

A SNAP COOKBOOK

GOOD

AND

CHEAP

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Text, recipes, design,
and photographs by
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fulfillment of a final
project for a master's
degree in food studies at
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I am indebted to
other cooks whose
recipes have guided
me, and all those
friends, professors,
and classmates who
supported me.

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Introduction

Cooking skill, not budget is the key to unlocking great food. Everyone has the right to good cooking, regardless of income. The recipes in this collection are lovingly designed and paired with tantalizing photos that show the plethora of exciting and inspiring food that can be prepared for little.

For too long discussions surrounding people of lower socioeconomic status have centered around nutrition and making do. This isn't a typical budget cookbook, nor is it a nutritional guide, it's a collection of recipes that happen to be inexpensive. Pricy ingredients are wonderful, but so are cheap ones—in fact most of our favorite foods can be had for pennies—the raw ingredients don't cost much. Your time and skill add the value.

These recipes are designed with the budget of SNAP recipients in mind. SNAP can only be successful at getting nutritious food in the bellies of those who need it if people who receive SNAP benefits are able to access and prepare good food. Especially in a climate when political support and budget for the program is waning, cooking skills are crucial for recipients. The recipes in this collection are healthy and made with ingredients common to most low income NYC neighborhoods. The recipes are flexible and encourage substitutions based on availability, taste, and price.

If you want a better life, filled with daily pleasures; learn to cook. If you want to get control over a small food budget; learn to cook. If you want a healthy body and mind for yourself and your family; learn to cook.

Cooking on a limited budget is not easy, and there are times when a tough week can make meals monotonous. I hope that some of the techniques and recipes in this collection can help make those times rare and help make tough choices a little more bearable. Good cooking alone can't solve hunger in America, but it can make life happier; and that is worth every effort.



Tips for Eating and Shopping Well

BUY FOODS THAT CAN BE USED IN MULTIPLE MEALS

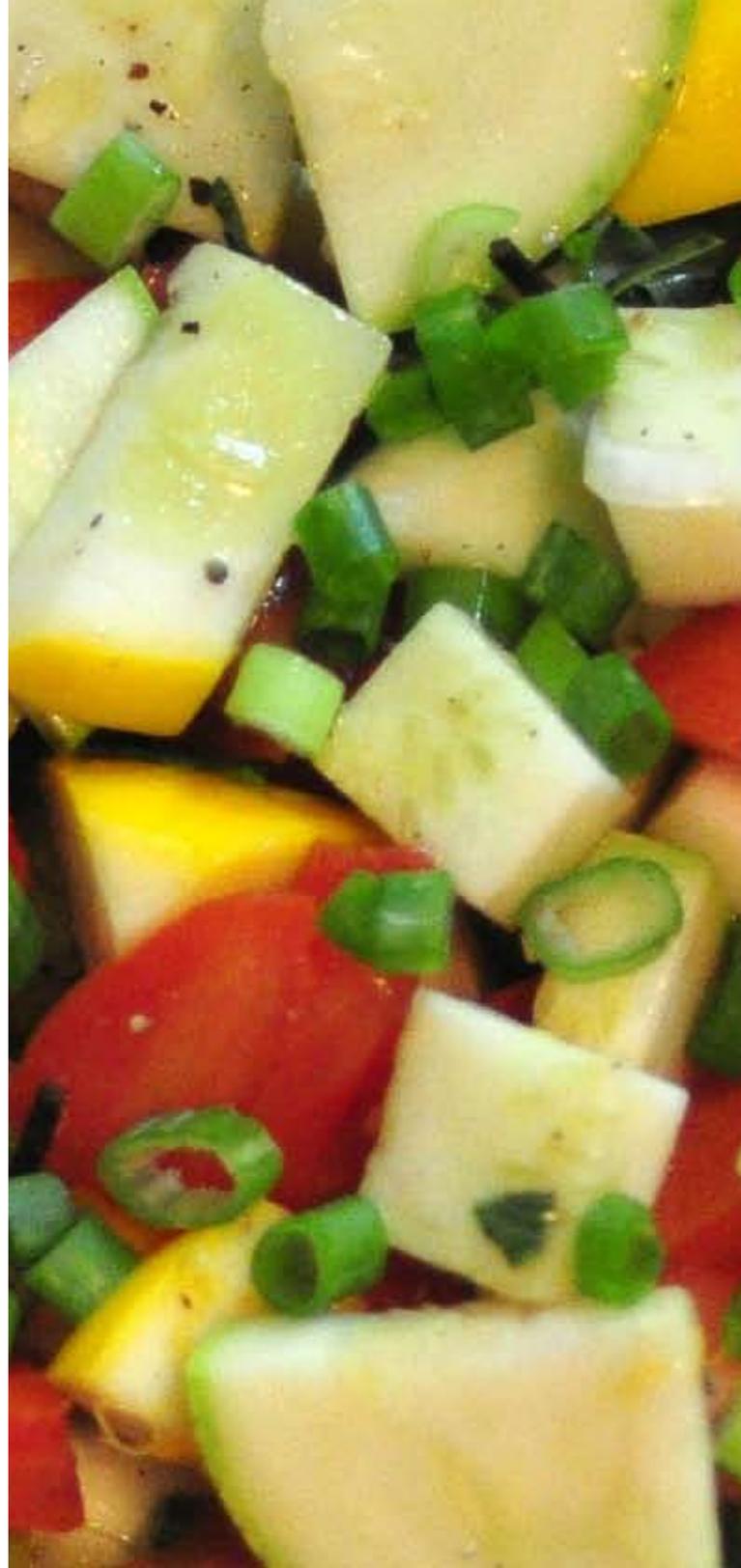
For example, if you buy corn meal you can make both polenta, corn bread and fried polenta strips. If you buy yogurt you can eat it with fruit, make raita, tzatziki or use it in soups or drinks.

THINK WEEKLY

When you're on a tight budget it's easy to feel like there isn't enough variety. Mix it up by buying different staple foods, like grains and beans each week. Yes, this week you may have had black bean chili, black bean tacos and oatmeal every morning, but next week you will have chana masala and hummus with yogurt for breakfast. Also, if you don't mind shopping, try to plan things so you pick up your produce every couple of days to make sure it's at its freshest. It's a lot more inspiring to pull out a bunch of crisp vibrant greens than to unstick the wilted mess from the bottom of the fridge.

START BUILDING A PANTRY

If possible, and admittedly this can be difficult for people on their own, start buying at least one or two more expensive items for the pantry each week you go shopping. Things like olive oil, soy sauce and spices are expensive initially, but you use little enough with each recipe that they go a long way. If you get just turmeric, coriander, cumin and some fresh ginger suddenly you'll have a world of flavorful dishes to make with inexpensive and everyday foods. Check out the next section for more specific items to build your pantry.



MORE VEGETABLES EQUALS MORE FLAVOR

Nothing livens up the bowl of rice like summer squash and corn! Vegetables make the best sauces, they are earthy, bright, tart, sweet, bitter, savory, rich. Make them a priority on your grocery list and you won't get bored.

ALWAYS BUY EGGS

With these babies in your fridge you are only ever minutes away from a satisfying meal. Scramble an egg with some leftovers or put an egg on top of a salad, bowl of grains or vegetables and deliciousness is guaranteed.

DON'T BUY DRINKS

All the body needs drink-wise is water. Except for milk, most prepared drinks are overpriced and deliver a lot of sugar without filling you up like a piece of fruit or a bowl of yogurt. If you want a special drink make an agua fresca (p. 109) smoothie (p. 110) or tea at home.

BUY A PEPPER GRINDER

Seriously, banish pre-ground pepper from your life; it loses all of its flavor when it sits around. Pepper is not just some dusty, crunchy black stuff that people seem to think is important, it's essential to bringing out the best in everything. Fresh pepper creates pops of intense flavor on the tongue and lights up bland dishes. One of the most popular pastas in Rome is just pasta with butter and pepper, give it a try!



Pantry Basics

With these commonly available items in your pantry you will always have a wide variety of meals on the table within minutes. Keeping a well stocked pantry is the key to easy, fast cooking at home.

VEGETABLES

Vegetables can and should be the base of most meals. Other than the greens, which should be used quickly, these can be stored for a few days to a few weeks. Try all the seasonal vegetables as they cycle through the markets and go on sale.

Garlic, Onions, Carrots, Celery, Peppers, Broccoli, Tomatoes, Hot Peppers, Hardy Greens, Salad Greens, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Cauliflower, Winter Squash

FRUITS

Citrus fruits are cooking essentials and they keep well. The zest and juice can liven up just about any dish and they always make a great dressing. Bananas, apples and melons are great quick snacks, but try them all!

Apples, Melons, Oranges, Limes, Lemons, Bananas

GRAINS

There is great variety to be had in whole grains, try some new ones and cook using the package instructions. Substitute them in rice dishes or salads.

Bread, Tortillas, Pasta, AP flour, WW flour, Oats, Popcorn, Short Grain Rice, Long Grain Rice, Brown Rice, Cornmeal, Dried Whole Grains

DAIRY

Butter is just as good to cook with as it is on toast.

Butter, Milk, Yogurt, Queso Fresco, Parmesan or Romano Cheese, Cheddar, Mozzarella

PROTEIN

These items are easily stored, they are cheap and have multiple uses. Buy your favorite meats fresh.

Eggs, Dried Beans, Lentils, Tofu, Nuts, Peanut butter

CANNED

Well priced and essential for making sauces.

Whole Tomatoes, Tomato Paste, Corn

FROZEN

Great for smoothies and for a quick addition to soups and rice dishes.

Berries, Peas and other small vegetables

FLAVOR AND COOKING

You can explore an extraordinary number of cuisines with these items and add depth and excitement to the most simple dishes.

Olive Oil or Vegetable Oil, Wine Vinegar, Capers, Anchovies, Sardines, Olives, Fish Sauce, Canned Coconut Milk, Miso Paste, Mustard, Soy Sauce, Chili Sauce, Fresh Herbs, Dried Spices, Brown Sugar

TREATS THAT GO A LONG WAY

Although these items can be expensive, a little goes a long way; when you can, pick up an item or two and enjoy the results.

Dried Fruits, Dried Mushrooms, Frozen Shrimp, Maple Syrup, Bacon, Prosciutto or Pancetta, Vanilla

Methods

In order to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption, the recipes do not feature large amounts of meat. Many recipe collections created for the American audience use meat as the central feature of most meals. My recipes celebrate the vegetables rather than the meat. The edict of the federal government's MyPlate, that half our plate at a given meal ought to consist of fruits and vegetables, is a step away from the large, center-of-the-plate meat dishes that are standard American fare. This change will produce benefits to health and wallets and my recipe creation was inspired by that.

The pricing in this collection is based on two sources. The first is data I collected from four grocery stores in Inwood, an average to low income neighborhood in New York City. I collected data on all the items in my list of suggested pantry items on the opposite page. For those non-pantry items like specific spices and a wider variety of fruits and vegetables, I used data from an online grocery store. I hope that these methods reflect the realities of the food shopping landscape for New York City residents.

Staples

These are the building blocks of great meals. Freshly made flatbreads are amazingly cheap to produce and they taste fabulous. They can take a bit of time, but with practice you will get faster and the flavor is absolutely worth it. Large batches of grains and beans can be cooked at the beginning of the week and used in different ways each day, saving time and money. This is where the possibilities begin!

Flour Tortillas

MAKES TWENTY-FOUR SMALL

Homemade flour tortillas are a bit of work, but if you have some time they are totally worth it. With practice you'll get quicker and enjoy the process as much as the results.

- 1¼ cups all purpose flour
- 1¼ cups whole wheat flour
- 2 ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ⅓ cup clarified butter or lard
- 1 cup hot water

In a large bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients. Add clarified butter or lard. Lard is more traditional, but I prefer clarified butter or even regular butter. Using your fingers, squish the butter against the flour until the mixture looks like moist crumbs. Add the hot water—not boiling, just hot—and form a dough with your hands. Leave the dough in the bowl covered by plastic wrap or a moist towel for an hour.

Separate the dough into 24 small pieces and roll each into balls. Keep the finished balls covered with the towel so they don't dry out while you work.

Lightly flour your counter top. Gently flatten out one dough ball with your palm, then roll it out with a rolling pin. Flip it over as you roll to make sure it isn't sticking to the counter top and be sure to add more flour as needed. Once you have it rolled out nice and thin set it aside under a moist towel.

Once you have rolled out one or two tortillas, put a non-stick or cast iron pan on medium-high heat. Let it get nice and hot. Place a tortilla in the pan. Once it starts to dry up around the edges, use a spatula to flip it over, then gently press the tortilla down to make sure it gets a bit of color on the underside. Work quickly! As you are waiting for the tortilla to cook, roll out more tortillas. You will get better at this part with practice. Once the tortilla has brown spots on both sides, remove it from the pan and continue with the next.

If you are serving the tortillas immediately, place them into a warm oven so that they stay pliable. If using them later in the day, pile them under a cloth while you finish making them. When they are ready, wrap them in aluminum foil and place them in the fridge. Heat in the oven before serving.

\$1.70 TOTAL
\$0.07 / TORTILLA



Roti

MAKES SIXTEEN

These are a staple flatbread in many parts of India. They are quick to make and very tasty when fresh. Enjoy them with a curried filling, dip them in soups or stews, or fill them with eggs at breakfast.

2 cups whole wheat flour
1 tsp salt
1 cup water

In a small bowl, mix together all the ingredients using one clean hand. It should form a fairly moist dough. Knead until it is smooth and form it into a ball. Cover it with a damp towel or paper towel and set aside for ten minutes to an hour.

Divide the dough into sixteen small balls.

Sprinkle a counter top with flour and place one piece of dough in the middle. Cover the dough ball on all sides with flour so that it doesn't stick to the surface, and gently roll it out with a rolling pin (or a bottle if you're in a pinch) until it is very thin and flat, about 1/8th of an inch thick. As you roll the dough be sure to unstick it from your counter top and flip it over. To make it round roll straight in front of you, then turn the dough 90 degrees and roll out again.

Place a non-stick skillet on medium heat. Once the pan is hot add the roti and cook until the dough lifts away from the pan around the underside edges and small bubbles form. Flip the bread over and cook the other side, usually it goes very quickly. You want to see light brown bubbles all over the dough. Don't let it get too dark though, as this will make the rotis too crunchy to use for rolls. Repeat this process until you are finished with the dough.

Once you have practiced you can roll out the rotis while each cooks in the pan to make the process quicker.

Keep them under a towel on the counter or in a warm oven until ready to serve.

\$0.50 TOTAL
\$0.03 / ROTI

Pizza Dough

MAKES FOUR INDIVIDUAL PIZZAS

There are two ways to make this. The fast way and the slow way. They are both the same amount of work, just with different waiting times. The slow way can be convenient for a weekday because you can make it before bed, stick it in the fridge and pull it out to finish rising the next evening.

3 cups all purpose or bread flour
1½ tsp salt
½ to 1 tsp instant yeast
1 tbsp olive oil
¼ cup water

\$0.80 TOTAL
\$0.20 / PIZZA BASE

Fast Dough

Measure out the flour, salt and 1 tsp of yeast into a big bowl. Add the olive oil. Mix the oil into the dough with your hands, crumbling it into the flour until it's a bit sandy in texture. Next add the water, making sure it is room temperature. Mix it up with your hands until it just comes together.

On a lightly floured counter top dump out the dough and knead it for five to seven minutes or until it becomes a smooth and elastic ball. The dough will be smooth, but quite wet. It is meant to be a moist dough.

Add a small amount of oil to a bowl and place your dough ball into it and cover it with plastic wrap. Let it rise for 1 ½ to 3 hours depending on the warmth of your kitchen. It is done when it has doubled in size. It is now ready to shape for your favorite pizza

Slow Dough

Use the same process as above, but add only ½ tsp of yeast to the flour mixture. Rather than room temperature, the water should be very cold.

After you have placed the dough ball in a bowl and covered it, place it in the fridge overnight. Letting the yeast work overnight creates a better flavor and makes the dough more elastic and easy to work with. If you can be organized enough to do the slow dough, do it. It's the best.

The next day, two to three hours before you make pizza, remove the dough from the fridge to come to room temperature.

Croutons and Breadcrumbs

I am constantly haunted by the hard, several day old bread that I have neglected. Luckily there are plenty of delicious solutions that avoid the trash can. Croutons and breadcrumbs, in a sealed container on the counter will keep for ages, and when you have them around you'll find yourself using them everywhere and finding an excuse to make a salad.

leftover bread
butter or vegetable oil as needed
salt and pepper

This is a method more than a recipe since you will have different amount of bread. Start by cutting the bread into cubes if making croutons. If making bread crumbs, add the bread chunks to a food processor, mince it with a knife or tear it apart. If the bread is too hard to cut, wrap it in a kitchen towel, sprinkle some water over the towel and put it in the microwave for 20 to 30 seconds. This will add just enough moisture back to allow you to cut it easily.

Take a sufficiently large pan for the number of bread cubes or crumbs you have—or work in batches if you have a lot—and place it on the stovetop on medium heat. Add enough butter or vegetable oil to coat the bottom of the pan. I prefer butter, it has more flavor, but use whatever you have around. Let the butter melt or oil get hot. Add the bread and toss them gently to coat in the oil or butter. Let them sit for 2 minutes and then flip them over. Keep tossing and turning until they are brown all over. Add oil or butter as needed and sprinkle with salt and pepper. It is basically impossible, unless you are very patient (which I am not) to get every side of the cubes browned so just get them generally looking good and toasty and then take them off the heat.

For breadcrumbs you can go oil free and just toast the bread and then crush it into small pieces if you like.

Use immediately or let them cool off and place them in a sealed container for use later in salads or over anything you want to add crunch to.

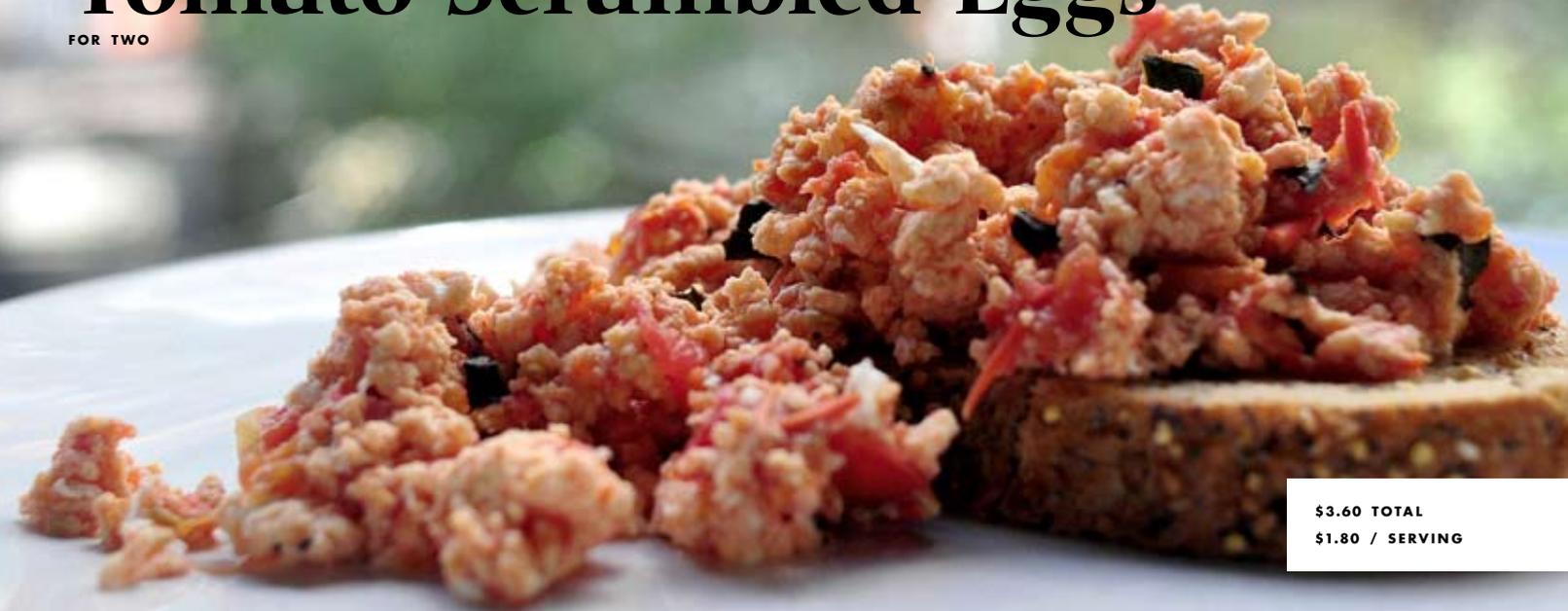


Breakfast

Fast, healthy and cheap is usually the game plan for breakfast – with as much pleasing flavor as I can manage in my grouchy morning state. Whether you have hours or minutes, there's a great breakfast to be had for little.

Tomato Scrambled Eggs

FOR TWO



\$3.60 TOTAL
\$1.80 / SERVING

Fluffy, creamy eggs holding together a mass of tangy, juicy, sweet tomatoes.

- ½ tbsp butter
- 4 cups tomatoes, chopped
- 4 eggs
- salt and pepper
- basil or other herbs, chopped (optional)

Put a small pan on medium heat and add the butter to it. Once the butter is melted, swirl it around to coat the pan. Add the tomatoes and cook until they release their juices and most of the juice cooks off. This should take 5 to 7 minutes. Meanwhile, crack the eggs into a bowl and add a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Beat the eggs lightly with a fork.

Once most of the juice has cooked out of the tomatoes turn the heat down to low and add the eggs to the pan. Using a spatula gently mix the eggs and tomatoes together. Carefully stir the eggs to break up the curds. Turn down the heat as low as possible; the slower your eggs cook the creamier they will be.

Once the eggs are cooked turn off the heat and add any chopped herbs you have around, basil is the best with tomatoes.

Serve over toast or a tortilla.

Oatmeal

FOR TWO

This basic recipe can be dressed up in so many ways you don't ever need to get bored with a healthy bowl of oatmeal. Hot and comforting, this breakfast will give you energy for a great morning. It's also extremely inexpensive so you can spend a bit more on lunch and dinner.

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 cups water
- ¼ tsp salt

In a small pot add the oats, water and salt. Place it on medium high heat just until the water comes to a boil. Immediately turn down the heat to low and place a lid on the pot. Cook for five minutes, or until the oats are soft and tender and most of the water has cooked off. You can add more water if you like your oatmeal smoother and thinner, or use slightly less water if you want a thick oatmeal.

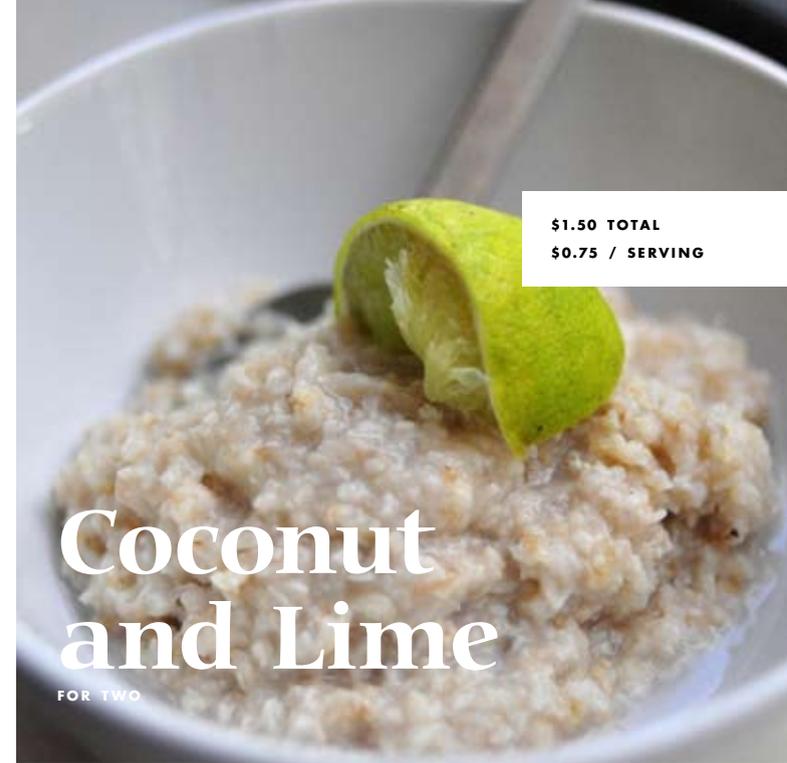
This is just the basic recipe and most people have strong opinions about how they like their oatmeal - whether it's milky and sweet or savory and salty I'm sure you can find a favorite way to enjoy a hot bowl of oats in the morning!



\$0.25 TOTAL
\$.13 / SERVING

- ¼ cup coconut, shredded
- 2 tbsp sugar
- ½ lime, juiced

Add the coconut and sugar to the oatmeal, water and salt. Cook as normal. Turn off the heat and squeeze the juice of half a lime over the top.



Coconut and Lime

FOR TWO

\$1.50 TOTAL
\$0.75 / SERVING

- ½ cup berries, fresh or frozen
- 1 tbsp sugar

2 minutes before the oats are finished cooking add some fresh or frozen berries and the sugar.



Berry Oatmeal

FOR TWO

\$1.10 TOTAL
\$0.55 / SERVING



\$1.50 TOTAL
\$0.75 / SERVING

Pumpkin Oatmeal

FOR TWO

- ½ cup canned pumpkin
- ¾ cup milk (or almond or soy milk)
- 1¼ cups water
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon

OPTIONAL

- ¼ tsp ginger powder
- ¼ tsp clove powder
- maple syrup to taste

In a medium sized pot add your pumpkin, milk, and water. Stir the mixture together with a whisk, then add the rest of the ingredients. Place the pot on medium low heat until it just starts to bubble. Turn the heat down and cook for five minutes until the oats are tender. Taste and add maple syrup or more sugar if you need it. Serve hot!

- 2 cups apple juice or cider
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 apple, cored and chopped

Instead of adding water, add the juice and cinnamon and cook as normal. Top with the chopped apple, or if you want it warm and soft, add it to the rest of the oatmeal and cook it all together.



\$2 TOTAL
\$1 / SERVING

Apple Cinnamon

FOR TWO



Baklava Oatmeal

FOR TWO

- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp orange zest, finely grated
- 4 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp chopped almonds or pistachios

Cook the oatmeal as normal, but add the cinnamon, orange zest and 2 tbsp of honey. Once it's cooked top each bowl with a tablespoon each of honey and nuts. Enjoy the flavors of baklava!

- 2-3 scallions, finely chopped
- ¼ cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 tsp butter
- 2 eggs

Cook the oatmeal as normal, but add the scallions. Just before it's finished add the cheddar cheese. While the oatmeal cooks, bring a non-stick pan up to medium heat with some butter in it. Once the butter is hot crack the 2 eggs into the pan and cover with a lid to trap the steam. Fry the eggs until the yolks are still runny, but the whites are fully cooked. Place an egg on top of each bowl of oatmeal and enjoy!



Savory Oatmeal

FOR TWO

\$1.50 TOTAL
\$0.75 / SERVING



\$1.60 TOTAL
\$0.80 / SERVING

Omelette

FOR TWO

I make this omelette at least once a week. It's insanely delicious, whether laden with veggies or kept simple. I love it with dill, but it's good with almost any herb or scallions. Once you are a pro at making this, add any other cooked veggies you have around.

Crack the eggs in a bowl. Add the dill, salt, and pepper, then beat it all with a fork.

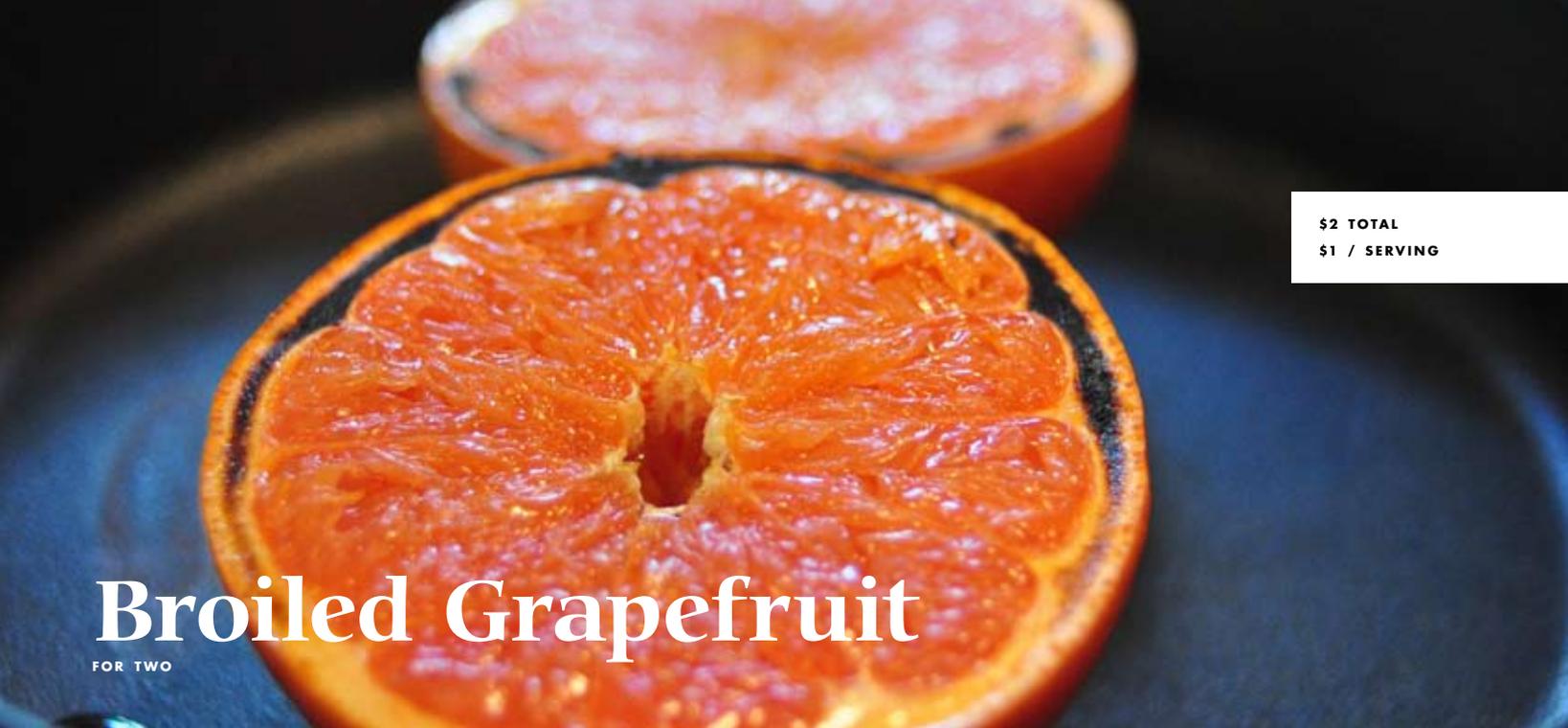
Put a big saucepan on medium-high heat. Melt a small blob of butter in the pan. Once the butter is sizzling, add the onion and sauté for about two minutes, until it's translucent and smells great.

Add the egg to the hot pan and swirl it around to coat the surface evenly. If the centre of the omelette cooks more quickly than the edge, use a spatula to pull any raw egg into the middle. Then stop touching it.

After about 30 seconds, toss the cheese on top along with any other raw or cooked vegetable you feel like adding. Once none of the egg remains translucent, fold the omelette in half with your spatula, then lift it out of the pan. You don't want any brown on your eggs.

If I'm serving two people, I usually cut one large omelette in half rather than making two omelettes. However, when you feel like being fancy make each two egg omelettes separately by simply using the same process, but using half the ingredients for each. Then roll up the omelette rather than folding it--this is the french method. The result will be quite thin and tender.

- 4 eggs
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
- salt and pepper
- butter for the pan
- 1 shallot or ½ small red onion, finely diced
- ¼ cup grated cheese



\$2 TOTAL
\$1 / SERVING

Broiled Grapefruit

FOR TWO

- 2 grapefruit
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- salt

Turn on the broiler. Split the grapefruit in half and place it on a baking tray or in an oven proof pan. Sprinkle the pink halves with sugar evenly and top with just a tiny bit of salt to bring out the flavor.

Place the grapefruit halves under the broiler until they are bubbly and a little brown or even black around the edges. It usually takes about 3 minutes, but monitor it because every broiler is different.

If you have it, swap the sugar for maple syrup for even more flavor.

This will make a grapefruit lover out of you.

If you have a broiler this is a fast and fun way to liven up the standard, healthy grapefruit for breakfast. This treatment makes it into a hot and sticky treat.

Banana Pancakes

MAKES TEN TO FOURTEEN PANCAKES

With the creamy texture and delicious flavor of bananas, these pancakes are stunningly good. You will be seriously popular if you feed these to your family or friends. Another plus, here is an alternate way to get rid of mushy bananas besides banana bread.

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 bananas, mashed
- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 bananas, sliced
- butter, for cooking

In one medium sized bowl add the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, soda and salt. Mix it thoroughly with a spoon.

In another bowl add the mashed bananas (or mash them in the bowl), the eggs, milk and vanilla and mix. Add the dry mixture from the other bowl into the second bowl. Gently stir it with a spoon until everything is just coming together. If there are still a few pockets of flour don't worry about it. Let the mixture sit for 10 to 15 minutes. Tender pancakes are created by not over-mixing the batter.

Place a non-stick or cast iron pan on medium heat. Once it is hot add a small amount of butter, about ½ tsp to the pan. Once it melts, use a ladle to pour the pancake batter into the center of the hot pan. You can make your pancakes as large or small as you like. Estimate about 1/4 to 1/3 cup of batter. If it's your first time making pancakes make them smaller and they will be easy to flip. As soon as the pancake batter is in the pan place 3 to 4 banana slices onto the top of the uncooked side of the pancake. Once the edges of the pancake start to dry up and you can see bubbles coming up through the middle flip the pancake over. Cook until it is browned on the underside. Place in a warm oven and repeat this process until you are out of batter.

Serve hot, with butter and syrup.



\$2.80 TOTAL
\$0.70 / SERVING

Whole Wheat Cheddar Jalapeño Scones

MAKES SIX

So delicious for breakfast or with a plate of beans, a pile of vegetables or alongside a chili or stew. Spicy, cheesy, flaky – these are best eaten straight out of the oven.

- ½ cup butter
- 2½ cups whole wheat flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 oz cheddar, cut into small cubes
- 1 jalapeño, finely diced
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ cup milk

EGG WASH

- 1 egg
- salt and pepper

Place the butter in the freezer for half an hour.

Turn the oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper, or lightly grease the pan if you don't have the paper.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, and salt.

Prepare your jalapeño and cheese. Cutting the cheese into cubes rather than grating it means that you will have pockets of gooey cheese that contrast nicely with the scone. If you want the spice of the jalapeño leave the seeds and membrane; if you like it milder than remove them and chop up only the pepper itself.

Take the butter from the freezer and grate it directly into the flour mixture. Using your hands, gently crumble the butter into the flour until everything is incorporated but not smooth. The chunks of butter will mean flaky scones. Add the jalapeno, cheese, eggs and milk to the bowl and use your hands to gently mix it together until it just comes together. It will probably be a little shaggy, but that is just fine.

Sprinkle flour on a clean counter top and dump the dough onto it. Gently shape the dough into a disc about 1 ½ inches thick. Cut the dough into six triangles, like a pizza, and transfer them to the cookie sheet. In a small bowl gently beat the egg for the egg wash and brush the scones with the egg mixture. Sprinkle salt and pepper over each scone. Bake for 25 minutes or until the scones are golden brown.





Salad

There isn't much to a great salad; fresh vegetables, crunchy stuff, a little something rich like cheese, nuts, or even a buttery crouton or creamy dressing. The dressing should be well seasoned with salt and have a nice hit of vinegar or citrus to bring out all the other flavors. Don't bother with store-bought dressing. It's usually lousy tasting and full of cheap oils and chemicals; you can make something better and cheaper at home with just a few pantry items. Salad shouldn't be something you choke down or grudgingly serve as an afterthought, make it something you look forward to by adding your favorite flavors to it.

Broiled Eggplant Salad

FOR ONE

If you aren't a big eggplant fan you might really enjoy this despite yourself. Broiling the eggplant creates a crunchy and meaty texture, and the tahini dressing makes this taste rich and creamy.

- 1 medium eggplant, sliced into circles
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp tahini
- sprinkle of chili flakes (optional)
- fresh dill, finely chopped (optional)
- salt and pepper

Turn your oven's broiler on. Arrange the slices of eggplant on a baking sheet. Place them under the broiler for about 3 minutes. Watch them carefully. Every broiler is different, so just watch for them to blacken in spots. Remove them from the oven and flip the slices over. Repeat the process on the other side. Once your eggplant is charred and tasty looking remove it and chop it up into bite sized pieces.

In a bowl add the tahini, lemon juice, and chili flakes if using and plenty of salt and pepper. Add the eggplant and stir it around. Taste it and add more salt or lemon juice according to your taste. Top it with dill and serve!

\$4.50 TOTAL
\$1.25 - 2.25 / SERVING



Kale Salad

FOR TWO AS A MEAL OR FOUR AS A SIDE

This kale is treated like romaine lettuce in a Caesar salad. The bitterness of the green is delicious with the rich, fatty dressing. You could also use Swiss chard.

- 1 large bunch of kale
- 2 cups bread cubes
- 2 tbsp butter (more as needed)
salt and pepper
parmesan or romano cheese, freshly grated

DRESSING

- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, finely grated
- 1 anchovy, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp olive oil
salt and pepper

Place a pan on medium heat. Add the butter and let it melt until just sizzling. Add the bread cubes. Let them cook until brown on the underside, then flip them. Add more butter as needed to keep the bread nice and toasty. Cook until all sides are brown, but don't worry about them being perfect. While the croutons are still hot, sprinkle them with salt and pepper. Set aside.

To make the dressing, start with the egg yolk in a large mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice, mustard, garlic, and anchovy. Whisk briskly until it is light and frothy. Slowly add the olive oil, whisking the whole time. Once everything is incorporated, add the salt and pepper, then adjust to your taste. I tend to like it very lemony.

Cut the kale leaves to remove the large stem from the center. Slice the leaves in half lengthwise, then cut into thin ribbons. You want to chop the kale smaller than you would romaine to disguise its naturally tough texture. Add the kale to the bowl and toss to coat it with the dressing. Set aside for 10 minutes or leave in the fridge for a few hours. The kale will become more tender if it marinates in the dressing for a while.

Before serving, add the croutons and grate some parmesan cheese over everything. Mix it up and serve!

\$4.50 TOTAL
\$2.25 / SERVING





Taco Salad

FOR TWO

A great use for leftover beans (or pulled pork); crunchy, fresh yet satisfying enough to be a whole meal. I like to make taco salad during a week where I've made a large batch of beans and I'm craving something fresh.

- 4 cups lettuce, chopped
- 1 cup beans, pulled pork or ground beef
- 2 small tomatoes, chopped
- ½ cup corn, canned or fresh
- 2-3 Scallions, finely chopped
- 1 cup tortilla chips, roughly crushed
- Cheddar or queso fresco, for sprinkling

DRESSING

- ¼ cup sour cream or yogurt
- juice of one lime
- salt and pepper

ADDITIONS

- cucumber
- jalapeno
- bell peppers
- grated carrots
- salsa

Mix up the dressing. Taste it and adjust the salt, pepper and lime juice to your taste.

Add everything to a large bowl and use a large spoon or tongs to mix it all together. Add the dressing right before serving and toss to coat everything thoroughly. Serve and eat immediately with a couple of extra tortilla chips.

\$5.20 TOTAL
\$2.60 / SERVING

Spicy, Crunchy Beet and Chickpea Salad

FOR TWO

- 2 to 3 beet roots, peeled and grated
- 1 cup of chickpeas, cooked or canned
- 3 tbsp peanuts

dressing:

- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp chili sauce
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- salt and pepper

Enjoy this unusual, sweet, spicy and pink combination.

Peel and stem the beet roots. Using a box grater shred the beets. Place them in a bowl along with the chickpeas and peanuts.

Mix up the dressing ingredients in another small bowl and stir to combine. Taste and adjust the salt and pepper to your liking. Add the dressing to the other bowl and mix up all the ingredients. Let it sit for about 5 minutes to let all the flavors soak in and the beet juices mingle.

One of the pinkest salads you'll eat!



\$3.50 TOTAL
\$1.75 / SERVING

Cold and Spicy Noodles

FOR FOUR

On a hot day, this is all I want to eat. Cold, spicy food is refreshing and delicious in the summer. If you have the spice oil from p.120 add it. It's amazing in this.

- 12 oz of noodles, (spaghetti, soba noodles or Asian noodles of any kind)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 1 cucumber, finely chopped
- salt and pepper

ADDITIONS:

- spice oil (p.120)
- grated carrot
- shredded cabbage,
- bean sprouts
- hard boiled egg
- chopped tomato
- peanut sauce

Prepare the noodles according to the package instructions. Rinse them under cold water and let the water drain from them for 2 minutes.

Put the noodles in a bowl and add the spice oil, scallions and cucumber (and any other additions) to the bowl. Mix it all together with a fork or a tongs. Taste it and add salt and pepper or more spice oil as needed. Let the noodles sit in the fridge for about an hour if you can. The flavors will mingle and become more intense.

Think of this as a recipe that you can really make your own. Use whatever sauce or dressing you like and whatever vegetables you have around, or just a few scallions.

\$5 TOTAL
\$1.25 / SERVING





The texture of thinly sliced apple and broccoli is wonderfully crunchy and the bitterness of the broccoli with the sweet and tart apples is delicious. The dressing brings it all together.

- 1 large crown and stem of broccoli
- 2 apples

DRESSING 1

- 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- salt and pepper

DRESSING 2

- 1 tbsp yogurt
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp chopped fresh dill
- salt and pepper

Slice the stem of the broccoli into 1/8th of an inch pieces. If you can't get them that thin don't worry, but the thinner the better if you have the patience! Once you reach the crown of the broccoli cut each of the florets off and slice each of them as thinly as you can as well. Set the broccoli in a bowl.

Halve and core the apples then place the flat side of the apple on your cutting board. Slice the apples into 1/8th of an inch pieces just like with the broccoli. Dump the apples into the bowl with the broccoli.

Choose your dressing and prepare it by simply mixing it together in a small bowl. Taste it and season with more salt and pepper according to your taste.

Pour the dressing over the vegetables in the bowl and mix it all together. If you want to give it a special look serve it on a cold plate (keep the plate in the fridge for 10 minutes) piled prettily high. You'll love it.



Soup

It's a cliché, but as soon as the weather gets cold our house invariably fills with the smell of simmering vegetables for soup. Vegetable soup is so simple you can easily start inventing your own with the stuff you and your family like. Start with some onion, carrot, celery, maybe a pepper and then add broth and a large amount of say... Spinach, and you have spinach soup! It's a great place for new cooks to gain some confidence. Just remember to season it enough! Dunk a grilled cheese sandwich in it and even mediocre soup tastes great.

Corn Soup

FOR FOUR TO SIX

This thick, sweet, satisfying soup is a favorite of kids and adults. This is wonderful to make at the beginning of Autumn when corn on the cob is at its peak, but use canned corn and it is also a warm reminder of summer in the depths of winter.

- 4 to 8 cobs of corn, with corn removed
- 2 bay leaves (optional)
- salt to taste
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 sticks celery, finely chopped
- 1 green or red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 small potato, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 chili, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 tbsp cornmeal
- 4 cups corn, canned, frozen or fresh
- 5 cups corn broth
- salt and pepper to taste

You can make this with the corn broth if you are using fresh corn, or just use some chicken or vegetable broth as well. If you are not making the corn broth than skip down to paragraph four to start.

Place the cobs and bay leaves in a large stock pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then turn the heat down to medium and let the water boil for about 30 minutes. Taste it and add salt and pepper until the broth tastes lightly corny.

The broth will keep for several months frozen or 3 weeks in the refrigerator.

To make the soup, place a large pot or Dutch oven on medium heat on the stovetop. Add the butter and let it melt. Add onion, celery, bell pepper and potato to the pot and stir it around. Cover it and let everything fry and steam for about five minutes. Take the lid off the pot and add the garlic and chili if using. Stir the vegetables and use a bit of water or broth to unstick any vegetables from the bottom of the pot. Let the vegetables cook, stirring occasionally for another five minutes. The vegetables should be light brown and soft, although the potatoes will not be fully cooked yet.

Add the cornmeal and corn to the pot and stir. Cover with the broth and bring it up to a boil. Once the soup is boiling, turn the heat down to low and let it simmer for about thirty minutes, the broth should thicken and become opaque. Taste and add salt and pepper, you will probably have to use at least a teaspoon of salt if you use the homemade corn broth, if you use a store bought broth you will need less salt.

Ladle up a bowl and serve with a slice of garlic bread or add a hard boiled egg for some extra protein.



\$5 TOTAL
\$1.25 / SERVING

Lightly Curried Butternut Squash Soup

FOR FOUR

Squash is almost the perfect vegetable for soup. It's flavor blends well and it has a divinely smooth texture when cooked and pureed. Serve this soup to people who think they don't like squash or curry, you'll change some minds. You can substitute any winter squash for the butternut, I just prefer butternut because it is faster to peel and chop than it's many cousins.

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 butternut squash
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 can coconut milk
- 3 cups water
- salt and pepper to taste

To Serve

- scallions
- cilantro

To prepare the butternut squash peel the tough skin off with a potato peeler. Next cut the squash in half lengthwise with a sharp chef's knife. Scoop out the seeds and gloop. You can save the seeds for later, clean the gloop off and toast then for a tasty snack. Next slice the stem and very bottom of the squash and throw it away. Take each half of the squash and place it solidly face-down on a cutting board. Slice each across into half inch sticks. Take each slice and cut into dice.

Put a large pot or Dutch oven on the stove on medium heat. Add the butter and let it melt and get hot. Add the onion, pepper and garlic and sauté for two minutes. Add the cubed squash and spices and stir it all together. Put a lid on the pot and let it cook for another two minutes. Add the coconut milk and water and stir. Bring the soup to a boil and then turn down the heat to low and let it cook for about thirty minutes or until the squash is tender.

Once the squash is tender taste the soup and add salt and pepper as needed. Soup usually needs a fair bit of salt so be generous.

If you have an immersion blender you can puree the soup in the pot, if you have a normal blender then wait until the soup has cooled and then transfer it to the blender. Puree until smooth, then taste again and add any more salt and pepper it might need.

You can enjoy it as is or serve it with a drizzle of coconut milk, or a dollop of sour cream and some chopped scallions or cilantro.

\$6 TOTAL
\$1.50 / SERVING





\$2.40 TOTAL
\$0.60 / SERVING

Dal

FOR FOUR

Here is a lentil stew prepared in an Indian style. There are a ton of ways to prepare this, and you can use any lentil you like, but at its core, ginger, garlic and chili, along with some dry spices are keys to this flavor-packed staple of the Indian table.

- 2 cups lentils
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp black mustard seeds
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 green chili, finely chopped
- ½ inch of ginger root, grated
- salt and pepper to taste

You can use any lentil you like. If you are using larger lentils, like chana dal or french lentils or split mung beans then soak them for half an hour before using them. If you are using the small orange lentils then don't bother soaking them, they cook very quickly.

Add butter to a saucepan on medium heat and let it melt. Add the onion and let it cook for one minute. Add the cumin and mustard seeds and stir them around with the onions until they sizzle. Add the turmeric powder, garlic and chili and cook for 3 to 4 more minutes. Add the ginger root and stir fry quickly for about 30 seconds.

Add the lentils along with enough water to cover them to the pot and place a lid on top. Let it cook for 20 to 45 minutes or until the lentils are tender. Taste the dal and add salt and pepper. You will probably need a healthy amount of salt, likely a teaspoon or so in order to bring out all the flavors in the dish.

You can top this with a small splash of cream or some chopped fresh cilantro.



Snacks and Small Bites

When cooking on a budget, snacks are often the first thing to be shaved away, but there are plenty of cheap, healthy and delightful snacks to be enjoyed in all seasons and for all occasions! Plus, leftovers make great snacks.

Yogurt

There are so many types of yogurt in the grocery stores. Some are low in fat and high in sugar, others have cute animals on the boxes. Some are greek. Some have chocolate shavings and candy, some have names like "key lime pie."

Now forget about all of that. The best yogurt for your money is the plain, usually two liter buckets of yogurt, the fat content is your choice. Make sure it doesn't have gelatin in it and you're all set. You can make your own super flavors at home in your own kitchen where you know exactly what is going into it.

Ask the kids what flavors they can imagine and go make it! It's a lot more fun than letting the supermarket choose for you. Try something new and smash it in! Check out the ideas on the adjoining page.

If you want a thicker textured, Greek style yogurt all you have to do is strain it with cheese cloth to release some of the water. Yogurt's versatility makes it a great staple to keep in the fridge. Mix it with some of the items you see on the next page for a snack or try one of the savory sauces on pages 122 and 123.



jam!

Yogurt

raspberry!

honey!

coconut!



On Toast

FOR ONE

\$0.75 TOTAL

2 PIECES

I love bread, and toast in particular is my comfort food - I crave it when I'm sick or worn down. Here I would like to suggest that you take some toast and put something tasty on it.

Certainly you can feed a crowd, but I like this meal for times when I am on my own and want a quick meal or snack. It's a great way to use leftovers or turn a side dish into a full meal. However, what makes this more like a special dinner than a quick snack is the way you treat the bread--toasting it in the pan like you might with a nice piece of fish. A pile of sautéed or raw veggies over buttered, toasty bread is the perfect meal for one and a great way to try a new vegetable. I've suggested a few below, but you could use all kinds of other veggies from this collection, or invent your own. Add a fried egg over the top if you're extra hungry.

- 2 slices bread
- 1 tbsp butter
- salt and pepper
- topping
- fried egg (optional)

Put a small frying pan on medium heat. Add 1/2 tbsp of butter and let it melt. Place the two slices of bread in the pan and let them cook for about two minutes. Using a spatula check to see if they are golden brown underneath. If so, flip them over. Add the rest of the butter to the pan to make sure the second side of the toast has the chance to be just as golden as the first. Sprinkle the top of the bread with salt and pepper. Once the second side is golden, set the bread on a plate to await your toppings.

For the toppings you can go raw or, as I most often do, sauté veggies or beans with your favorite flavors like garlic and chilies or olives and dill or ginger and turmeric. Get some ideas for combinations from p.126.

I've given you a bunch of topping ideas below, and any of these could be great over rice or any other grain, or in a tortilla, tossed with pasta or even on a pizza, it's up to you!



\$1 TOTAL
\$0.50 / PIECE

PEAS WITH LEMON: Sort of like a less salty and more rustic version of the British mushy peas dish. Add a bit of olive oil to a pan on medium heat. Add your peas--fresh or frozen will do just fine--along with the water to steam them a bit. Leave them alone to turn bright green and warm through. Sprinke with lemon zest and parmesan. Take them off the heat and either in the pan or in a bowl gently mash them a bit with the back of a fork. Pile onto toasted bread and enjoy!

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- parmesan or romano, to taste
- salt and pepper, to taste



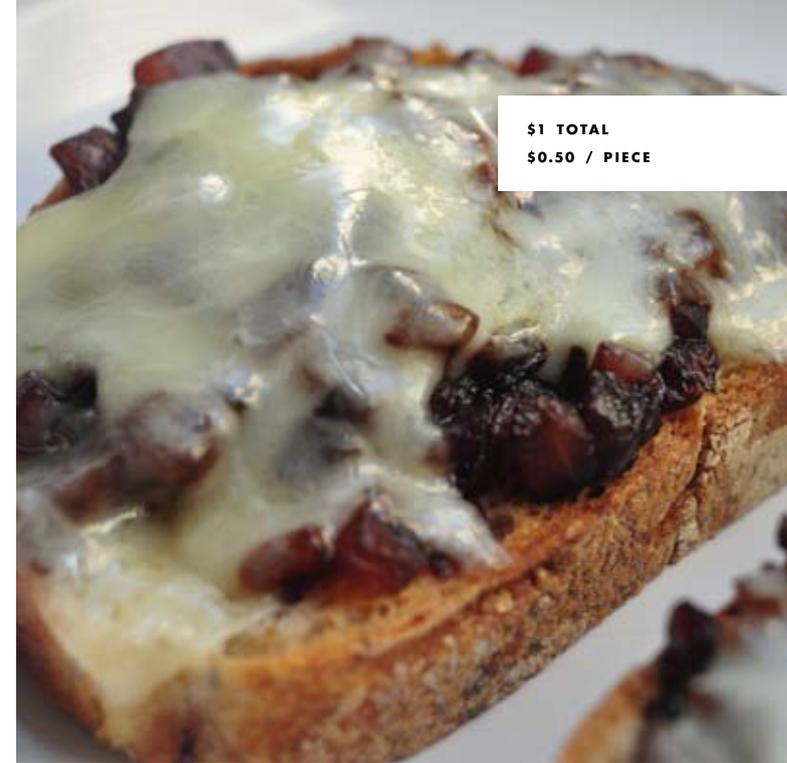
\$2.50 TOTAL
\$1.25 / PIECE

ASIAN GREENS GRA PROW: This works with any asian green from bok choy to tatsoi to gai lan. If there is a leafy part and a stem part be sure to separate them into two piles since the stems take longer to cook. Place a pan on medium heat and add the vegetable oil. Add the garlic and cook for two minutes, then add the ginger and soy sauce and watch out for splattering! Quickly add the stem part of the greens and cook for 4 to 5 minutes until they are almost tender. Then add the leafy part of the green and cook for two more minutes. Lastly add the Thai basil and turn off the heat. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed. You may not need much because of the salty soy sauce!

- 1 bunch Asian greens
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp Thai basil
- salt and pepper to taste

CARAMELIZED ONIONS AND CHEDDAR: Melt the butter in a pan on medium high heat. Add the onions to the pan and let them cook slowly. As the onions darken stir them occasionally and add a bit of water to loosen up the sticky onion bits on the bottom. If at any point you think the onions are burning, just add water and you should be able to unstick everything. Leave the onions until they are a dark purple like the ones pictured. They will now be sweet and caramelized. Spread them over your toast and top with slices of aged cheddar, sprinkle with pepper and salt. Put the toast back in the pan and cover with a lid to keep the heat in. Once the cheddar is bubbly, serve it up.

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- cheddar, thinly sliced
- salt and pepper, to taste



\$1 TOTAL
\$0.50 / PIECE

ROASTED ROOT VEGETABLES: This is one of my favorite ways to eat leftover roasted vegetables from page 53. Simply create a ridiculously tall pile of vegetables like the one pictured here and sprinkle some cheese and fresh pepper over it. You could also add any leftover sauces you have or sprinkle some crushed nuts on top. Beautiful!

Pictured here is roasted winter squash and leeks.



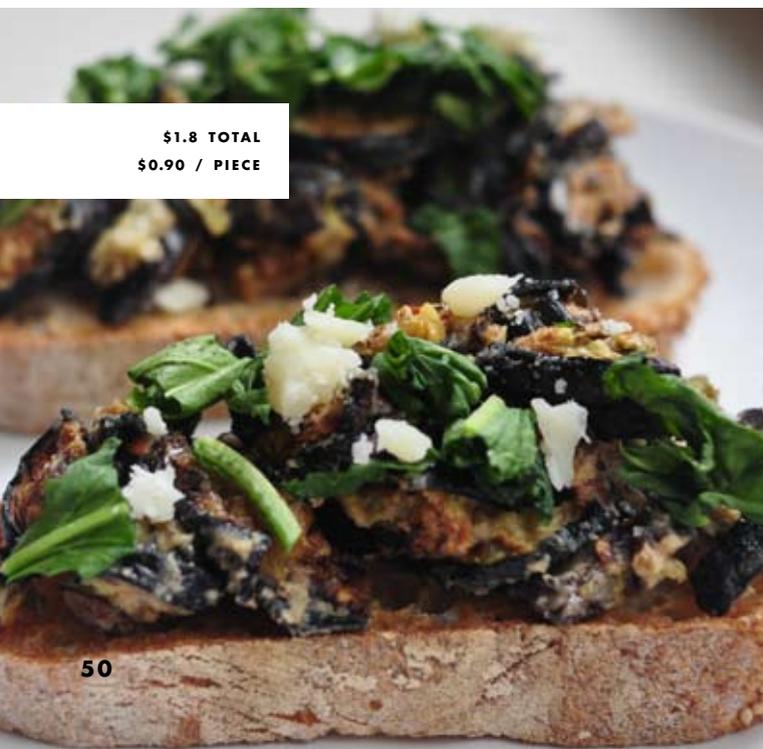
\$1 TOTAL
\$0.50 / PIECE



\$1.50 TOTAL
\$0.75 / PIECE

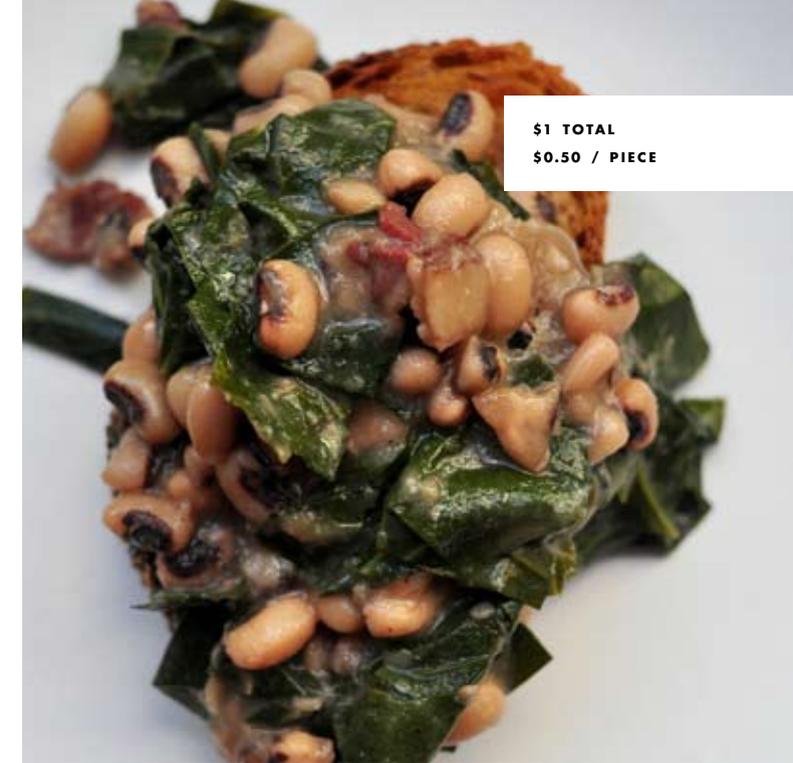
BROCCOLI: Place a pan on medium heat and add the olive oil. Let it get hot for a few seconds. Add the garlic and chili flakes and cook for two minutes, until they smell great, but are not yet brown. Add the anchovy and cook for another minute. Add the broccoli and about 1/4 cup of water. Cover the pan with a large lid and let it steam for 3 minutes or so. Take the lid off and toss all the ingredients together. Cook for another two minutes, or until the broccoli is as tender as you want it to be and the water has cooked off. Sometimes stems can take a while! Plop it on the toast and use a vegetable peeler to make a few strips of parmesan to sprinkle over the broccoli. You will convert any broccoli haters.

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 1 anchovy, finely chopped
- 1 crown and stem of broccoli, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- parmesan, to taste
- salt and pepper to taste



\$1.8 TOTAL
\$0.90 / PIECE

EGGPLANT SALAD: Another use for leftovers or just a different way to eat this salad if you want something a little more substantial. Dollop the eggplant salad from p. 29 onto toast and add some herbs or greens to the top for some freshness.



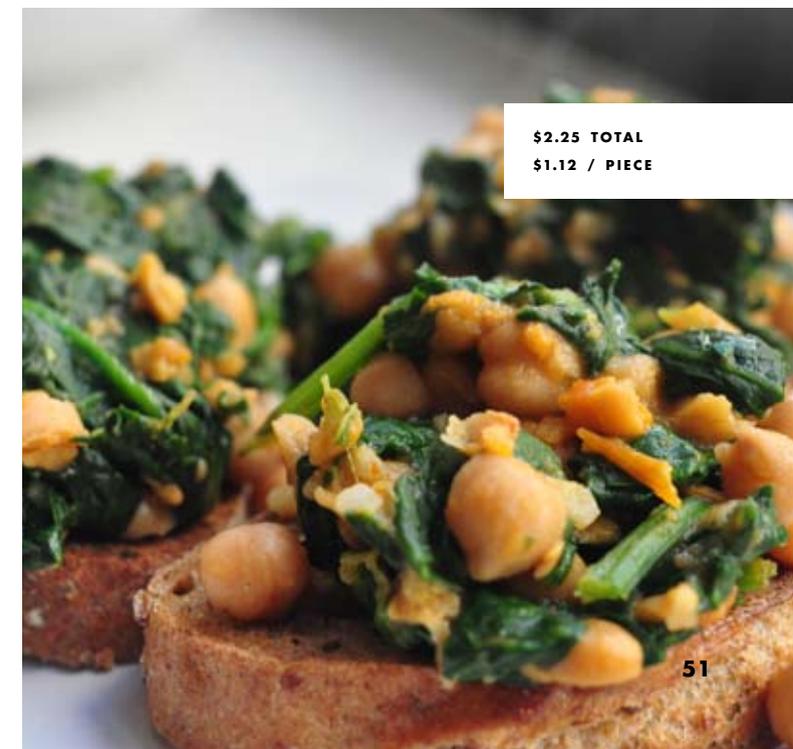
\$1 TOTAL
\$0.50 / PIECE

BLACK EYED PEAS WITH COLLARDS AND BACON: Oh man, is there anything more comforting than beans on toast? This is so satisfying and a favorite way to use leftovers for this dish, found on p. 88. Any friend or family member would be happy with this tasty meal, but you can up the fanciness, by using one of the jalapeno cheddar biscuits from p 26 instead of toast.

SPINACH AND CHICKPEAS: This is probably a little more than you need for two pieces of toast - but hey, leftovers are tasty. This is a popular tapas dish in Spain! One of my favorites. Try a little smoked paprika sprinkled on top if you have it.

Place a pan on medium heat and add the olive oil. Let it get hot and add the garlic and cook for two minutes. Add the chickpeas and spinach. Cook for two to five minutes until the spinach cooks down and everything warms through, but the spinach is still bright green. Taste and add salt and pepper. Spoon it over toast!

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup cooked chickpeas
- 1 bunch spinach
- salt and pepper to taste



\$2.25 TOTAL
\$1.12 / PIECE

Roasted Vegetables

As soon as the weather turns cooler I only want to eat warm, flavorful food. Roasting is so easy, it warms up the kitchen, and it even makes the house smell like the holidays. If you are uncertain how to prepare a new vegetable, you usually can't go wrong with roasting – most things end up sweeter, with nice crunchy bits. If you roast a bunch of vegetables at the beginning of the week you can eat them throughout the week in various ways, with eggs at breakfast, folded into an omelette, as a side dish, in a taco or sandwich, on toast of course or with any grain. They are the best! Check out the basic method below and then figure out your own favorites!

Vegetables

Olive oil or butter

Salt and pepper to taste

GREAT FOR ROASTING

THE ROOTS

potatoes, sweet potatoes, beets, turnips, onions, parsnips, carrots, sunchokes, kohlrabi

NON-ROOT VEGETABLES

bell peppers (not a root, but awesome roasted and don't dry out too fast), winter squash, brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, eggplant, fennel

EXTRAS

whole garlic cloves, lemon slices or lemon zest, anything you would pair with roast chicken, tough herbs like sage, oregano, thyme, bay leaves and dry spices of any kind. Get some ideas for good flavor combinations for spices from p.126.

*unfortunately I can't give a cost estimate for this recipe because it is so open ended. Keep the cost down by buying the vegetables that are in season – they will be the tastiest and the least expensive.

Set the oven to 400 F.

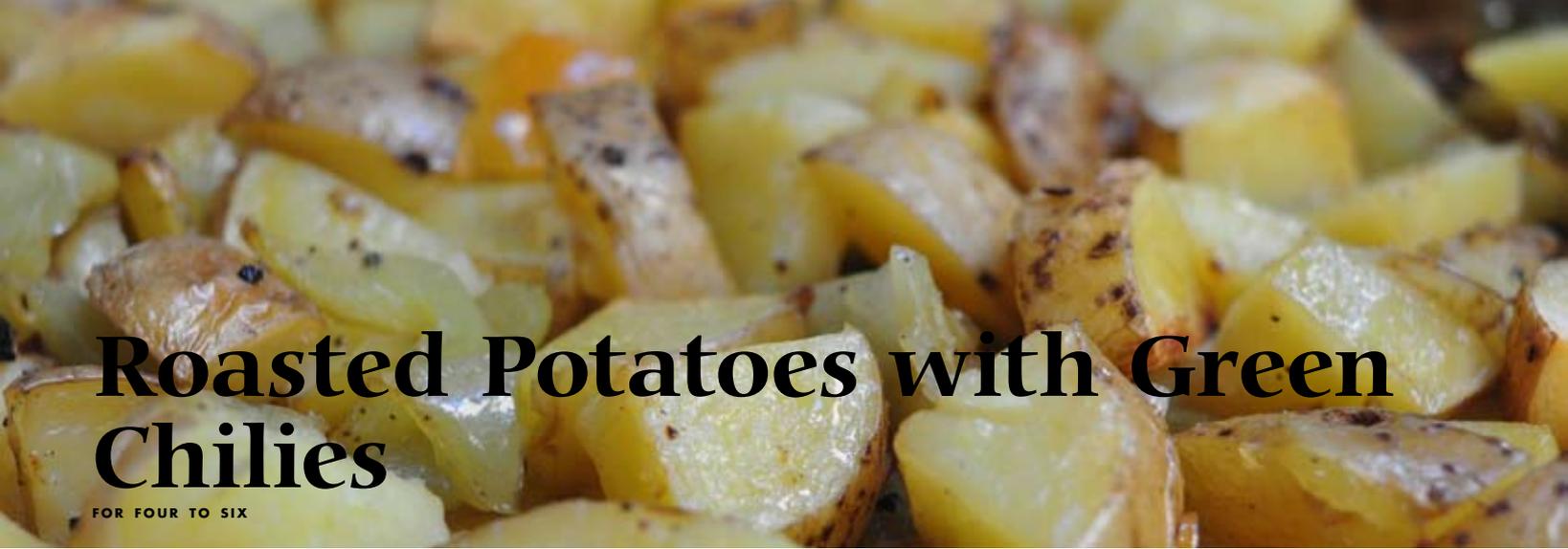
Clean and chop your vegetables. Generally I prefer to leave the skin on for the following reasons: 1. They taste nice and get crispy 2. There is a lot of nutrition in the skin 3. It's faster than peeling them. Just be sure to wash the vegetables thoroughly.

It's up to you how you want to chop your vegetables. Many are nice roasted whole, like the small new potatoes or little sunchokes or turnips—they will be crispy and salty on the outside and bursting with fluffy, starchy goodness inside. You can also chop them up into equal sized pieces. The general rule is, the smaller they are the faster they will cook, so try to keep everything generally the same size so nothing cooks faster than anything else.

Dump your vegetables into a roasting pan. Drizzle it with olive oil or melted butter. Probably about 2 tbs per medium sized roasting pan is enough. Season generously with salt and pepper and add any other extras from the list beside. Lastly, use your hands to coat the vegetables thoroughly with the oil and spices. Pop it in the oven for 1 hour or longer. I suggest checking on the vegetables after 45 minutes. Test them by poking them with a knife – if it meets no resistance they are finished, if not then let them cook longer. Don't worry, if you overcook them it's not much of a problem, unlike with boiling or steaming vegetables, roasted vegetables may dry out a bit, but retain their shape and flavor even when overcooked.

When you pull the vegetables out of the oven use a spatula to move them around and free them from being too stuck to the pan. Remove any garlic you have added and smash it up into a fine paste then add it back into the pan and mix it together. Squeeze the juice of any lemons and take out the woody bits of any cooked herbs. Add a little more butter, a bit of favorite sauce, a little soft cheese or mayonnaise and serve.

On the following pages are two examples of how to make great roasted vegetables.



Roasted Potatoes with Green Chilies

FOR FOUR TO SIX

It doesn't get much simpler or more satisfying than this. You can use any chilies from large, dark poblanos to hungarian wax chilies to bell peppers if that's what you prefer.

- 4 medium potatoes, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 4 medium green chilies, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 tbsp butter
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a large roasting pan tumble together the potatoes, green chilies and garlic. When you prepare the green chilies be sure to get rid of the seeds, and white placenta inside. You can use any kinds of chilies you like, or even substitute bell peppers or use canned chilies.

Pour over the butter, and sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Potatoes need quite a lot of salt! Use your hands to mix everything up, coating everything in oil, salt and pepper.

Roast for 1 hour, or until you can spear the potatoes easily with a fork and everything is a little brown and crispy.

The ways to serve this are many. In addition to being a great side dish, this makes a delicious taco filling. It's pictured here on a tortilla topped with chopped tomato, and queso blanco. Salsa and cilantro would also be a great addition.

Try it alongside some black beans and rice or piled high on a plate with an egg on top. It even makes a great sandwich filling. Try it and let you and your families tastes guide you!



\$3 TOTAL
\$0.75 / SERVING



Smoky and Spicy Roasted Cauliflower

FOR FOUR

Roasted veggies are always delicious, but there's something magical that happens to cauliflower in the oven. It gets so crispy and nutty, and that flavor is brought out even more with the spices here. I can just eat a bowl of this for dinner, maybe with an egg on top, but you can use it all over.

- 1 head cauliflower, cut into small pieces
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- freshly cracked pepper to taste

Turn the oven to 400 F.

In a medium sized roasting pan arrange the cauliflower pieces and the cloves of garlic. Leave the skins on the garlic, they can roast in their skins and get sweet and soft. Pour the butter over the cauliflower and then sprinkle the spices over the top. Use your hands to thoroughly coat the cauliflower with butter and spices.

Place the cauliflower in the oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on how crispy you like the florets!



Green Chile and Cheddar Quesadillas

FOR TWO

These are a great late-night snack, or a quick lunch or dinner. You can add anything to them to bulk them up as well or change the cheese. Super fast and yummy.

- 4 tortillas
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, grated
- ½ cup green chilies, chopped, (canned or fresh)
- 1 tbsp cilantro, chopped

serve with sour cream and salsa

Spread a ¼ cup of green chilies evenly over top of each tortilla. Sprinkle ¼ cup of cheese over the chilies and then top with the cilantro. Place another tortilla on top of each prepared tortilla to form a quesadilla.

Place a large, non-stick pan on medium heat. Once it's hot add the quesadillas to the pan. Once the tortillas are toasty, after about a minute, flip them over and brown the second side. Once the cheese is melted and the tortillas browned the quesadilla is ready. Slice into triangles and enjoy with some fresh salsa and sour cream.



\$0.25 to \$1 TOTAL

Leftover Polenta Fries

This is more of a method than a recipe. These are so crunchy and savory that you just might find yourself making batches of polenta just for the leftovers.

The night before, take your leftover cooked polenta and put it in a baking pan or flat piece of Tupperware. Anything with a flat surface on the bottom will do. Smooth the polenta down so it's even and flat like you would if you were making brownies. Cover and leave it in the fridge over night.

The next day take the polenta out of the fridge. It should be one hardened mass. Carefully remove it from the pan. Slice the polenta into strips like french fries, of about 2 inches in length.

Put a pan on medium high heat. Add some vegetable oil to the pan and let it get hot for about 30 seconds. Add the polenta strips. Sprinkle with salt to your taste. Fry until golden brown on all sides, using tongs or a spatula to gently flip them.

Serve with salsa and sour cream, ketchup, yogurt dip, bean dip or anything you like. They're great with a bowl of chili too in place of corn bread.

leftover polenta
1-2 tsp Vegetable oil
Salt, to taste

Spicy Green Beans

FOR TWO

This is one of my favorite things to eat of all time. Whenever I make them I think, why don't I have this every day? Throw a fried egg on top and serve it with some rice and you have a seriously delicious meal.

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- ½ lb green beans, ends trimmed, chopped into bit-size pieces
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp sambal olek (or 2 tsp chili flakes)

ADDITIONS

- 1 tsp ginger, grated
- 1 tsp lemon juice

Place a frying pan on medium heat and add the vegetable oil. Let it get hot and then add the green beans. Let them cook, undisturbed for about a minute. Mix up the garlic, soy sauce and sambal olek in a small bowl (and the ginger and lemon juice if using). The beans should have turned bright green. Add about a ¼ cup of water to the pan. Watch out for steam! Let it cook for another two minutes until the water is mostly gone. Add the garlic, soy sauce mixture and toss everything gently to coat it. Let it cook for another two minutes until everything is fragrant and most of the moisture is gone from the pan. Test to see if the green beans are tender by poking them with a fork. If they go through easily then they are done. They shouldn't take longer than 5 minutes. Take the beans off the heat and taste them. Add more soy sauce or chili sauce if you want it hotter or saltier.

Try not to eat it all right there at the stove, but it might be difficult.



\$1.30 TOTAL
\$0.65 / SERVING

Brussel Sprout Hash and Eggs

FOR TWO

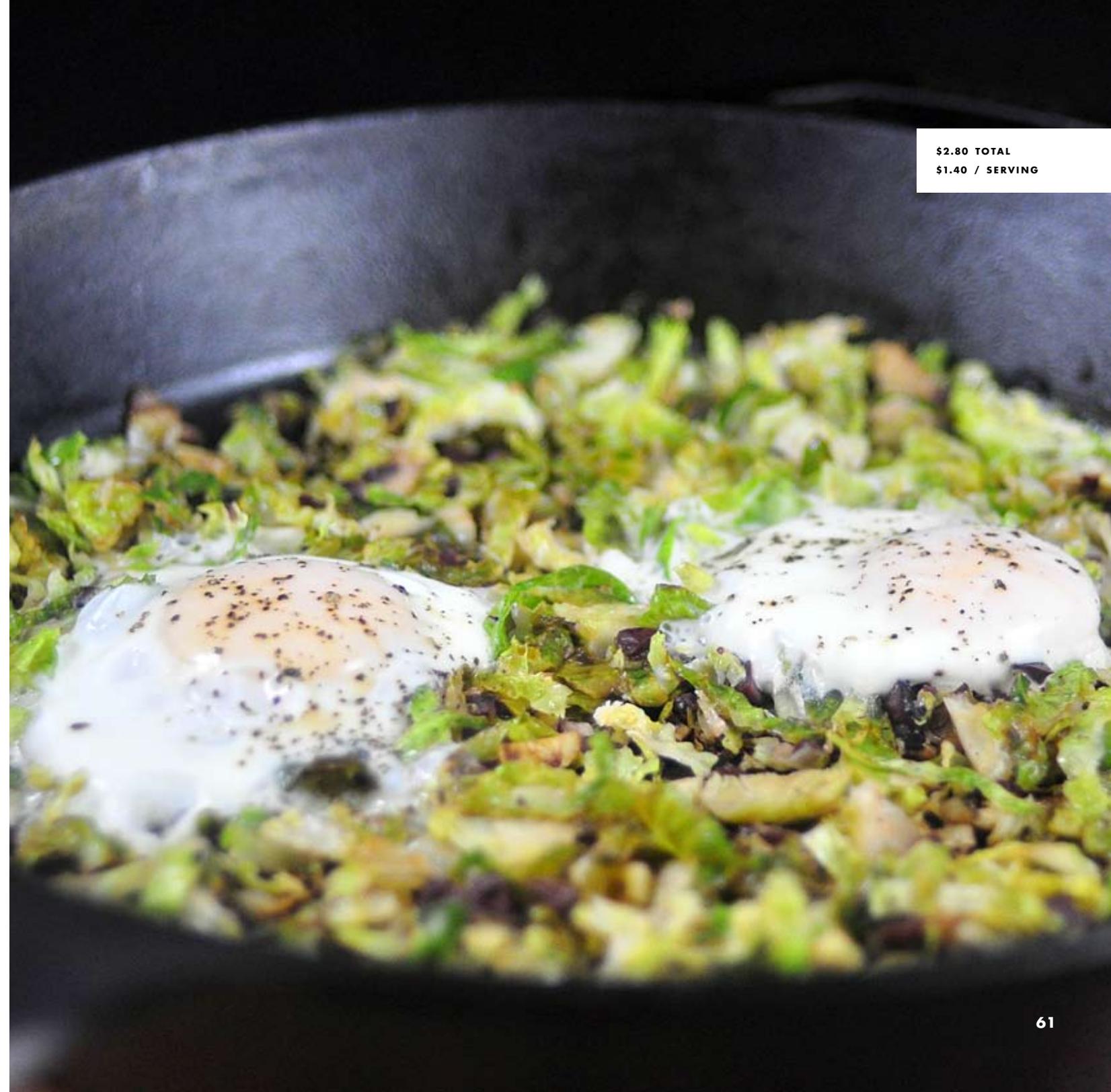
This is great for a light lunch or as a side dish. The brussel sprouts are salty and tangy because of the olive and lemon and then crispy and caramelized on the bottom. Mix in the little bit of fat from the egg yolk and wow is this delicious.

- 4 cups brussel sprouts, finely chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp butter
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6 olives, finely chopped
- lemon juice, to taste
- 2 eggs

Slice the ends off of the brussel sprouts. Slice them in half and then finely chop each half to create shreds. Place your shreds into a bowl and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

In a non-stick pan on medium high heat place the butter and let it melt. Swirl it around to coat the pan. Add the brussel sprout shreds and garlic and let it cook for about a minute. Mix it up and toss it around. Add the olives and mix again. Crack an egg one at a time into the far corners of the pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Pour 2 tbsp of water into the pan and cover with a lid. Let it steam and don't disturb the pan for 2 minutes. Check to see if the whites of the eggs are cooked through, once they are, turn off the heat and sprinkle with lemon juice. Serve.

\$2.80 TOTAL
\$1.40 / SERVING





\$4.25 TOTAL
\$1.06 / COB

Mexican Street Corn

FOR FOUR

This recipe takes already amazing, fresh, sweet summer corn on the cob and adds salty, tangy and spicy to the experience. If you have an outdoor grill prepare the corn that way, but for those without, a broiler is a great shortcut!

- 4 cobs of corn
- 4 tbsp mayonnaise
- ½ cup cojita, queso blanco, feta or parmesan, crumbled
- cayenne pepper powder, to taste
- 1 lime, sliced into wedges

Turn the broiler on high.

Peel off the outer layers of the corn and clean it of all the corn silk. Leave the green ends attached for a convenient hand hold. Place the cobs on a baking pan under the broiler and leave for 2 to 3 minutes. Check the corn and rotate them, slowly letting them get brown and toasty. It shouldn't take more than 10 minutes total.

Working quickly add a tbsp. of mayonnaise to each cob of corn and spread it all over, lightly coating every kernel. Next sprinkle the cheese all over the corn. It should stick fairly easily to the mayonnaise, but you will probably have to get a little messy coating them thoroughly. Sprinkle chili powder over the corn to your taste, don't go too heavy on the powder though or it will be a bit gritty. Use any chili powder you like, ancho or cayenne are great.

Lastly, squeeze lime juice all over the corn cobs and serve hot!

Jacket Sweet Potatoes

FOR FOUR

I like to serve these for dinner with all kinds of toppings, usually leftovers from other meals. Give it a try – fill them with a bit of roast chicken, beans and cheese, corn and tomatoes, whatever you have around. You can even go sweeter and add peanut butter and brown sugar. This can be a great meal for one or something fun with a group.

- 4 large sweet potatoes
- salt and pepper
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ½ bunch scallions, finely chopped

Turn the oven to 400 F. Wash and scrub your sweet potatoes and stab them a few times with a fork. Place them on a baking sheet and slide them into the oven. Let them bake for 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes. Because the sizes of sweet potatoes differ greatly you should check them after an hour. Test them by stabbing them with a long knife or another pointy object. If there is no resistance they are finished. If not, give them extra time.

Let the sweet potatoes cool for 15 minutes. Make a long cut along the top of each potato and gently open them, using a fork to fluff up the soft, orange contents of the potato. Sprinkle salt and pepper on each potato and serve them. Allow each person to add sour cream and scallions (or more salt and pepper) to their taste.



\$4.80 TOTAL
\$1.20 / SERVING

Cornmeal Crusted Veggies

SERVES FOUR TO SIX AS A SIDE DISH

- ½ lb of green beans, stems cut off
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup milk

ALTERNATIVES:

- Zucchini
- green pepper sticks
- winter squash
- cauliflower florets
- broccoli florets
- okra
- carrot sticks

These are kind of like having veggie french fries. The cornmeal makes them super crunchy, and they are great with your favorite dipping sauce (might I suggest peanut sauce p. 125). This breading process can be done with almost any vegetable, some of my favorites include zucchini wedges, green peppers and cooked winter squash. You might have tried fried green tomatoes or okra, but try this baked version which skips the expense and mess of the oil and keeps the crunch.

Heat the oven 450F.

Set up your breading station! On one plate spread the cornmeal, salt, black pepper, paprika and garlic powder. Mix it together with your fingers. Crack both eggs into a bowl, add the milk and mix them lightly with a fork. On a second plate spread out the flour.

Prepare a baking sheet by spreading a small amount of oil or butter across it.

A few at a time take the green beans and dredge them in the flour. Next transfer the flour covered beans to the egg mixture. Cover the beans lightly with egg mixture being careful to shake off any excess egg. Transfer to the cornmeal mixture and cover evenly with the cornmeal. Carefully spread the crusted green beans onto the baking sheet. Repeat until the green beans are gone. If you run out of any of the three mixtures just mix up a bit more.

Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until golden and crispy. Enjoy hot with your favorite dipping sauce!

Pictured: Green beans, zucchini and green peppers



\$2.50 TOTAL
\$0.60 / SERVING

Popcorn!

FOR FOUR

Popcorn is such a great snack. It's easy to forget how easy and cheap it is to prepare at home. Try some different toppings! I've suggested a few on the opposite page.

- 1/3 cup popcorn
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- salt to taste

Place a large pot with a good tight fitting lid on the stove. Add the vegetable oil to the pan and pour in the popcorn kernels. Put the lid on and turn the heat to medium. Using pot holders or oven mitts occasionally shake the pot from side to side to make sure the kernels are evenly distributed in the oil. Once the popcorn begins to pop turn the heat down to medium low and gently shake from side to side. Once the popping slows down to five to ten seconds between pops turn the heat off. Once you are sure the popping is done take the lid off. Pour the popcorn into a bowl. Pour butter, salt and other spices or toppings over the popcorn and gently toss to evenly coat it.

This recipe makes about 10 to 12 cups of popped popcorn. Enough for four people. Eat it while it's hot!



SCALLION AND CILANTRO



TURMERIC AND CORIANDER



SPICE OIL (p.120)



PARM AND BLACK PEPPER

CAYENNE AND
SMOKED PAPRIKA



BROWN SUGAR
AND ORANGE ZEST



CHILI POWDER AND LIME



PARM AND OREGANO



Poutine

FOR TWO AS A MAIN AND FOUR TO SIX AS A SIDE

Poutine is certainly not an everyday meal, but it's a favorite. Since I don't like frying at home I bake the potato chips, and they can still get nice and crispy without the fuss of frying. Montreal style poutine is made with vegetable gravy so give this a try or make your favorite beef or turkey gravy. Of course, proper poutine also uses cheese curds, and if you can find them do use those, but fresh mozzarella works for me, it has the same spongy quality, just maybe with a little less squeak.

- 2-3 medium russet potatoes, sliced into sticks
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- salt and pepper, to taste
- scallions, chopped
- 6 oz fresh mozzarella, diced

GRAVY

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 shallot or 3 scallions, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp all purpose flour
- 1½ cups vegetable broth
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- salt and pepper
- 6 leaves of fresh sage, finely chopped (optional)

Set the oven to 400 F.

Pour 1 tbsp of vegetable oil onto a baking sheet. Spread the oil around. Spread out the potato sticks. Pour the rest of the oil over the top and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Using your hands make sure the potatoes are coated with oil, salt and pepper and evenly spread across the pan. Place them in the oven and bake for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile prepare the gravy. In a saucepan on medium heat add the butter and let it melt. Once the butter is warm add the shallot and garlic. Let it cook for 2 minutes until it is translucent, but not brown. Add the flour and quickly stir with a spoon. Add a little broth if gets too clumpy. Let the flour, butter mixture cook until it turns light brown. Add the vegetable broth, soy sauce and cayenne pepper. Bring the gravy to a boil, then turn down the heat and let it cook for about 5 minutes stirring occasionally. Taste it and add salt and pepper as needed. Turn down the heat to very low to stay warm until the fries come out of the oven.

Prepare your mozzarella. After 20 minutes remove the fries from the oven, using a spatula lift them up and test their tenderness with a fork. If it easily goes through the potato then it is ready. If you want them a little more crispy you can flip them over and put them in for a few more minutes. When they are ready, pile one layer onto a plate, top with cheese and then the hot gravy. Repeat with a second layer and sprinkle with green onions and more freshly ground black pepper.

* This recipe comes out as a little more expensive than you would think because of the fresh mozzarella - if you cut back or skip the cheese entirely you can cut the price in half.

\$7 TOTAL
\$3.50 / SERVING





Handheld

Sometimes you just don't want to deal with plates and cutlery, plus eating with your hands is fun! These recipes are great for lunch, dinner or for a casual party.

Cauliflower Tacos

FOR 2 TO 3

Other than just eating it, this is one of my favorite ways to use the roasted cauliflower on page 56. A delicious change from the usual vegetable taco offerings. Just look at those crunchy bits!

- 1 recipe for smoky and spicy roasted cauliflower (p.56)
- 6 tortillas
- ½ cup cheese, grated
- ½ to 1 cup salsa or sauce of choice

Warm up the tortillas in the microwave for 20 to 30 seconds (or you can leave them in a warm oven covered with a towel while you prepare everything else). Place two to three tortillas on each plate and fill each with a generous serving of cauliflower. Sprinkle the grated cheese over top and drizzle with salsa or sauce of your choice. Enjoy!



\$6 TOTAL
\$2 to \$3 / SERVING



\$9 TOTAL
\$2.25 / PIZZA

Potato Leek Pizza

MAKES FOUR PIZZAS

Obviously you should just make all kinds of pizza. Seriously, do it. Make it a Thursday night tradition and use up leftovers that way. This is a fun and different pizza that sort of confounds expectations - it makes you realize that indeed, anything is good on pizza!

- 1 recipe for pizza dough (p.13)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 russet potato or 3 small potatoes, sliced into thin circles
salt and pepper
- 3 leeks, sliced into circles
- 1 lb fresh mozzarella, shredded

Turn the oven to 500 F.

Put a large pan on medium heat and add 1 tbsp of olive oil. Once the oil is hot add the potato slices evenly to the pan, making sure each slice is touching the pan. Let them cook until they start to crinkle around the edges and turn brown. Flip them over and brown the other side. If you slice them thin enough they are almost like little potato chips. Take the potatoes off the heat and set them aside in a bowl. Sprinkle them with salt and pepper and then toss them with your hands to make sure they are evenly coated.

Now repeat the above process with the leeks. Cook the leeks, stirring occasionally until they are soft, about five minutes. Toss them with the potato pieces and add a bit more salt and pepper.

Clear a space on the counter and sprinkle with flour. Divide your dough into 4 equal pieces. One at a time stretch the dough into crusts. You can use a rolling pin or just slowly use your fingers and hands. I like to make mine really thin and big, but it's up to you how thick to make it.

Once the crust is the desired shape and thickness, dust the back of a cookie sheet with flour or cornmeal to keep the crust from sticking, then place it on the sheet.

Now layer it with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the potato and leek mixture and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the shredded mozzarella. Bake it for 5 to 8 minutes. If it's your first time simply keep an eye on the oven to see when it's done. The crust should be light brown and the cheese melted.

Repeat the process until you have all your pizzas. You can of course do more than one pizza at a time if you have the space.

Broccoli Rabe and Mozzarella Calzones

MAKES 4

Calzones are pizza in a slightly different form. A form that allows you to get a bit more filling into them without weighing down the crust. Broccoli rabe is great, but you could use any bitter green or even broccoli or cauliflower. Crusty pockets full of oozy goodness, you'll love these!

- 1 recipe for pizza dough (p.13)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large bunch broccoli rabe, roughly chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 2 anchovies, finely chopped (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups grated mozzarella cheese

Turn the oven on to 500 F (or as hot as your oven gets!). Sprinkle a small amount of flour or corn meal over a baking sheet and set aside.

Place a large pan on medium heat and add olive oil. Once the oil is hot add the tougher, stem ends of the broccoli rabe and cook for two minutes. Add the rest of the broccoli rabe including the leafy parts to the pan with the garlic, chili flakes and anchovies. Give the ingredients a stir and let it cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste. It is done when the larger stems of the broccoli rabe are tender. Set the broccoli rabe aside.

Divide the pizza dough into 4 equally sized pieces. Sprinkle flour on counter top and place one of the four pieces of dough on it. Using your hands or a rolling pin, roll out the dough as you would for pizza (see p.73).

Roll the dough out quite thin. Once it is ready pile $\frac{1}{4}$ of your broccoli rabe mixture and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mozzarella onto half of the dough, leaving a lip around the edge. Gather up the half of the dough that isn't weighed down with broccoli rabe and drape it over top of the mixture. Pinch the edges of the dough together and create a half moon shape. Place it carefully onto the prepared baking sheet and repeat until you have four calzones.

Bake for 6 to 8 minutes or until they are golden brown on the outside. Be careful when you bite into them! They will be hot!



\$6 TOTAL
\$1.50 / EACH



Leftover Ideas

Leftovers are convenient, but can seem unappealing, limp and cold after sitting in the fridge for a couple of days. In these situations the sandwich, the wrap and the taco are your friend. Here are just a few ideas for how to make leftovers over very quickly for a whole new meal!

Roasted Cauliflower tacos: (p.56)

These are the perfect re-use of roasted cauliflower.

Chana masala wrap: (p.86)

Sounds strange, but spread some herbed mayo on the wrap and then pile in the chana masala. Wow.

Black eyed peas and collards wrap: (p.88)

Fold this into a wrap with a little hot sauce or some tzatziki.

Vegetable jambalaya burrito: (p.90)

Add some salsa or any leftover beans.

Cauliflower cheese sandwich: (p. 94)

Add some crunchy greens and mustard. Yum!

Roasted vegetables Sandwich: (p.53)

Add some extra spices or sauces to liven this up and grill the bread for some crunch.

Tilapia taco: (p.102)

For a makeshift fish taco chop up some crunchy cabbage and cilantro.

Roasted potatoes and chilies: (p.54)

This dish is so good in a taco, just add a little salsa and grated cheese. I like green salsa here.

Tomato scrambled eggs wrap: (p.17)

Throw this into a wrap and add some roasted potatoes or rice for bulk.

On Toast Toppings: (p.48-51)

Any of these would work in a wrap, as a calzone filling or pizza topping.

Baked sweet potatoes spread: (p.63)

Mash leftover baked sweet potatoes and spread them in a bacon sandwich for a sweet counterpoint.

Vegetable Quiche, hold the Crust

FOR FOUR

Strangely, I like these quiches even better cold out of the fridge the next day. They make a great fast breakfast or lunch. Here's a broccoli one pictured, but you can do any kind of vegetable. Some of my favorites are roasted green chilies and cheddar, winter squash with goat cheese, zucchini and tomato, or spinach and olives.

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 large onion, chopped into half moons
- 3-4 cups chopped vegetables
- 8 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup cheese
- 1 tsp salt
- freshly ground pepper to taste

Set the oven to 400 F.

There are two ways to make this quiche. If you have a cast iron or other oven proof skillet then you can make the quiche right in the skillet and simply transfer it to the oven. This cuts down on dishes. Otherwise assemble the ingredients in a pie dish.

In a skillet on medium heat add the butter and let it melt. Add your onion and sprinkle a bit of salt and pepper over them. Cook the onions until they are golden brown and just starting to look caramelized. If your pan is oven proof, simply remove it from the heat and spread out the onions evenly along the bottom of the pan. Otherwise, butter a pie plate and scoop the onions into it, creating an even layer on the bottom. The onions add a crust-like texture and a bit of crunch.

A note on vegetables. For things like broccoli, cauliflower or winter squash, I suggest steaming or cooking them before adding them to the quiche to bake just to ensure they will be fully cooked. If using tomatoes, zucchini, spinach or any other quick cooking vegetable just use it fresh. Spread the vegetables out evenly over top of the onions. The dish or pan should look fairly full.

In a bowl add the eggs, milk, cheese, salt and pepper and lightly beat them with a fork to break up the yolks and whites. This is a custard mixture; savory of course. Pour the custard over the vegetables and onions and enjoy watching it fill in all the free spaces.

Bake it in the oven for 1 hour. Once it is lightly brown all the way into the center it is fully cooked. Let it cool for about 20 minutes, slice it into wedges and serve it with a side salad.

\$5 TO \$6 TOTAL
\$1.50 / SERVING



Potato and Kale Rolls with Raita

FOR FOUR

These are great meal to make when you have leftover rotis and raita - the filling comes together in minutes and could be anything - but potatoes and greens are tasty and filling.

- 1 tbsp butter or ghee
 - ½ cup onion, finely chopped
 - 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - 1 tbsp ginger, finely grated
 - 1 tsp cumin seeds
 - 1 tsp turmeric powder
 - 1 tsp coriander powder
 - 1 tsp cayenne powder
 - 2 large russet potatoes, chopped
 - 1 bunch of kale (or spinach), chopped with stems removed
-
- 8 rotis (p.12)
 - raita (p.122)
 - cilantro for serving

Put a saucepan on medium heat and add the butter to the skillet. Ghee, traditional in Indian cooking, is butter with the milk solids removed, and it is better to use here because it can go to higher temperatures than butter without burning. Once the butter is hot add the cumin seeds and let them sizzle for five seconds before adding the diced onion. Let the onion cook for two minutes, stirring occasionally. In a small bowl add the garlic, ginger, turmeric, coriander, cayenne powder, salt, and a tbsp of water. Mix it up. Add it to the onion mixture and mix it together, cooking for another two minutes. It will smell strongly aromatic. This step is important because the spices become toasted and it releases their flavor properly.

Next add the potatoes and stir to coat with the onions and spices. Add about a cup of water and cover the pan with a lid. Let it cook for about 10 minutes, checking occasionally to stir and make sure nothing is burning. Add more water as needed. You want the final mixture to be only a bit moist, but the water helps everything cook evenly. Test the potatoes with a fork and if you can easily pierce them they are ready. Add the kale and mix it all up until the kale is wilted. Taste and add more salt if needed.

To assemble the rolls, scoop an 1/8th of the mixture into the center of the roti, distributing it in an even line. Roll it up. Serve two per person and sprinkle with cilantro and a generous dollop of raita either over the top or on the side.

\$5.25 TOTAL
\$0.66 / ROLL





Dinner

My favorite meal of the day. For me, eating dinner indicates that the hard work is done and it's time for family, relaxing and the more optional work. A great dinner is an opportunity to show love to those you are cooking for and to yourself.



\$3.50 TOTAL
\$1.17 / SERVING

Creamy Zucchini Fettuccine

FOR THREE

Zucchini and summer squash are so abundant in the summer months. This simple pasta is like a lighter, brighter Fettuccine Alfredo. It also comes together in no time, the veggies will be ready by the time your pasta is cooked. You'll love it.

- 4 tbsp butter
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp chili flakes
- 2 small zucchini, finely diced
- 1 lemon, zested
- ¼ cup cream
- ½ cup parmesan or romano, grated
- ½ lb. Fettuccine
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- basil, finely chopped (optional)

Bring a pot of water to boil on high heat. Salt the water liberally. This is how pasta gets salted, so don't be shy with the salt! Most of it won't end up in the pasta. Cook the pasta according to your package instructions. I prefer my pasta with some bite so I drain the pasta just before it's finished so it doesn't get mushy when I add it to the vegetable pan to cook slightly more.

Meanwhile, put a pan on medium heat and add 1 tbsp of butter. Let it melt and add the garlic and chili flakes. Let them sizzle for 30 seconds to a minute then add the zucchini. Stir the vegetables around to coat them with the garlic, chili flakes and butter. Leave them for 5 to 7 minutes stirring occasionally until some of the water has cooked off and they are tender when stabbed with a fork. Young summer zucchini doesn't need much cooking. Add the lemon zest and stir.

Drain the cooked Fettuccine and add it to the zucchini pan along with the other 3 tbsp of butter, the cream and most of the parmesan. Toss the Fettuccine around in the pan to get everything mixed. Add salt to taste and lots of freshly ground pepper. Top with a bit more parmesan and serve immediately.

Pasta with Eggplant and Tomato

FOR TWO

This is similar to a traditional Pasta Alla Norma, but without anchovies and ricotta salata. I like to use a tubular pasta for this dish, but you can use anything, even spaghetti. The eggplant and tomatoes come together into a sauce that is thick and jammy and savory.

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large eggplant, cubed
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp chili flakes
- 2 cups canned tomatoes, finely diced
- ¼ cup romano
- salt and pepper
- basil, finely chopped (optional)
- ½ lb pasta (rigatoni or similar)

Put a pot of water on high heat and add a good shake of salt. Bring it to a boil and cook your pasta according to the package instructions.

While the water is coming to a boil put a wide pan on medium high heat. Add the olive oil and let it get hot. Add the eggplant cubes and sprinkle them with salt. Let the eggplant cook for about 5 minutes. If they start to look too dry add a bit of water. Once they are a little brown on all sides add the garlic and chili flakes and stir. Add the tomatoes and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Again, if it looks too dry add a bit of water. Everything will shrink up and become a sort of loose, thick sauce. Add half the romano and half the basil if you have it.

Once the pasta is cooked, drain it and add it to the sauce. Toss everything together. Turn off the heat and taste it. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve it in bowls sprinkled with more romano and basil.



\$5 TOTAL
\$2.50 / SERVING



\$3 TOTAL
\$1.50 / SERVING

Chana Masala

FOR TWO

This is a staple in my home, and for many friends as well. It's just so delicious, so fast, and so wonderfully inexpensive. If you don't have cooked chickpeas around, you can use canned, but it will add about \$1 to the overall cost.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ½ tbsp ghee or ½ tbsp butter and a splash of olive oil | 1 tsp smoked paprika |
| 1 tsp cumin seeds | ½ tsp salt |
| ½ cup onion, diced | 1 cup canned, puréed tomatoes |
| 1 tsp garlic, finely chopped | 2½ cups cooked chickpeas, drained |
| 1 tsp ginger, grated | ½ cup water |
| ½ jalapeño, finely diced | |
| 3 tsp coriander powder | GARNISH |
| 1 tsp turmeric | cilantro |
| ¼ tsp cayenne powder | yogurt |
| ½ tsp garam masala powder | |

Measure out all the spices except the cumin seeds and put them in a small bowl.

Let the ghee (clarified butter) melt in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. (Ghee is the traditional Indian choice, but you can substitute butter and a splash of olive oil if you can't find ghee.) Once the ghee begins to sizzle, add the cumin seeds and stir for about five seconds. Add the onion and sauté for two minutes. Add the garlic and cook for a minute. Add the ginger and jalapeño and cook for another minute. Add the spices and then the puréed tomatoes. Mix, then put a lid on the pan and let everything cook down for five to ten minutes.

Once the tomato has reduced and the ghee starts to separate from the sauce, add the chickpeas and water. Mix, then bring it to a boil before reducing the heat to a simmer. Cook for ten minutes, then squish a few of the chickpeas with your spoon to thicken the sauce. Garnish with yogurt and cilantro. For a full meal, serve the chana masala over rice or with rotis.



Black Eyed Peas and Collards

FOR FOUR TO SIX

This is similar to the southern classic Hoppin' John. It's delicious and you can add more vegetables to the base along with the onion if you have them – celery, carrot, green pepper and some canned tomato would all be great in this. If you want to skip the bacon, just add smoked paprika to replace the smoky flavor.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 cup dried black eyed peas | 1 bay leaf |
| 1 tbsp butter | 1 large bunch collards |
| 1 large onion, finely chopped | salt and pepper to taste |
| 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped | |
| 3 strips bacon, cut into small pieces | |

Soak the black eyed peas in 4 cups of water overnight.

Place a large saucepan on medium heat. Add the butter, onion, garlic, bacon and bay leaf. Cover the pan with a lid and leave it for 2 minutes. Stir occasionally and cook until the onions are translucent and the bacon is starting to be crispy. Drain the peas from their soaking liquid and pour them into the saucepan. Cover them with water and turn the heat down to medium low. Cook for 30 minutes to 2 hours. The cooking time will depend on how old the peas are, which is difficult to predict. Check on them every half hour or so and if water boils off add more to cover them. The peas are done when they are tender and you can easily squish them on the counter top with the back of a spoon.

While the peas cook, prepare the collards. Line up several leaves on your cutting board and slice the tough central stem away from the leaves. Discard the stems. Thoroughly wash the collards and then chop them into bite sized pieces. You could also use your hands to tear the collards into small pieces with your hands.

Once the peas are cooked add the collards to the pot and place the lid on top. Add 1 tsp of salt and freshly ground pepper and stir. Taste the liquid and peas and add more salt as needed. Cover the pan with a lid and leave for about ten to fifteen minutes. Once the collards are tender turn off the heat.

Serve this over rice or any other grain or with some toast or flatbread.



\$5 TOTAL
\$1.25 / SERVING



Vegetable Jambalaya

FOR SIX

I don't make this exactly the way they do down south, but this vegetable heavy version is faster and just as good. A great, throw everything in the pot kind of meal. Spicy, savory and deeply satisfying. The leftovers are great for making burritos or warmed up with a fried egg on top.

In a large saucepan with high sides, add the oil on medium high heat and let it get hot. Add the onion, pepper and celery until they become translucent, but not brown. Add the rest of the ingredients except for the rice and broth. Let it cook for about a minute, allowing some of the tomato juices to release. Add the rice and slowly add the broth. Reduce the heat to medium and let the dish cook until the rice absorbs all the liquid. It should take about 20 to 25 minutes. Add any of the additions at the 15 minute mark to let them warm up with the rice.

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ small green chili, finely chopped
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce (or soy sauce)
- ¾ cup long grain rice
- 3 cups vegetable or chicken broth

ADDITIONS

- Slices of fried sausage
- shrimp
- =leftover meat, tofu or beans

\$3.90 TOTAL
\$0.65 / SERVING



\$8 TOTAL
\$2 / SERVING



Celebrate summer's most ubiquitous vegetables, tomato and zucchini, with a crunchy Southern biscuit topping.

- 1 tbsp Olive oil
- 3-4 medium sized zucchini or summer squash, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 3-4 large tomatoes, chopped into bite sized pieces (canned or fresh)
- salt and pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4 scallions, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, zested
- ¼ cup fresh basil (optional)

Topping:

- 1½ cups all-purpose or whole wheat flour
- ½ cup cornmeal
- 3 tbsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ cup cheddar, grated
- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup milk

Savory Summer Cobbler

FOR FOUR TO SIX

Put the butter for the topping in the freezer for 30 minutes. Set the oven to 425 F.

Lightly butter or oil an 8x10 baking dish (or any baking dish that will fit the mixture) and pile the vegetables, garlic, scallions, lemon zest and basil into the dish. Pour the olive oil, salt and pepper over top and mix everything together with your hands. Bake the vegetables for 25 minutes while you prepare the biscuit topping.

Measure out the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, pepper, paprika, and cheese into a bowl. Mix it up with a wooden spoon.

Once the butter is frozen, use a box grater to grate the butter into the flour mixture. Gently massage the butter into the flour with your fingers until it's crumbly but still clumpy. Add the milk and quickly bring the dough together. Don't knead the dough: lumpiness is fine and results in flaky topping. Put it in the fridge while you wait for the vegetables to come out of the oven.

Once the vegetable mixture has cooked for 25 minutes, quickly top it with the biscuit dough in small clumps. The vegetables should still be visible in some areas.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the vegetables are bubbly and the topping is lightly browned. Top with some more cheddar and some chopped herbs, then enjoy!

For a variation, swap the zucchini for eggplant. Chop the eggplant into bite-sized pieces, salt them, and set them aside for 30 minutes before continuing with the recipe as you would with the zucchini.

Cauliflower Cheese

FOR FOUR

In Great Britain this is a classic side dish. Creamy, cheesy sauce over cauliflower then baked in the oven until the edges get crunchy and bubbly. I love it; it's like a healthier and more flavorful version of macaroni and cheese. Swap the pasta for cauliflower and you get a rich satisfying and indulgent dish with a little more fiber. Bubbly cheese; yum! Try this with broccoli or cooked winter squash—everyone will love it.

- 1 head cauliflower, cut into bite sized florets
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp butter
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp chili flakes
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp all purpose flour
- 1½ cups milk
- 6 oz cheddar cheese, grated
- salt and pepper, to taste

ADDITIONS

- 1 tbsp mustard
- 4 scallions, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp thyme

Set the oven to 400 F.

Bring a large pot of water to boil over high heat. Add the salt to the water. Once the water is boiling add the cauliflower and cook it for four minutes.

Meanwhile, butter a baking dish large enough to comfortably fit all the cauliflower. I usually use a pie dish. Drain the water from the cauliflower and pour the cauliflower into your prepared baking dish.

To make the sauce, add the butter to a saucepan on medium heat. Let it melt. Add the garlic, chili flakes and bay leaf and cook for about 1 minute. Add the flour and stir quickly. The flour-butter mixture is called a roux. You want the roux to get just a little brown, this will probably take another minute. Slowly add the milk to the pot, stirring all the while to incorporate the roux. Bring the sauce to a boil, stirring every now and then to make sure the sauce doesn't get scorched on the bottom. Once it comes to a boil turn off the heat and stir in the cheese. Add in any additions at this point. Taste the sauce and add salt and pepper as needed. You should have a creamy, smooth and savory sauce.

Pour the sauce over the cauliflower. Place the dish in the oven for 40 minutes, or until the top is brown and bubbly. You can also add some bread crumbs to the top off the dish before it goes in the oven if you like some extra crunch.

Enjoy with a green salad. I like to eat mine with a bit of salsa.

\$6.60 TOTAL
\$1.65 / SERVING



Spicy, Crunchy, Creamy Polenta

FOR TWO

This is an idea more than a recipe. The basic idea is this: Polenta, plus vegetable, plus egg equals satisfying and delicious.

You can also add a can of corn to the polenta for even deeper, rich corny flavor. Or go a little different by adding frozen peas, scallions, olives, or my favorite, green chilies to the polenta. You could also skip the parmesan and add ¼ cup of grated cheddar to the polenta.

- ½ cup polenta/cornmeal
- 2 cups water
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 cups broccoli rabe, roughly chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 anchovy finely chopped
- ½ tsp chili flakes (or fresh chili)
- parmesan, to taste
- 2 Eggs
- salt and pepper to taste.

Bring the water and salt to a boil in a medium sized pot. Once the water is boiling turn the heat down to low and slowly pour the polenta into the water while stirring briskly with a wooden spoon. This is a crucial step that will keep the polenta creamy and smooth—no lumps! Once the cornmeal is in the water and it is smooth and a little thicker, place the lid on the pot with the spoon still in it. This will allow some steam to escape. Let the polenta cook while you prepare the rest of the meal. Occasionally check on the polenta and give it a stir. The total cooking time should be about 25 to 30 minutes. However, if you are in a rush you can eat it after 15 minutes.

Chop the broccoli-rabe, garlic and anchovy. Set them aside. Put a pan on medium heat. Add a bit of olive oil or butter to it. Let it heat up until you can hear a sizzle when you throw some water onto the pan. Add the garlic, anchovy and chili flakes. Let it cook until you can smell it, about a minute. Add the broccoli rabe and toss it around with a spoon or tongs or just swirl the pan to coat the rabe with the garlic mixture. Let it cook for 3 to 5 minutes until the rabe is tender. Put it in a bowl to wait for your polenta and egg.

Once the polenta is about 2 minutes from finishing start with the egg.

Clean out the pan roughly with a cloth and place it back on the heat. Put a bit more olive oil in the pan and wait for it to get hot. Crack the two eggs into the pan and cover the pan with a lid. This will steam them so you can have a sunny-side up egg with fully cooked whites.

Scoop the polenta into 2 bowls. Add some parmesan and lots of salt and pepper. Layer about half the vegetables over the polenta.

Once the white of the egg is cooked remove the eggs from the pans with a spatula and place it straight onto the polenta and vegetables. Top it with the rest of the vegetables and further sprinklings of parmesan.

\$3.50 TOTAL
\$1.75 / SERVING



\$12 TOTAL
\$3 / SERVING



Shrimp and Grits

FOR FOUR

This is far from an authentic, Southern version of this dish, but it is absolutely delicious. Southerners will demand you use white stone ground corn for this, and I won't quibble, but if you aren't offended by the idea you can use yellow.

- 1 cup grits
- 4½ cups vegetable or chicken stock
- ½ cup, sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 3 scallions, finely chopped

- 1 tbsp butter or vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 2 sticks celery, chopped
- 1 green chili, finely diced (optional)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined

Bring the vegetable stock to a boil in a medium sized pot. Once the water is boiling, turn the heat down to low and slowly pour the cornmeal into the water while stirring briskly with a wooden spoon. This is a crucial step that will keep the grits creamy and smooth—no lumps! Once the cornmeal is all in the water and it is smooth and a little thicker, place the lid on the pot with the spoon still in it. This will allow some steam to escape. Let the grits cook while you prepare the rest of the meal. Occasionally check on the grits and give it a stir. The total cooking time should be about 25 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, chop and prepare the shrimp and vegetables. Add the butter or oil to a large pan on medium heat and let it get hot. Add the onion, pepper and celery and sauté until it is just translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and green chili if you like it spicy. Let it cook for another minute. Add the tomato and cook for 3-4 minutes until the juices release from the tomatoes and the vegetables resemble a thick and chunky sauce. Add a drizzle of water to keep everything loose and saucy and add the shrimp. Cook, stirring occasionally until the shrimp are pink all over. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Once the grits are ready take them off the heat and add the cheese and scallions and stir. Ladle the grits into bowls and top with the shrimp and vegetables. Top with a few more scallions.

Roast Chicken

FOR SIX

A whole chicken is usually less expensive than buying single pieces like breasts or thigh – plus you can use the bones and any meat too difficult to get off the bones to make stock for soup. The leftovers for a roast chicken can be used in sandwiches, tacos, over a salad or tossed with a favorite sauce and mixed into a pasta. This is a base recipe. Add spices to the butter or sprinkle on the outside of the chicken to change up the flavor in any way you like.

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 lemon
- salt
- pepper

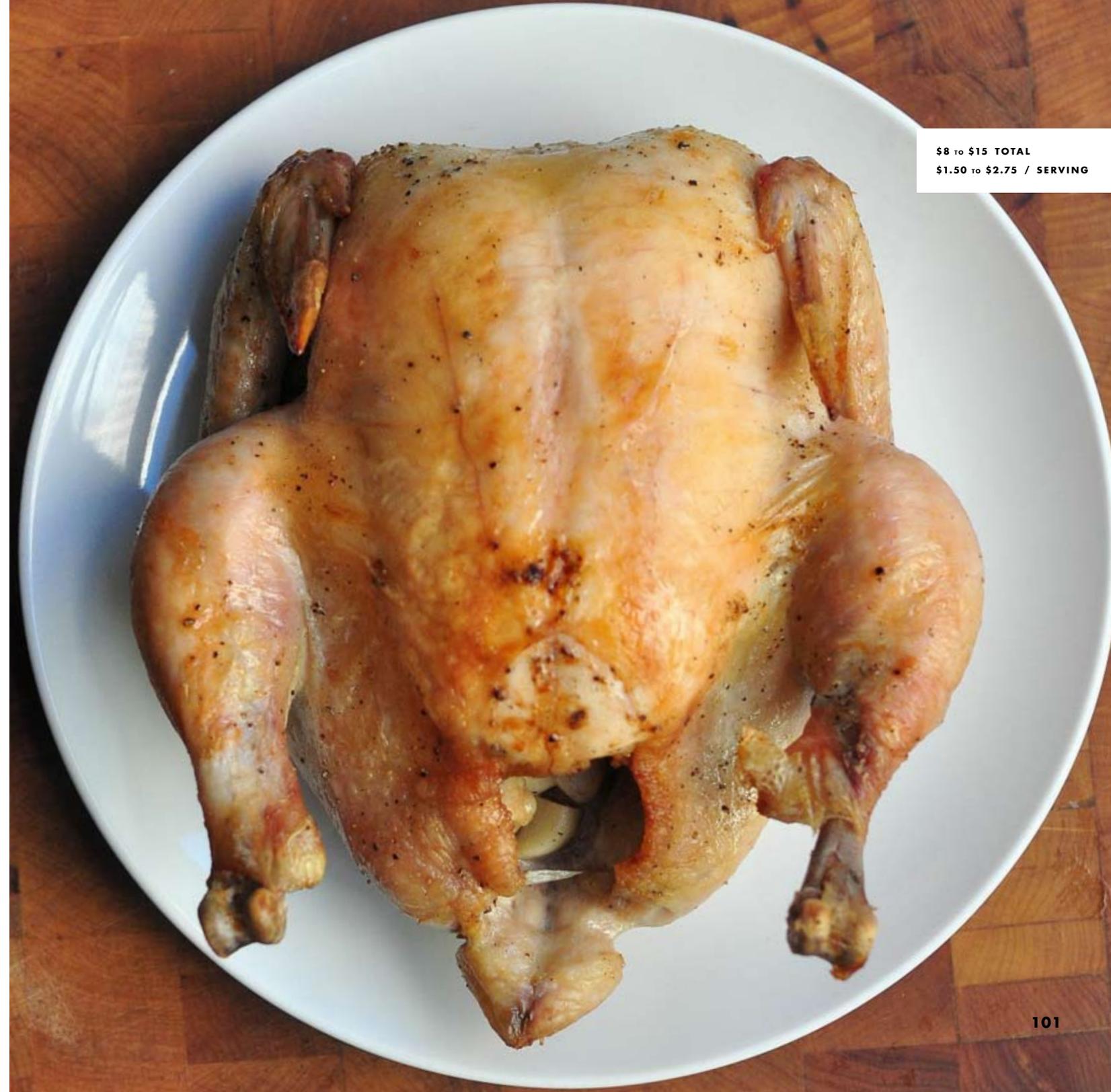
Heat the oven to 400 F.

Remove the giblets and neck from the chicken. Keep them for stock later. Rub the entire bird with the butter and then sprinkle it with salt and pepper. Smash the garlic cloves with the back of your knife and slice the lemon in half. Stuff the garlic and lemon into the chicken's body cavity.

Place the chicken in a roasting pan or an ovenproof skillet. Let it cook for 1 hour. If you have a kitchen thermometer you can check to make sure the chicken is at 165 F, the temperature when chicken is completely safe to eat. But 1 hour should definitely be long enough to fully cook it.

Let the chicken rest for at least ten minutes before you carve it to make sure you don't lose any of the tasty juices.

\$8 to \$15 TOTAL
\$1.50 to \$2.75 / SERVING





Spicy Broiled Tilapia with Lime

FOR TWO

\$9 TOTAL
\$4.50 / SERVING

This meal comes together so quickly it's astonishing. Broiled fish is crispy on the outside and flaky and moist on the inside. You can quickly sauté some vegetables while the fish cooks and have dinner on the table in minutes.

- 2 tilapia fillets
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp oregano
- ½ lime, juiced

Turn the broiler on to high heat.

Mix the spices together in a small bowl. Sprinkle them over both sides of the tilapia and massage gently with your fingers to cover the fish thoroughly in the spices.

Lay the spiced fillets on a baking pan lined with aluminum foil.

Broil for 4 to 7 minutes. They will cook very quickly so check to see if they are done after 4 minutes by lightly inserting a butter knife into the thickest part of the fillet. If it goes through easily and flakes apart they are done. If it stays together and meets resistance then place the fillets under the broiler for another few minutes. Once you have done this once or twice it will become easy to tell when your fish is done.

Take the fish out of the oven and squeeze lime juice all over it.

Serve with rice or a favorite vegetable side dish like spicy green beans.



Big Batch

It's simple economics; sometimes making a large amount of something can be cheaper and more time efficient than making lots of different small dishes. You can blow it all on a big celebration or portion these dishes out and freeze them for later use. You'll be extremely grateful to your past self when you pull delicious home-made food out of the freezer on a busy Monday evening!

Spicy Pulled Pork

SERVES EIGHT TO TEN GENEROUSLY

\$14 TOTAL
\$1.40 / SERVING



Pulled pork is a celebration, worthy of a special day. It's incredibly flavorful, rich and spicy. It is also remarkably versatile. Although it seems expensive, it is quite a bargain when you look at the price per serving. It feeds a crowd and will definitely leave everyone happy and impressed. As with most celebratory meals this one takes quite a long time to prepare. Most of the preparation time however, is just spent waiting for it to cook "low and slow."

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 5 lb. pork shoulder, any cut | 2 tsp cumin powder |
| DRY RUB | 1 tsp coriander powder |
| 1/3 cup brown sugar | 1 tsp clove powder |
| 2 tbsp coffee, ground | 1 tsp garlic powder |
| 2 tbsp kosher salt | 1 tsp black pepper, freshly ground |
| 4 tsp smoked paprika | |
| 3 tsp sweet paprika | |

Make the rub by mixing all the ingredients together. Apply it liberally to the pork shoulder, pressing it gently into the meat until you have covered every side. Set any leftover rub aside for later. Cover the shoulder with a towel or a tight pot lid and leave it in the fridge for a few hours or overnight.

The night before, place the pork shoulder in a large pot or a Dutch oven with a lid. Pour a small amount of water into the bottom of the pot just to keep the juices from burning. Put a lid on the pot and place it in a 200 F oven for 10 to 12 hours. It really is best to do it overnight, but you can put it in early in the morning and have it ready for dinner as well.

In general the rule is that it takes about 1.5 to 2 hours per pound of pork, but I find it usually takes a little longer than that. You are waiting for the internal temperature to reach 200F. It is edible at 160F, but at higher temperatures the tough connective tissues in the meat will break down and create the flavor and texture that make pulled pork such a delicious and unique treat. If you don't have a meat thermometer it is a bit more difficult, but you can test it by feel. When you poke the

meat with a finger if it is soft and falling apart then it is ready to take out of the oven. If when you start to pull it there are any sections that are tough to tear away, then it has not reached a sufficient internal temperature to break down the connective tissue. Put it back in the oven for another couple of hours if you have the time to spare.

The pork will release a lot of fat and juices. Leave the pork in the juices to rest. Put the pork in the fridge if not pulling until later.

To pull the meat, remove it from the juices and use two forks or tongs to gently tear it apart, removing any larger bits of fat that you don't wish to eat. Once it has all been pulled, use the rest of the rub and mix it into the pork. Keep the pulled pork in a big casserole dish or a large plate and cover with tinfoil.

Meanwhile, put the pot full of drippings over medium high heat and bring to a gentle boil. Let the juices cook for 20 to 30 minutes to thicken them somewhat. Once the juices are thicker skim as much of the fat as possible off of the top of the liquid. The fat will rise to the top, it is the clear, thick liquid, not the redder, thinner liquid below.

Mix a few spoonfuls of the pan drippings with the pork and serve.

Serve the pork over squishy hamburger buns or in tacos with some crunchy vegetables. Traditionally pulled pork sandwiches have cabbage slaw on them, but anything crunchy will do. You can also add a little barbecue sauce if the pork isn't flavorful enough for you, but try it first, I think you will be surprised!

Serve with green salad, corn on the cob, or any other summer vegetables. You'll love this.

For leftovers you can spread the meat over nachos, make a breakfast hash or use as a stuffing for baked sweet or regular potatoes. You could even serve this over grits or toss it with pasta. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination.



\$14 TOTAL
\$0.20 / PEROGY

Perogies

MAKES SIXTY TO SEVENTY-TWO

This is a huge recipe that will feed you for days. It takes time and effort, but the results are worth it. The most fun approach is to invite a couple of friends over for a perogy-making party. Everyone takes home a bag or two for the freezer and it's a great time!

DOUGH

- 4½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 cups yogurt
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp water (as needed)

FILLING

- 5 russet potatoes, roughly cubed
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- salt and pepper (to taste)

ADDITIONS

- 2 tbsp scallions, chopped
- 3-4 cloves roasted garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp paprika

TO SERVE

- sour cream
- scallions, chopped

In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt. Pour over the yogurt, eggs and 1 tbsp of water. Mix it slowly and carefully. The dough will be quite sticky. Cover it with a towel or saran wrap while you prepare the filling.

Put your chopped potatoes in a pot and pour water over them. Add a bit of salt. Put a lid on the potatoes and bring them to a boil over medium-high heat. Once the potatoes are boiling, remove the lid. Let them cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Test them with a fork: if it goes through easily, the potatoes are done.

Drain the potatoes and add shredded cheese, salt, pepper, and any additions you might enjoy. I like strong aged cheese so you don't have to use as much of it. I usually use several additions and you should play around with some of your favorite things—there aren't too many flavors that don't work in potatoes! Next, mash the potatoes with an electric mixer or simply two forks.

Once the filling is ready, gather some friends because shaping takes some time!

Flour your counter top liberally. Split the dough in half. Keeping the other half covered, take half the dough and place it onto the floured surface. Use a rolling pin to flatten out the dough to about ¼ inch thick. Be sure to use flour so that it doesn't stick to the surface. Use a round cookie cutter or a drinking glass to make as many circles as possible. Pull aside the excess dough and put it back in the container with the rest of your dough.

Place a tablespoon or so of filling in the center of a circle of dough. Carefully fold the dough over the filling and press it together to create a dumpling.

The stickiness of the dough should ensure a tight seal. Place the dumpling on a floured surface and use a fork to squish the edges together. Repeat until you are out of circles, then continue with the remaining dough.

Now that you have all your perogies formed, put a pot of water on to boil.

Once it has reached a rolling boil, add your perogies. I usually do 12 at a time. Let them cook until they rise to the top. Repeat with the remaining perogies. Take the boiled perogies you will not consume and carefully place them in freezer bags. I usually do 12 to a bag, but you can portion them out in whatever way suits you. They will keep for at least 6 months in the freezer.

Now, you can eat the perogies boiled or, if you are anything like my family, you'll prefer them fried. Put a pan on medium heat and add a tbsp. of butter to it. Take whatever number of perogies you want to eat and fry them in the butter. (Six dumplings per person is plenty.) Flip them to make sure they are browned everywhere. Serve with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkling of scallions and enjoy!





Drinks

You don't need a special drink at every meal (unless of course it is the meal!) but when you do, let fruit play a leading role, and make it yourself. It'll be so much better than the overpriced bottles in the supermarket.

Agua Fresca

SERVES FOUR TO SIX

Refreshing and hydrating, these beautiful drinks are great to prepare for a party or to use up any leftover fruit you might not be able to eat before it goes off. This is certainly not the master recipe, just a good starting point.

2 cups fruit, chopped
4 cups water

ADDITIONS:

1 tsp vanilla
squeeze of lemon or lime juice
sugar, as needed
mint leaves
other herb leaves

All you have to do is mix the water and fruit together to create a lightly flavored water. If you want more fruit flavor then use less water, if you want less then use more water.

Simply blend the fruit and water together. Then strain the pulpy leftovers of the fruit to have a clear drink. If you want, you can also keep the pulp, it is great when making a melon agua fresca since it mostly disappears – if you are making blueberry or orange or something with skins than you will probably want to strain it. Serve it over ice.

Try some of the types I've suggested or do whatever your family likes!

TRY THESE: Blueberry and lemon, Melon (any kind!), Papaya, Pineapple, Mango and lime, Cucumber and lemon, Strawberry and mint



Smoothies

FOR TWO

I have four main types of smoothies here and of course there are many more.

The frozen melon drinks have to be one of the most refreshing treats for a hot summer day. Give these a try when your fruit is over-ripe. Add a tsp of vanilla to any of these and they will seem incredibly professional.

BERRY SMOOTHIE: Blend until smooth then taste and adjust with more berries or milk until it's your desired consistency.

- ½ cup yogurt
- 1 cup frozen berries
- milk or juice to thin as needed

MANGO LASSIE: Blend the mango and yogurt together first. If it is too thick to drink with a straw then add some milk to thin it out. Often a juicy and ripe mango combined with a thinner yogurt is all you need. Be warned, if you make this for a child they will probably request it over and over.

- 1 mango, diced
- 1 cup yogurt
- milk to this as needed

DRINKABLE YOGURT: If you enjoy the drinking yogurts from the grocery store, try making these at home for less! You don't even need to blend them, just add the juice and yogurt to a jar and shake.

- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ½ cup fruit juice

MELON SMOOTHIE: When you buy a melon, dice and freeze whatever you don't eat right away. Pull it out and blend it with a bit of water or juice to thin it out. It's like a better slushy!

- 1 cup frozen melon
- ½ cup water or juice
- 1 tsp vanilla



\$1 - \$2 TOTAL
\$1 - \$0.50 / SERVING



Desserts

Whether it's been a rough day, it's time to celebrate, or just because it's Wednesday, these sweets are totally worth it.

Caramelized Bananas

FOR TWO



These bananas cooked in just a bit of caramel are crispy and gooey on the outside and almost like a soft pudding inside. Sweet, messy and irresistible.

- 2 bananas, peeled and split in half
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp brown sugar

Place a non-stick or cast iron pan on medium high heat. Add the butter to the pan and let it melt. Add the sugar and let it melt into the butter for about 2 minutes. Place the bananas face down the in butter-sugar mixture and cook for 2 minutes or until they become brown and sticky. Carefully flip them over and do the same to the other side.

Serve them whole or split them into quarters. Drizzle the caramel left in the pan over the bananas. Serve with ice cream or on their own.

\$0.70 TOTAL
\$0.35 / SERVING



\$10 TOTAL
\$0.27 / COOKIE

Chocolate Coconut Cookies

MAKES THIRTY SIX TO FORTY

A just chewy enough, just crisp enough, just gooey enough cookie that is perfect for a special treat.

- 2/3 cups of shaved, unsweetened coconut, toasted
- 2 sticks unsalted butter
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups dark brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups of chocolate chips

Heat the oven to 350 F.

Spread the coconut out into a thin, even layer on a cookie sheet. Place it in the oven for 5 to 8 minutes until it is light brown, toasty and aromatic.

Melt the butter in a heavy-bottom saucepan over low heat. Once it's melted leave it to cool in the pan for a few minutes.

In a medium sized bowl add the flour, salt and baking soda and stir it together.

In another bowl add the brown sugar and the melted butter. Beat it together for 5 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat for another 2 minutes. Slowly add the flour mixture to the brown sugar mixture until it has formed a dark brown, homogeneous mass. Add the chocolate chips and coconut and stir until just combined.

Place the dough in the fridge for 20 minutes then use a spoon to scoop tablespoon sized cookies onto a lightly buttered cookie sheet leaving large spaces in between each cookie so they have space to spread out. I usually do about 6 cookies per sheet. Just before putting the cookies into the oven sprinkle them with salt.

Let the cookies bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Take them out and leave them on the sheet to set up for about 2 minutes before removing them from the pan onto the counter to cool further. Continue the process until the dough is gone.

Store in an airtight container.

Peach Coffee Cake

FOR EIGHT TO TWELVE

This is adapted from the kind of apple cake often served during Rosh Hashanah. It's simple and wonderful for dessert, with tea or as a sweet breakfast. The juicy peaches add so much sweet flavor to this simple cake. If you buy peaches in season the price can be quite reasonable.

- 6 peaches pitted and cut into 8 slices
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 sticks unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1⅓ cups brown sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla

Turn your oven to 350F.

Using the paper wrapping from the butter, lightly butter an 8 x11 glass baking dish or 9 inch spring form pan. Any shape will do so long as it is large enough. This cake doubles in size when it bakes.

In a large bowl add your peach slices, lemon juice and cinnamon and mix then together with your hands making sure the peaches are coated in cinnamon.

In a medium sized bowl add the flour and baking powder and stir then together to get rid of any lumps.

In a large bowl add the butter, brown sugar and salt. Either by hand or with an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar until the are fluffy and have slightly lightened in color. Add the vanilla, and then the eggs one at a time, fully mixing in the first before adding the second.

If using an electric mixer, switch to a wooden spoon and add the flour mixture into the butter mixture, gently incorporating it until it is smooth. The batter will be quite thick.

Spread half the cake batter over the bottom of your buttered pan. Evenly spread half the peach slices over the cake pan, there should be 24 of them. Spread the other half of the cake batter over the peaches and repeat the procedure again. Sprinkle the top with a tablespoon or so of sugar and place it in the oven.

Bake it for 1 hour or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

\$9 TOTAL
\$1.12 / SERVING





\$2.40 TOTAL
\$0.60 / SERVING

Fast Melon Sorbet

FOR FOUR TO SIX

- 2 cups frozen watermelon (or any melon)
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla or lime juice (optional)

This is the perfect summer dessert. And who isn't impressed with homemade ice cream? When you have lovely watermelons, honeydews and cantaloupes on sale, buy them up. Eat half, then cube and freeze the other half. Then when you want a quick dessert or smoothie, pull a bag of frozen melon out and whiz this up.

Add all the ingredients to a food processor or blender and blend until just smooth. Don't over blend or it will become too soft. Serve immediately or stick it into the freezer to enjoy later..



Flavor

If you have a great sauce, or some spices in your kitchen, you will never have to tolerate bland food. Most of these recipes require surprisingly little effort and time, pack a ton of flavor and can be stored for use in any dish you choose.



\$7 TOTAL
2 CUPS

Spice Oil

MAKES 2 CUPS

Use the spice oil on salads, in cold noodle dishes or on roasted or sautéed vegetables. These spices can all be easily acquired at Asian grocery stores.

- 2 cups olive or vegetable oil
- ¼ cup chili flakes or dried red chilies
- 2 tsp Sichuan or regular peppercorns
- 1 star anise
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and squished

In a small pot add all your ingredients. Using the back of your knife gently crush the garlic cloves to release some of their juices.

Put the mixture over low heat for about 10 minutes until they start to bubble gently and you can hear a bit of a sizzle. You want to heat it just enough to let the spices infuse into the oil but not so hot that they start to cook or fry. Put a lid on the oil and let the spices infuse for 4 to 8 hours.

Taste the oil. If it doesn't taste strongly spicy let it infuse for a few more hours. Once it's ready pour the oil into a container through a sieve to get rid of all the spices.

Store it in the fridge.



\$2.25 TOTAL
3 CUPS

Salsa

MAKES THREE CUPS

Summertime salsas combine a load of fresh tomatoes with smaller amounts of choice vegetables and fruit. In the winter, use canned tomatoes and cook them for a few minutes.

- 2 cups tomatoes, chopped
- ½ medium onion, finely diced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, finely diced
- 1 lime, juiced
- ¼ cup cilantro, finely chopped
- salt and pepper

ADDITIONS

- mango, peaches, plums, pineapple, finely chopped
- beans
- corn
- garlic

Apart from its usual use on tortilla chips and tacos, this salsa is a wonderful topping for fish or chicken, as a sauce for cold noodles or as a topping on a savory breakfast.

If you like raw onion, keep it as is. Otherwise, take the edge off by adding the onion to a pan on medium heat with a bit of water. The onion is ready once the water has boiled off. If you aren't a fan of cilantro, substitute another herb. Mint, savory, or lemon balm work well.

Mix the onion, tomato, and the rest of the ingredients in a bowl. Be sure to add enough salt and pepper! Taste the salsa. You are looking for a balance of spicy from the peppers, sweet from the tomatoes, and bright and fresh from the herbs and lime juice. If something is out of balance, add the appropriate ingredient to bring it back into balance.

Enjoy immediately or place in an air-tight container in the fridge for later.



\$2.60 TOTAL
2 CUPS



\$3.25 TOTAL
2 CUPS

Raita

MAKES TWO CUPS

- 1 cup cucumber, chopped
- ½ cup tomato, chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper powder
- 2 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- salt and pepper

ADDITIONS

- 1 tbsp ginger, very finely chopped or grated
- 2 tbsp mint
- cooked spinach
- ¼ cup chickpeas

Raita is a traditional Indian sauce served with all kinds of things. It's extremely simple and surprisingly tasty. Spoon it onto curry or over the spinach and kale rolls or anything spicy to cool things down. I like to eat it on it's own for breakfast sometimes. This recipe is extremely forgiving and loose. Basically just stir some of your favorite chopped vegetables into yogurt and add salt and pepper. Use this as a stepping stone to develop your own.

Stir all the ingredients together and place in a covered container in the fridge until you are ready to use it.

Tzatziki

MAKES 2 CUPS

If you are in a hurry you don't have to strain at all, you can just mix all the ingredients together. However, leaching out the water from the cucumber and yogurt really intensifies the flavor. Your patience will be rewarded by a thick and flavorful sauce that will give you a whole new perspective on cucumbers.

- 2 cups yogurt
- 1 large cucumber, grated
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp dill, chopped
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- salt and pepper to taste

Grate your cucumber and place it in a sieve over a large bowl. Salt the cucumber and mix it around. Leave it for ½ an hour to 2 hours. Occasionally gently press some of the liquid from the cucumber. The salt will leach the water out of the cucumber.

Line a sieve with paper towel or cheesecloth and pour the yogurt into it. You can leave it for as little as 1 hour or just leave it overnight. The longer you leave it the thicker it will get. This is how greek yogurt is made!

Next mix all your ingredients together and taste. Adjust the salt and pepper and add any more onion or dill you would like. Enjoy on sandwiches, as a dip, with pita or tortilla chips or over meatballs, kebabs or anything spicy.

Essential Tomato Sauce

makes about 2 cups

There are many ways to make tomato sauce and we all have our favorites. I don't find that any of the more complex recipes taste better; this one is boldly tomatoey and works on just about anything. It also takes 5 minutes. Can't beat that.

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp chili flakes
- 1 16 oz can tomatoes, crushed or diced
- ½ lemon, zested (optional)
- salt and pepper, to taste

Place a saucepan on medium heat. Add the olive oil and let it get hot. Add the garlic and let it cook for 1 minute or until it smells great and becomes translucent. Add the chili flakes and cook for another thirty seconds. Add the can of tomatoes. Mix it together and cook until warmed through. Add a little lemon zest and taste. Add salt and pepper as needed. Since canned tomatoes are often already salted you may not need to add any.

If you want a thicker sauce that will stick to pasta a little better, cook for ten to twenty minutes to get rid of some of the liquid. Use immediately or keep in a jar in the fridge for later use.



\$2.25 TOTAL
2 CUPS

Peanut Sauce

MAKES 1 CUP

- 1 jalapeño or other chili, chopped fine (or 2 tbsp of chili paste)
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 shallot (or equivalent amount of any onion)
- 1 tsp turmeric (optional)
- cooking oil
- ½ cup peanut butter (natural, no sugar added)
- ½-1 cup coconut milk
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp brown sugar (if it needs sweetness)
- ½ tsp sesame oil

Chop the top 3 ingredients up finely or use a food processor to make a paste.

Put a saucepan on medium heat and add the oil. Once it's warm add the chili, garlic and shallot. Sauté until everything's translucent (add the chili paste at this point if using that). Add the turmeric and coconut milk. Let it come to a boil. Turn the heat down and add your peanut butter and soy sauce and stir to combine. Once it's all combined taste it and add anything it needs, test for salt and spice in particular.



\$3 TOTAL
1 CUP

Spices and Aromatics

So many of the recipes in this collection can be easily modified to your taste. Learning to cook with different spices, herbs and aromatics will instantly elevate your cooking and open up more interesting possibilities for you and your family.

Spices usually don't come cheap, but since we generally use them in small amounts, they end up costing pennies per recipe. If you have the opportunity to shop around, inexpensive spices can often be bought in bulk from ethnic markets.

If you become interested in spices try buying them whole and grinding them yourself at home, they are far more aromatic when freshly ground.

Spices are fun! Try these on anything from rice to roasted chicken to vegetables. Try mixing them into butter and adding them to popcorn, toast or vegetables. Here are some classic combinations and stuff I like.

- lemon zest and garlic
- oregano, cumin and chili powder
- cumin seeds, mustard seeds and coriander seeds
- onion, garlic, ginger
- anchovy, garlic, chili
- Salt, pepper, and parmesan
- Onion, chili, cilantro
- Sage, rosemary, thyme
- Lemon, olives, garlic
- chipotle powder and lime
- pickling spices
- dill and paprika
- parsley and garlic
- fennel seeds and parsley
- orange, lemon and lime zest
- ginger, cinnamon and black pepper
- cardamom, coriander and bay leaf
- coconut, chili and lime
- scallions and cilantro
- basil and garlic

