

## America's Test Kitchen Dinner

### Appetizer

#### Salmon Cakes

Serves 4

If buying a skin-on salmon fillet, purchase 1 1/3 pounds of fish. This will yield 1 1/4 pounds of fish after skinning. When processing the salmon it is OK to have some pieces that are larger than 1/4 inch. It is important to avoid overprocessing the fish. Serve the salmon cakes with lemon wedges and/or tartar sauce.

#### INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons plus 3/4 cup panko bread crumbs  
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
4 teaspoons lemon juice  
1 scallion, sliced thin  
1 small shallot, minced  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
pinch cayenne pepper  
1 (1 1/4 pound) skinless salmon fillet, cut into 1-inch pieces  
1/2 cup vegetable oil

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine 3 tablespoons panko, parsley, mayonnaise, lemon juice, scallion, shallot, mustard, salt, pepper, and cayenne in bowl. Working in 3 batches, pulse salmon in food processor until coarsely chopped into 1/4-inch pieces, about 2 pulses, transferring each batch to bowl with panko mixture. Gently mix until uniformly combined.
2. Place remaining 3/4 cup panko in pie plate. Using 1/3-cup measure, scoop level amount of salmon mixture and transfer to baking sheet; repeat to make 8 cakes. Carefully coat each cake in bread crumbs, gently patting into disk measuring 2 3/4 inches in diameter and 1 inch high. Return coated cakes to baking sheet.
3. Heat oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Place salmon cakes in skillet and cook without moving until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Carefully flip cakes and cook until second side is golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer cakes to paper towel-lined plate to drain 1 minute. Serve.

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/6600-easy-salmon-cakes>

### Salad

#### Creamy Dill Cucumber Salad

Serves 4 as a side dish

Salting and draining the onion along with the cucumbers in this recipe removes the sharp sting of raw onions.

#### INGREDIENTS

1 cup sour cream  
3 tablespoons cider vinegar

1 teaspoon granulated sugar  
1/4 cup minced fresh dill  
Salt and ground black pepper  
1/2 medium red onion, sliced very thin, salted and drained with cucumbers  
3 medium cucumbers, sliced, salted, and drained (see directions)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

To prepare the cucumbers: Peel, halve lengthwise, and scoop seeds from cucumbers. Stack halves flat side down; slice diagonally 1/4-inch thick. Toss with 1 tablespoon salt in strainer or colander set over bowl; weight with water-filled, one-gallon-sized zipper-lock freezer bag, sealed tight. Drain for at least 1 hour, and up to 3 hours. Transfer to medium bowl; reserve for further use.

Whisk first four ingredients, and salt and pepper to taste, in medium bowl. Add cucumbers and onion; toss to coat. Serve chilled, adjusting seasonings if necessary.

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/1309-creamy-dill-cucumber-salad>

### Soup

Wild Rice and Mushroom Soup

Serves 6 to 8

White mushrooms can be substituted for the cremini mushrooms. We use a spice grinder to process the dried shiitake mushrooms, but a blender also works.

#### INGREDIENTS

1/4 ounce dried shiitake mushrooms, rinsed  
4 1/4 cups water  
1 sprig fresh thyme  
1 bay leaf  
1 garlic clove, peeled, plus 4 cloves, minced  
Salt and pepper  
1/4 teaspoons baking soda  
1 cup wild rice  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 pound cremini mushrooms, trimmed and sliced 1/4 inch thick  
1 onion, chopped fine  
1 teaspoon tomato paste  
2/3 cup dry sherry  
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1/4 cup cornstarch  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1/4 cup minced fresh chives  
1/4 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Grind shiitake mushrooms in spice grinder until finely ground (you should have about 3 tablespoons).
2. Bring 4 cups water, thyme, bay leaf, garlic clove, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and baking soda to boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Add rice and return to boil. Cover saucepan, transfer to oven, and bake until rice is tender, 35 to 50 minutes. Strain rice through fine-

mesh strainer set in 4-cup liquid measuring cup; discard thyme, bay leaf, and garlic. Add enough water to reserved cooking liquid to measure 3 cups.

3. Melt butter in Dutch oven over high heat. Add cremini mushrooms, onion, minced garlic, tomato paste, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are browned and dark fond develops on bottom of pot, 15 minutes. Add sherry, scraping up any browned bits, and cook until reduced and pot is almost dry, about 2 minutes. Add ground shiitake mushrooms, reserved rice cooking liquid, broth, and soy sauce and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, until onion and mushrooms are tender, about 20 minutes.

4. Whisk cornstarch and remaining 1/4 cup water in small bowl. Stir cornstarch slurry into soup, return to simmer, and cook until thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove pot from heat and stir in cooked rice, cream, chives, and lemon zest. Cover and let stand for 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve.

<https://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/7283-wild-rice-and-mushroom-soup>

### **Side #1**

Asparagus with Toasted Garlic and Parmesan

Serves 4 to 6

This recipe works best with asparagus that is at least 1/2 inch thick near the base. If using thinner spears, reduce the covered cooking time to 3 minute and the uncovered cooking time to 5 minutes. Do not use pencil-thin asparagus; it cannot withstand the heat and overcooks too easily.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

2 tablespoons olive oil

3 medium cloves garlic, sliced thin

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

2 pounds thick asparagus spears (see note), ends trimmed

Kosher salt and ground black pepper

2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

1/2 lemon (optional)

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Heat the olive oil and sliced garlic in 12-inch skillet over medium heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is crisp and golden but not dark brown, about 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer garlic to paper towel-lined plate.

2. Add the butter to the oil in the skillet. When butter has melted, add half of asparagus to skillet with tips pointed in one direction; add remaining spears with tips pointed in one direction. Using tongs, distribute spears in even layer (spears will not quite fit into single layer); cover and cook until asparagus is bright green and still crisp, about 5 minutes.

3. Uncover and increase heat to high; season asparagus with salt and pepper. Cook until spears are tender and well browned along one side, 5 to 7 minutes, using tongs to occasionally move spears from center of pan to edge of pan to ensure all are browned. Transfer asparagus to serving dish, sprinkle with grated Parmesan and toasted garlic, adjust seasonings with salt and pepper, and, if desired, squeeze lemon half over spears. Serve immediately.

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/1893-pan-roasted-asparagus-with-toasted-garlic-and-parmesan>

## Side #2

### Smashed Potatoes

Serves 4 to 6

White potatoes can be used instead of Red Bliss, but their skins lack the rosy color of Red Bliss skins. Try to get potatoes of equal size; if that's not possible, test the larger potatoes for doneness. If only larger potatoes are available, increase the cooking time by about 10 minutes. Check for doneness with a paring knife.

#### INGREDIENTS

2 pounds Red Bliss potatoes (about 2 inches in diameter), unpeeled and scrubbed

Table salt

1 bay leaf

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and warm

1/2 cup cream cheese (4 ounces), at room temperature

Ground black pepper

3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives (optional)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place potatoes in large saucepan and cover with 1 inch cold water; add 1 teaspoon salt and bay leaf. Bring to boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer gently until paring knife can be inserted into potatoes with no resistance, 35 to 45 minutes. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water, then drain potatoes. Return potatoes to pot, discard bay, and allow potatoes to stand in pot, uncovered, until surfaces are dry, about 5 minutes.

2. While potatoes dry, whisk melted butter and softened cream cheese in medium bowl until smooth and fully incorporated. Add 1/4 cup of reserved cooking water, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, chives (if using), and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Using rubber spatula or back of wooden spoon, smash potatoes just enough to break skins. Fold in butter/cream cheese mixture until most of liquid has been absorbed and chunks of potatoes remain. Add more cooking water 1 tablespoon at a time as needed, until potatoes are slightly looser than desired (potatoes will thicken slightly with standing). Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper; serve immediately.

TO MAKE AHEAD: The potatoes are best made just before serving, though see the related Quick Tip for a suggestion on how to hold mashed potatoes.

TO DOUBLE: The Smashed Potatoes recipe and variation can easily be doubled to serve 8 to 12. To accommodate the increased volume, you will need to cook the potatoes in a Dutch oven or stockpot instead of the specified saucepan. Depending on pot size, the cooking time will increase by 5 to 10

minutes. <http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/7384-braised-red-potatoes-with-lemon-and-chives>

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/1714-smashed-potatoes>

## Dinner rolls (for Carole!!!)

Makes 16 rolls

Because this dough is sticky, keep your hands well floured when handling it. Use a spray bottle to mist the rolls with water. The rolls will keep for up to 2 days at room temperature stored in a zipper-lock bag. To re-crisp the crust, place the rolls in a 450-

degree oven 6 to 8 minutes. The rolls will keep frozen for several months wrapped in foil and placed in a large zipper-lock bag. Thaw the rolls at room temperature and re-crisp using the instructions above.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups plus 1 tablespoon water (12 1/2 ounces), room temperature
- 1 1/2 teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 3 cups plus 1 tablespoon bread flour (16 1/2 ounces), plus extra for forming rolls
- 3 tablespoons whole-wheat flour (about 1 ounce)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons table salt

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk water, yeast, and honey in bowl of stand mixer until well combined, making sure no honey sticks to bottom of bowl. Add flours and mix on low speed with dough hook until cohesive dough is formed, about 3 minutes. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature 30 minutes.
2. Remove plastic wrap and evenly sprinkle salt over dough. Knead on low speed (speed 2 on KitchenAid) 5 minutes. (If dough creeps up attachment, stop mixer and scrape down using well-floured hands or greased spatula.) Increase speed to medium and continue to knead until dough is smooth and slightly tacky, about 1 minute. If dough is very sticky, add 1 to 2 tablespoons flour and continue mixing 1 minute. Lightly spray 2-quart bowl with nonstick cooking spray; transfer dough to bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let dough rise in warm, draft-free place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.
3. Fold dough over itself; rotate bowl quarter turn and fold again. Rotate bowl again and fold once more. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise 30 minutes. Repeat folding, replace plastic wrap, and let dough rise until doubled in volume, about 30 minutes. Spray two 9-inch round cake pans with nonstick cooking spray and set aside.
4. Transfer dough to floured work surface, sprinkle top with more flour. Using bench scraper, cut dough in half and gently stretch each half into 16-inch cylinders. Divide each cylinder into quarters, then each quarter into 2 pieces (you should have 16 pieces total), and dust top of each piece with more flour. With floured hands, gently pick up each piece and roll in palms to coat with flour, shaking off excess, and place in prepared cake pan. Arrange 8 dough pieces in each cake pan, placing one piece in middle and others around it, with long side of each piece running from center of pan to edge and making sure cut-side faces up. Loosely cover cake pans with plastic wrap and let rolls rise until doubled in size, about 30 minutes (dough is ready when it springs back slowly when pressed lightly with finger). Thirty minutes before baking, adjust rack to middle position and heat oven to 500 degrees.
5. Remove plastic wrap from cake pans, spray rolls lightly with water, and place in oven. Bake 10 minutes until tops of rolls are brown; remove from oven. Reduce oven temperature to 400 degrees; using kitchen towels or oven mitts, invert rolls from both cake pans onto rimmed baking sheet. When rolls are cool enough to handle, turn right-side up, pull apart, and space evenly on baking sheet. Continue to bake until rolls develop deep golden brown crust and sound hollow when tapped on bottom, 10 to 15 minutes; rotating baking sheet halfway through baking time. Transfer rolls to wire rack and cool to room temperature, about 1 hour.

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/4519-rustic-dinner-rolls>

## **Main Course**

### **Onion Braised Beef Brisket**

Serves 6-8

This recipe requires a few hours of unattended cooking. It also requires advance preparation. After cooking, the brisket must stand overnight in the braising liquid that later becomes the sauce; this helps to keep the brisket moist and flavorful. Defatting the sauce is essential. If the fat has congealed into a layer on top of the sauce, it can be easily removed while cold. Sometimes, however, fragments of solid fat are dispersed throughout the sauce; in this case, the sauce should be skimmed of fat after reheating. If you prefer a spicy sauce, increase the amount of cayenne to 1/4 teaspoon. You will need 18-inch-wide heavy-duty foil for this recipe. If you own an electric knife, it will make easy work of slicing the cold brisket. Good accompaniments to braised brisket include mashed potatoes and egg noodles. For a Passover menu, substitute matzo meal or potato starch for the flour.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 beef brisket, 4 to 5 pounds, flat cut preferred  
Salt and ground black pepper  
Vegetable oil  
3 large onions (about 2 1/2 pounds), halved and sliced 1/2 inch thick  
1 tablespoon brown sugar  
3 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
1 tablespoon paprika  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth  
1 cup dry red wine  
3 bay leaves  
3 sprigs fresh thyme  
2 teaspoons cider vinegar (to season sauce before serving)

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position; heat oven to 300 degrees. Line 13 by 9-inch baking dish with two 24-inch-long sheets of 18-inch-wide heavy-duty foil, positioning sheets perpendicular to each other and allowing excess foil to extend beyond edges of pan. Pat brisket dry with paper towels. Place brisket fat side up on cutting board; using dinner fork, poke holes in meat through fat layer about 1 inch apart. Season both sides of brisket liberally with salt and pepper.
2. Heat 1 teaspoon oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until oil just begins to smoke. Place brisket fat side up in skillet (brisket may climb up sides of skillet); weight brisket with heavy Dutch oven or cast-iron skillet and cook until well browned, about 7 minutes. Remove Dutch oven; using tongs, flip brisket and cook on second side without weight until well browned, about 7 minutes longer. Transfer brisket to platter.
3. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from pan (or, if brisket was lean, add enough oil to fat in skillet to equal 1 tablespoon); stir in onions, sugar, and 1/4 teaspoon salt and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened and golden, 10 to

12 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 1 minute; add tomato paste and cook, stirring to combine, until paste darkens, about 2 minutes. Add paprika and cayenne and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Sprinkle flour over onions and cook, stirring constantly, until well combined, about 2 minutes. Add broth, wine, bay, and thyme, stirring to scrape up browned bits from pan; bring to simmer and simmer about 5 minutes to fully thicken.

4. Pour sauce and onions into foil-lined baking dish. Nestle brisket, fat side up, in sauce and onions. Fold foil extensions over and seal (do not tightly crimp foil because foil must later be opened to test for doneness). Place in oven and cook until fork can be inserted into and removed from center of brisket with no resistance, 3 1/2 to 4 hours (when testing for doneness, open foil with caution as contents will be steaming). Carefully open foil and let brisket cool at room temperature for 20 to 30 minutes.

5. Transfer brisket to large bowl; set mesh strainer over bowl and strain sauce over brisket. Discard bay and thyme from onions and transfer onions to small bowl. Cover both bowls with plastic wrap, cut vents in plastic with paring knife, and refrigerate overnight.

6. About 45 minutes before serving, adjust oven rack to lower-middle position; heat oven to 350 degrees. While oven heats, transfer cold brisket to cutting board. Scrape off and discard any congealed fat from sauce, then transfer sauce to medium saucepan and heat over medium heat until warm, skimming any fat on surface with wide shallow spoon (you should have about 2 cups sauce without onions; if necessary, simmer sauce over medium-high heat until reduced to 2 cups). While sauce heats, use chef's or carving knife to slice brisket against grain into 1/4-inch-thick slices, trimming and discarding any excess fat, if desired; place slices in 13 by 9-inch baking dish. Stir reserved onions and vinegar into warmed sauce and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Pour sauce over brisket slices, cover baking dish with foil, and bake until heated through, 25 to 30 minutes. Serve immediately.

To Make and Serve the Brisket on the Same Day If you would like to make and serve the brisket on the same day, after removing the brisket from the oven in step 4, reseal the foil and let the brisket stand at room temperature for an hour. Then transfer the brisket to a cutting board and continue with the recipe to strain, defat, and reheat the sauce and slice the meat; because the brisket will still be hot, there will be no need to put it back into the oven once the reheated sauce is poured over it.

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/1772-onion-braised-beef-brisket>

## **Dessert**

**Cream Cheese Coffee Cake**

Makes one 10-inch cake, serving 12 to 16

Leftovers should be stored in the refrigerator, covered tightly with plastic wrap. For optimal texture, allow the cake to return to room temperature before serving.

### **INGREDIENTS**

**Lemon Sugar-Almond Topping**

1/4 cup sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons finely grated zest from 1 lemon

1/2 cup sliced almonds

**Cake**

2 1/4 cups (11 1/4 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 1/8 teaspoons baking powder  
1 1/8 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon table salt  
10 tablespoons (1 stick plus 2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened but still cool  
1 cup plus 7 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon finely grated zest plus 4 teaspoons juice from 1 to 2 lemons  
4 large eggs  
5 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1 1/4 cups sour cream  
8 ounces cream cheese, softened

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. **FOR THE TOPPING:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Stir together sugar and lemon zest in small bowl until combined and sugar is moistened. Stir in almonds; set aside.
2. **FOR THE CAKE:** Spray 10-inch tube pan with nonstick cooking spray. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in medium bowl; set aside. In stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat butter, 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar, and lemon zest at medium speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping down sides and bottom of bowl with rubber spatula. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition, about 20 seconds, and scraping down beater and sides of bowl as necessary. Add 4 teaspoons vanilla and mix to combine. Reduce speed to low and add one-third flour mixture, followed by half of sour cream, mixing until incorporated after each addition, 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat, using half of remaining flour mixture and all of remaining sour cream. Scrape bowl and add remaining flour mixture; mix at low speed until batter is thoroughly combined, about 10 seconds. Remove bowl from mixer and fold batter once or twice with rubber spatula to incorporate any remaining flour.
3. Reserve 1 1/4 cups batter and set aside. Spoon remaining batter into prepared pan and smooth top. Return now-empty bowl to mixer and beat cream cheese, remaining 5 tablespoons sugar, lemon juice, and remaining teaspoon vanilla on medium speed until smooth and slightly lightened, about 1 minute. Add 1/4 cup reserved batter and mix until incorporated. Spoon cheese filling mixture evenly over batter, keeping filling about 1 inch from edges of pan; smooth top. Spread remaining cup reserved batter over filling and smooth top. With butter knife or offset spatula, gently swirl filling into batter using figure-8 motion, being careful to not drag filling to bottom or edges of pan. Firmly tap pan on counter 2 or 3 times to dislodge any bubbles. Sprinkle lemon sugar-almond topping evenly over batter and gently press into batter to adhere.
4. Bake until top is golden and just firm, and long skewer inserted into cake comes out clean (skewer will be wet if inserted into cheese filling), 45 to 50 minutes. Remove pan from oven and firmly tap on counter 2 or 3 times (top of cake may sink slightly). Cool cake in pan on wire rack 1 hour. Gently invert cake onto rimmed baking sheet (cake will be topping-side down); remove tube pan, place wire rack on top of cake, and invert cake sugar-side up. Cool to room temperature, about 1 1/2 hours. Cut into slices and serve.

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/5028-cream-cheese-coffee-cake>