

● Southern Cornbread

Ezekiel Preedin, Chef & Honey Bee Gardens Contributor

2½ c coarse stone ground yellow cornmeal (local farm or Bob's Red Mill)
2½ c all-purpose flour
½ c granulated sugar
4 t baking powder
1 t baking soda
1 T salt
2 whole eggs, farm fresh
½ c mayonnaise
3½ c buttermilk
1 c cheddar cheese
1 c fresh or frozen corn (off the cob)

Finishing Glaze: Honey Butter

8 T butter (local farm/Amish)
4 T Honey Bee Garden's Honey or other local honey

Mix together dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, whisk eggs until fully blended. Whisk in mayonnaise. Slowly whisk in buttermilk until fully incorporated. Mix wet ingredients into dry. Fold until fully incorporated. Do not over mix. Fold in cheddar and corn. Grease cast iron pan with a pad of butter or bacon fat.

Optional: Line pan with coarse yellow corn meal (polenta grind is best), which gives an added crunch to the crust. You can use this technique for muffins, too!

Add batter to pan, melt butter slowly, and incorporate fresh honey. Use pastry/BBQ brush to apply Honey Butter while cornbread is still warm. Finish with Maldon/Flake Sea Salt. **Recipe Yield:** 12-inch cast iron pan or 30 muffins (paper liners are not necessary for muffins).

Modifications: Fresh Jalapeños (3, seeded and diced small); Pickled Jalapeños (1 cup chopped); Green Onions (1 bunch or 4-6 stalks sliced-greens only-mix into batter and reserve some to garnish the top); Bacon (mix in 1 cup of crispy chopped bacon); Bacon (top with ½ cup of crispy finely chopped bacon); and Fresh/Dry Herbs (add ¼ cup of herbs to batter).

● Chocolate Chip Cranberry Bread

Kathy Lesser, Chicago

2 c all-purpose flour
½ t baking soda
1 c sugar
¼ c water
2 T melted butter
1 c fresh cranberries, finely chopped
1½ t baking powder
¼ t salt
½ c orange juice
1 large egg
1 c almonds, finely chopped
1 c white chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and sugar. In a large mixing bowl, combine orange juice, water, egg, and butter. Add the flour mixture and mix until everything is well blended. Stir in the almonds, cranberries, and white chocolate chips. Pour batter into a greased 9x5-inch loaf pan. Bake for 1 hour, or until a knife inserted comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes, and then remove from pan and cool on cooling rack. Makes 1 loaf, and serves 8-10 slices.

● Mike's Irish Apple Muffin

Mike O'Brien, Summit Argo

2½ c flour
½ t ground cloves
¼ t salt
3 tart apples, cored and chopped
3/8 c walnuts, chopped
¼ c milk or buttermilk
1 T vanilla
1 T baking powder
½ t ground cinnamon
1 stick butter
3/8 c raisins
3 eggs
½-¾ c Greek yogurt
¾ c sugar

Sift flour, baking powder, salt, and spices together in a bowl. Cut in butter. In another bowl, add sugar to chopped up apples and mix in raisins and nuts. Stir in milk and eggs, and mix well. Add flour and mix to make batter. Add vanilla and enough yogurt to finish with smooth batter. Grease muffin pans with bacon grease, and dust with flour. Add batter to muffin cups and bake approx. 30 minutes in preheated 350° oven until toothpick comes clean. Great to serve with ice cream or Cool Whip.

● Sweet Potato Quinoa Cake

James Harvatt, Wildflower Culinary for Honey Bee Gardens Farm

1 c uncooked red quinoa
1 green pepper, small dice
1 t minced garlic
1 c breadcrumbs
1 t chili powder
2 sweet potatoes, small dice
½ yellow onion, small dice
2 eggs
1 t cumin

Cook quinoa until little tails sprout. Peel and dice sweet potatoes, small. Toss in oil, salt, and pepper, and then roast. Sauté bell pepper, onion, and garlic until soft. Combine all ingredients in bowl except for breadcrumbs. Slowly add breadcrumbs until the mix comes together. Mix should form a patty and hold its shape. Form into patties. Chill, then pan sear and finish in oven for about 4 minutes.

● Tomato Soup with Grilled Cheese Croutons

The Superfood Swap Cookbook

Tomato Soup:

1 T extra virgin olive oil
4 c baby spinach leaves
¼ t crushed red pepper flakes
1 (28 oz) can no-salt added crushed tomatoes
4 c low-sodium vegetable broth
1 onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
4 tomatoes, finely chopped
½ c chopped fresh basil

Grilled Cheese Croutons:

4 slices whole grain bread, toasted
4 slices cheddar cheese
2 T balsamic vinegar, for serving

To make soup, in a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, spinach, garlic, and crushed red pepper, and cook 3 minutes. Add fresh tomatoes, canned tomatoes, and basil (save a few leaves for garnish), and cook 5 minutes more. Add broth and bring to a boil. Cover, turn heat down to maintain a simmer, and cook for about 15 minutes. Use an immersion blender to puree soup to a semi-smooth consistency, being careful not to splash yourself with hot soup.

To make croutons, preheat broiler. Top each slice of toast with cheese and place on a baking sheet. Broil for 4 minutes, or until cheese is bubbling. Cut toast into crouton-size pieces. Drizzle soup with vinegar and top with croutons and remaining basil. Makes 4 servings.

● Pasta with Creamy Blue Oyster Mushroom Sauce

Gibby's Gourmet Mushrooms LLC, Chicago Ridge

½ onion, diced
1 lb dry Pappardelle pasta
1 c heavy whipping cream
1 c roasted red bell pepper, chopped, or 1 cup pepper relish
1 lb Blue Oyster Mushrooms (all mushrooms can be used)
½ c grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, plus more for serving
1-2 large garlic cloves, minced
2 T olive oil
Salt & pepper, to taste

Fill large pot with salted water and bring to boil over high heat. Cook pasta according to package directions. Reserve ¼ cup pasta water, drain and set aside. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, chopped mushrooms, and roasted red peppers. Season with salt and pepper, and cook approx. 4 minutes. Add garlic and simmer another 2-3 minutes. Stir in cheese and pasta until coated. If sauce is too thick, add reserved pasta water. Garnish with additional cheese. Makes 4-6 servings.

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Best Cherry Bars

Joyce Holste, Midlothian

Cherry Filling:

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| 1 lb cherries (2 c fresh picked pie cherries) | 1 t lemon juice |
| 2 T corn starch | ¼ c sugar |
| | ½ c water |

Crumble Mixture:

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| 2 c all-purpose flour | ¾ c butter (1½ sticks) unsalted, chilled |
| ¾ c sugar | 2 T milk |
| 2 t vanilla | ¼ t salt |

½ t spice powder (can be pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon, clove, and ginger mixture)

Preheat oven to 375°. Use 8x8-inch square cake pan or 7x9-inch rectangle pan with parchment paper and make sure to have excess at edges so can lift out of pan.

Cherry Filling:

- Place cherries in a saucepan with the sugar, lemon juice, and half the water (¼ cup). Heat on low to medium until sugar is dissolved. **Pro-Tip:** Let mixture boil on low for 3–5 minutes until cherries soften and release some of the juices.
- In a separate bowl, combine the remaining water with the cornstarch. Combine well so cornstarch does not settle on the bottom.
- Add the cornstarch water to the cherries. Continue to cook on low—the mixture will thicken and look glossy. When thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon or spatula, it's ready.
- Cool completely. Cooking will thicken the filling some more. Set aside.

Cherry Crumble Mix:

- In a food processor, add flour, sugar, salt, vanilla extract, spice mix, and cold cubed butter. Pulse a few times until crumbly but not too much. **Pro-tip:** We want a crumble with some small pieces and some large pieces of butter. These will give us a good texture and mouthfeel.
- Pour the crumble into two separate bowls—one for the base, and one for the top. **Pro-Tip:** Use a little extra for the base and less for the topping. This gives a bit more structure to the base so the squares will hold better.
- Top crumble—keep the bowl for crumble topping in the fridge to stay cold. **Pro-Tip:** The butter in the crumble must be chilled well when added on top, otherwise it will melt instead of baking like a crumble.
- Base crumble—add the two tablespoons of milk to the crumble for the base and combine well and pour the mixture into the baking pan. Use the back of a spoon to press it down firmly. **Pro-Tip:** The milk makes sure the base is pressed firmly and does not crumble when cutting the square so don't omit this.
- Bake the base for 10 minutes until lightly golden but not cooked through. Cool for 5 minutes. **Pro-Tip:** Want the base to be partially cooked, so it is firm as a base. This way it won't soak up the filling juices and crumble apart.
- Pour filling over the base and spread evenly. Generously sprinkle the crumbled top mixture all over the filling (saved in the fridge). Use fingers but a spoon works well too. **Pro-Tip:** The top does not have to be even. In fact, the more uneven it is, the better the baked crumble topping.
- Continue to bake in the oven for another 35–45 minutes until lightly golden. When done, cool in the pan for at least 10 minutes. If left in the pan too long, they may get stuck; take a knife and run through the edges.
- Cut into 16–18 squares. Get about 16 squares from the square pan and about 18 squares from the rectangle pan. **Pro-Tip:** The top is quite crumbly so do the best you can when cutting. A sharp long knife does a better job than a short blade.

Cook County Farm Bureau® is a non-for-profit, general farm organization created in 1920 by area farmers, businessmen, and community leaders to improve science, knowledge, lifestyle, and standards of living on the farm and off for its members. Today, the Cook County Farm Bureau holds close to these roots through agricultural literacy efforts, membership service, public policy interaction, consumer engagement, farm product marketing, and outreach.

Hot Honey Chicken Meatballs

Cook DuPage Beekeepers Assoc News

Meatballs:

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| 1 lb ground chicken | 2 t Korean chili pepper flakes |
| ½ c breadcrumbs | Scallions, sliced for garnish |
| 1 egg, beaten | |

Hot Honey:

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| ½ c local fresh honey | 1 t crushed red pepper flakes |
| 2 T apple cider vinegar | 1 t kosher salt |

Preheat air fryer to 380°. In a medium bowl, mix together ground chicken, breadcrumbs, egg, chili pepper, and salt. Make 16 1-inch meatballs and place in air fryer. Cook for 8–10 minutes, shaking halfway through cooking time. While the meatballs are cooking, combine honey, vinegar, and red pepper in a microwave safe dish and heat for approx. 1½ minutes. Remove the meatballs from the oven and toss with the hot honey and scallions; serve immediately. Makes 16 1-inch meatballs.

You can also bake in the oven on a sheet pan at 375° for 10–12 minutes. **Pro Tip:** Dip your fingers in cold water as you roll meatballs, to make it easier!

Minestrone Soup

Victoria Larkin, Riverside

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| ¼ c olive oil | 2 t dried leaf basil |
| 1 medium onion, sliced | 1 t dried leaf oregano |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | 1 t salt |
| 2 carrots, sliced | ¼ t pepper |
| 2 celery stalks, sliced | 2 (15 oz) cans cannellini beans or dark red kidney beans, drained |
| 1 leek, sliced | 2 c shredded cabbage |
| 1 (28 oz) can Italian plum tomatoes | 1 medium zucchini, sliced |
| 1 qt chicken broth (or two 14½ oz cans) | ½ c uncooked elbow or small-shell macaroni |
| 1 T chopped fresh parsley | |
| Freshly grated Parmesan cheese | |

Heat olive oil in a 4-qt. pot. Add onion, garlic, carrots, celery, and leek. Sauté until onion is tender. Add tomatoes with liquid, breaking up tomatoes with a knife and fork. Stir in broth, parsley, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Stir in beans and cabbage. Simmer 10 minutes longer. Stir in zucchini and macaroni. Simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes. Serve with Parmesan cheese. Makes 6 (2 cup) servings.

Red Pepper Coulis

James Harvatt, Wildflower Culinary for Honey Bee Gardens Farm

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| ¼ c extra virgin olive oil | 1 c chopped white onion |
| 1 clove garlic, chopped | 16 oz roasted red bell pepper, drained |
| 1 pinch kosher salt | 1 T heavy cream |
| 2 t balsamic vinegar | |

Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a skillet over high heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook, tossing regularly, until softened and fragrant. Transfer to a food processor. Add the roasted peppers, salt, cream, and remaining olive oil to the onion-garlic mixture in the food processor. Process until smooth. Transfer mixture to a saucepan. Add the balsamic vinegar to the coulis and simmer 10 minutes.

Perfect Thyme Cocktail

Nina Koziol, Garden Writer & Hort Educator—Beauty and the Feast

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| 2½ c gin | 2–3 slices lemongrass stalk (white portion) |
| 2–3 small slices of peeled, fresh ginger | 1 sprig of fresh thyme |

Muddle the ginger, lemongrass, and thyme in mixing glass. Add ice cubes, then the gin. Stir to combine all flavors. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass.

Black Walnut Pin Wheel Cookies

Sherryanne de la Boise, Northfield

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| ½ c of room temperature salted butter | ½ t Mexican vanilla (can use Madagascar, but different flavor) |
| ½ c plus ¼ c granulated white cane sugar | ½ c firmly packed light brown sugar |
| 2 c sifted all-purpose flour | 1 large, fresh egg |
| Waxed paper | ¼ t baking soda |
| Dash salt | 1/3 c water |
| 7¼ oz of finely chopped dates (rough cut take a bit longer to melt) | 1 c finely chopped black walnuts* |

Cream butter until light and a bit fluffy. Add the brown sugar and ½ cup of the white sugar, vanilla, and egg. Beat the mixture until light. Add the baking soda, then work in the flour. Halve the dough and spread between sheets of wax paper. Since you will be rolling the dough up the width of the waxed paper, any length will be fine. Chill the two flat sheets of dough until firm.

For the filling: Using very gentle heat or a double boiler, melt the dates into the water and the ¼ cup sugar. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the nuts and allow to cool to room temperature.

Roll the dough between sheets of waxed paper until it is 1/8–1/4 inch thick. Smear half of the filling onto the dough so that there is a ½ inch of unfilled border along the top edge of the dough (that will keep the filling from oozing out). Start rolling from the side opposite the unfilled border, using the waxed paper to assist in getting the roll tight. Chill the resultant log overnight. Slice 1/8-inch thick and bake 350° for 10 minutes. Makes 6 dozen.

*Black walnuts are abundant in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. The recipe needs the meat from a dozen walnuts. Making slices and baking cookies is really easy after you have done it once. If you add ¼ cup cocoa powder to the dough, you will have a chocolate pinwheel.

Zucchini Casserole

Joyce Holste, Midlothian

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| 2 c zucchini, washed, unpeeled, sliced | 1 ½ c sliced fresh mushrooms |
| ¼ c sliced or diced onions | ½ c shredded cheddar cheese |
| ½ t basil | |

Layer all ingredients in 1 qt. casserole dish sprayed with Pam, etc. in order given. Bake 350° covered for 20 minutes, and then uncovered for 10 minutes.

Honey Sparkler Cookies

Lynne Rine, Glenview

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| 2/3 c cooking oil | 1 c sugar |
| ¼ c honey | 1 egg |
| 1 t vanilla extract | 2 c flour |
| 2 t baking soda | ½ t salt |
| Turbinado sugar, for rolling | |

Preheat oven to 350°. In a mixing bowl, add egg and vanilla, and mix until combined. Mix in flour, baking soda, and salt. If dough is soft, refrigerate for 15–30 minutes. Shape dough into balls and roll in the turbinado sugar. Cover entire balls with sugar. Bake 7–9 minutes or until the edges are light brown.

Bee's Knees Cocktail

Ray's Quality Greenhouse, Steger

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| 1½ T simple syrup recipe | ¾ oz fresh lemon juice |
| 2 oz gin | |

Honey Simple Syrup:

2 c honey to 1 c water, in pan and simmer until honey dissolves

Fill cocktail shaker with ice. Add gin, lemon juice, and shake it silly. Add simple syrup and shake again. Use cocktail strainer to strain into glass over ice. Garnish with fresh lemon slice and enjoy!

LEGEND

t = teaspoon

c = cup

lb = pound

T = tablespoon

lg = large

oz = ounce