reba's Place Spicy Hot Barbecue Sauce or Reba's Place Cherry Coke Barbecue Sauce.

Marissa Blackstock's Banana Pudding

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 2 HOURS

DIFFICULTY



1/2 (3.4-ounce)
box instant
French vanilla
pudding mix

1/2 (3.4-ounce)
box instant
banana
pudding mix

2 cups
whole milk

1 (8-ounce) bar
cream cheese,
softened

1 (14-ounce)
can sweetened
condensed
milk

1 1/2 cups heavy
whipping
cream,
very cold

2 tablespoons
powdered
sugar

2 (7.25-ounce)
bags buttery
shortbread
cookies or
1 (11-ounce)
box vanilla
wafer cookies

6 large
bananas,
sliced 1/4-
inch thick

Banana pudding was my daddy's favorite dessert, and as I mentioned earlier, Mama would make it for him every year at Christmas. These days, my daughter-in-law, Marissa, makes banana pudding for all of us. Hers is every bit as good as Mama's, and it always takes me back to Christmas on the ranch whenever I have it.

1. Place the pudding mixes in a large mixing bowl. Pour in the milk and whisk until smooth and combined. Set the bowl aside and allow the pudding to thicken.
2. Place the cream cheese in a separate large mixing bowl. Beat with a hand mixer on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the sweetened condensed milk and continue beating until thoroughly combined, about 2 minutes more.
3. Pour the heavy whipping cream into a third mixing bowl. Beat with the hand mixer on medium-high speed until the cream holds medium peaks, about 3 to 4 minutes.
4. Add roughly 1/2 of the freshly whipped cream to the cream cheese mixture. Fold gently until mostly combined. Add this mixture to the pudding. Continue folding, using a light hand, until no streaks of cream remain.
5. Add the powdered sugar to the remaining freshly whipped cream. Beat on medium speed until the cream holds stiff peaks, about 30 seconds to 1 minute.
6. Arrange half the cookies in an even layer on the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Layer half the sliced bananas over the cookies.

7. Pour the pudding mixture into the dish and smooth it into an even layer. Arrange the remaining cookies on top, followed by the remaining bananas. Top with the sweetened whipped cream.
8. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.





Redhead 'Rita

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 1 DRINK
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

'RITA

1½ ounces tequila blanco

½ ounce Solerno Blood
Orange Liqueur

½ ounce Ancho Reyes
Chile Liqueur

1 ounce prickly pear
puree (or guava or
watermelon juice)

1 ounce fresh
raspberry puree

1 ounce fresh lime juice

½ ounce agave syrup
(or simple syrup)

5 drops saltwater
(or a dash of salt)

1 slice lime, for garnish

RIM

¼ cup Himalayan pink salt

¼ cup freeze-dried
raspberries, blended
into powder

1 tablespoon sweetened
lime juice

Around here we like to call it a marga-Reba.

1. Fill a margarita glass with ice and set aside to chill.
2. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add in the tequila, liqueurs, purees, lime juice, syrup, and saltwater and shake vigorously to combine.
3. Whisk together the salt and raspberries in a small bowl. Pour into a shallow dish. Place the sweetened lime juice into a separate shallow dish.
4. Discard the ice from the margarita glass. Dip the glass in sweetened lime juice, then into the salt mixture, pressing firmly to create a thick rim. Fill the glass just below the rim with fresh ice.
5. Strain the drink into the center of the glass. Garnish with a slice of lime, and enjoy!



Fried Avocado Slices

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 4 SERVINGS
 PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES
 COOK TIME: 15 MINUTES

CREMA

- 1/2 cup Mexican crema (or sour cream), for serving
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons hot sauce, more or less to taste (try a Serrano pepper hot sauce)
- Kosher salt, to taste

AVOCADOS

- 1 quart peanut oil (or vegetable oil), for frying
- 2 large avocados, peeled, pitted, and sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 2 egg whites
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 cup plain breadcrumbs
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt (like Lawry's)
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated onion
- 1 small handful fresh cilantro, finely chopped, for garnish
- 1/2 cup salsa verde, for serving

If you're looking for a new way to serve up an avocado, try frying it! Once you start eating them, you won't want to stop. They are great as a side for burgers or tacos.

1. Place the crema, lime juice, hot sauce, and a large pinch of salt in a small mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.
2. Attach a thermometer to the side of a large Dutch oven and add the peanut oil. Heat the oil to 350°F and maintain the temperature within a range of 25°F.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set a cooling rack on top of a second baking sheet and place it next to the Dutch oven.
4. While the oil heats, place the avocado slices on a plate. Sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon of salt and the lime juice. Set aside.
5. Place the flour, remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of pepper in a shallow bowl. Whisk to combine. In a second bowl, whisk together the

egg whites and water until lightly frothy. Place the panko, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, seasoned salt, garlic, onion, and remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of pepper in a third shallow bowl. Whisk to combine.

6. Gently toss the avocado slices in the flour mixture until evenly coated. Transfer $\frac{1}{3}$ of the slices into the egg whites and stir to coat. Lift the slices from the bowl using a large fork and transfer them to the panko mixture. Turn the slices with the fork until evenly coated, then carefully transfer them to the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining avocado slices.
7. Fry the avocado slices in 3 to 4 batches until deeply golden brown, about 4 minutes. Carefully lift them from the oil using a deep fryer skimmer and transfer to the cooling rack.
8. Arrange the fried avocado slices on a plate and drizzle with crema. Sprinkle with chopped fresh cilantro. Serve with a side of salsa verde.



NOLA Shrimp and Grits

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 6 SERVINGS
 PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
 COOK TIME: 50 MINUTES

If you're looking for a fun way to reinvent this New Orleans classic, try this version featuring blue corn grits. These grits deliver a beautiful purple hue that makes this dish look like a million bucks.

GRITS

1 cup blue corn grits (or yellow grits)
 2 cups water
 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cubed
 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt,
 plus more to taste
 Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning, divided
 1 tablespoon tomato paste
 1 cup beer (preferably lager)
 1 cup low-sodium shrimp stock
 (or chicken stock)
 Juice of 1/2 lemon
 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 teaspoon hot sauce
 1/2 cup all-purpose flour

SHRIMP

1 tablespoon olive oil
 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1 sprig fresh rosemary
 Zest of 1/2 lemon
 1 tablespoon sweet paprika

1 1/2 pounds large raw shrimp,
 peeled and deveined
 1/2 cup unsalted butter, divided
 1/2 cup diced tasso ham (about 4 ounces)
 4 green onions, finely chopped, divided

GRITS

1. Place the grits in a fine-mesh sieve and rinse with cool water.
2. Place the grits and water in a large pot and set over medium heat. Bring to a simmer, stirring frequently.
3. Pour the chicken stock into a separate saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat.

4. Add a couple ladles of chicken stock to the simmering grits and stir. Simmer for about 10 minutes, until the stock is mostly absorbed, then add a couple more ladles. Repeat until all the stock has been added to the grits.
5. Once the grits are very soft, turn the heat to as low as it goes. Add the butter and salt. Stir gently until the butter is fully melted into the grits. Add additional salt and pepper to taste. Keep warm while you prepare the shrimp.

SHRIMP

1. Add the olive oil to a large saucepan and set it over medium heat. Add the garlic, rosemary sprig, lemon zest, paprika, 1^{1/2} teaspoons of Cajun seasoning, and tomato paste. Sauté just until fragrant, about 1 minute.
2. Pour the beer into the pan, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom. Add the stock, lemon juice, Worcestershire, and hot sauce, and stir to combine. Simmer the liquid until it is reduced by half, about 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Once reduced, remove the pan from the heat. Discard the rosemary sprig and set aside.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and remaining 1^{1/2} teaspoons of Cajun seasoning. Add the shrimp to the bowl and toss to coat.
5. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the tasso ham and cook until browned and crispy, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the floured shrimp and half the green onions. Cook, stirring constantly, until the shrimp begins to turn pink, about 2 minutes.
6. Pour the reduced stock into the pan and bring to a simmer. Cook until the shrimp are cooked through, about 4 minutes. Turn off the heat. Add the remaining butter to the pan in 3 additions, whisking after each, to form a sauce.
7. Serve the shrimp over bowls of blue corn grits, garnished with the remaining green onion.



Atoka Float

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 1 DRINK

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 5 MINUTES

INACTIVE TIME: 12 HOURS

VANILLA SIMPLE SYRUP

1 vanilla bean, split

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

FLOAT

1/2 ounces Ole Smoky
Banana Pudding
Cream Moonshine

1 ounce heavy
whipping cream

1/2 ounce Reba's Place
Vanilla Simple Syrup

1 (12-ounce) bottle hard
root beer (like Not Your
Father's root beer)

At Reba's Place, this take-you-back drink is served with a freshly baked chocolate chip cookie.

VANILLA SIMPLE SYRUP

MAKES ABOUT 1 1/2 CUPS

1. Place vanilla bean, sugar, and water in a small saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil.
2. Once boiling, turn the heat to medium-low. Simmer the liquid for 2 minutes, until fragrant. Remove the saucepan from the heat.
3. Remove the vanilla bean and discard. Pour the syrup into a heatproof glass container and refrigerate for at least 12 hours, until chilled. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 months.

FLOAT

1. Place an 18-ounce mug in the freezer for a few hours or overnight.
2. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add the moonshine, cream, and Reba's Place Vanilla Simple Syrup. Shake vigorously to combine.
3. Strain the drink into the frosty mug. Slowly pour the root beer into the glass, letting the froth rise above the top. Enjoy!



Pinto Beans and Cornbread

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 6 SERVINGS
PREP TIME: 40 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 2 HOURS
INACTIVE TIME: 12 HOURS

This is hands-down my favorite food! I've loved pinto beans and cornbread forever! And I still love them. This is the "fancy" version we make at the restaurant, but you don't need a fancy occasion to enjoy them.

PINTO BEANS

- 1 pound dry pinto beans (about 2 cups)
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 (4-ounce) end piece bacon slab, roughly chopped (or 6 slices thick-cut bacon, roughly chopped)
- 1 yellow onion, whole, peeled
- 1 carrot, whole, peeled
- 4 bay leaves
- 8 cups light chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Hot sauce, for serving (optional)

CORNBREAD

- 1½ cups fine cornmeal
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup honey
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup buttermilk (or 1 cup whole milk whisked with 1 teaspoon vinegar)

PINTO BEANS

1. Rinse the beans thoroughly with cold water, then transfer to a large bowl. Fill the bowl with enough fresh water to cover the beans by a few inches. Stir. Allow the beans to stand at room temperature for 12 hours.
2. Drain and rinse the beans, then transfer them to a large pot. Fill the pot with enough fresh water to cover the beans by a few inches. Add the salt.
3. Set the pot over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer. Once simmering, remove the pot from the heat. Drain the beans and rinse gently.
4. Wipe out the pot and return it to the stove over medium-high heat. Add the bacon and cook until it begins to render fat. Add the onion and carrots. Sauté until the bacon is browned and the vegetables are softened, about 8 to 10 minutes.

5. Add the beans and bay leaves to the pot. Pour in the chicken stock, ensuring the beans are covered by at least 3 inches of liquid.
6. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Continue cooking until the beans are fully softened, about 1½ hours. Keep an eye on the pot and turn down the heat if the mixture begins to boil.
7. Add the vinegar and adjust salt and pepper to taste. Remove the pot from the heat. Discard the bay leaves and any large pieces of carrot and onion.
8. Ladle 1 cup of beans with a bit of liquid from the pot into a blender. Puree on low until fully smooth, increasing the speed if needed.
9. Pour the pureed beans back into the pot and stir to combine. Serve immediately with a side of hot sauce, if desired.

CORNBREAD

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Place a 10-inch cast-iron skillet in the oven while it preheats.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, honey, and melted butter until combined.
4. Pour the liquid mixture into the dry mixture and begin to whisk. Add the buttermilk and continue whisking until the ingredients form a thick batter. A few lumps are okay!
5. Remove the hot skillet from the oven and pour the batter into it. Return the skillet to the middle rack of the oven.
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
7. Remove the skillet from the oven and allow to cool for at least 30 minutes before serving.

The Tropical Trish

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 1 DRINK
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

This is definitely some of the good stuff. This refreshing *Barb and Star*-inspired cocktail will make you feel like you've been whisked away to a sunny beach even if it's the middle of winter! You'll want to serve this in a tall, chilled glass. I like to add a little pineapple wedge cut in the shape of a star as the perfect garnish! Triple the recipe and you'll have enough to fill a punchbowl. Bonus points if you can make a pirate ship out of papaya to go on top like in the movie!

1½ ounces Reba's
Place Pineapple-
Infused Rum (p. 150)
1 ounce blue Curaçao
2 ounces
pineapple juice
1 ounce creme
de coconut
½ ounce mango juice
½ ounce fresh
lemon juice
½ cup ice, plus
more as needed
Pineapple wedge
or orange slice,
for garnish

1. Place rum, Curaçao, juices, creme de coconut, and ice in a high-powered blender and blend until slushy.
2. Pour into a tall, chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a pineapple wedge or orange slice and enjoy!





The Fancy

DIFFICULTY



MAKES 1 DRINK
PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

2 ounces whiskey
(I love Blanton's)
Squeeze of lime juice
6 ounces 7UP or Sprite
Lime wedge, for garnish

I like a lot of different drinks, but I always come back to my old standby—my version of a seven and seven. I've adapted it over the years as my tastes have changed. It's the closest thing I have to a signature drink—The Fancy.

1. Fill a highball glass with ice. Add the whiskey, lime juice, and soda. Stir gently to mix.
2. Garnish with a lime wedge and enjoy!

Like It Not That Fancy?

If you'd like a non-alcoholic version, swap the whiskey for cranberry juice.