

Soulful Creations



**NOURISHING FLAVORS FROM
AFRO-CARIBBEAN, CREOLE,
AND SOUL FOOD CUISINES**

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HEALTHY TRADITIONS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Health disparities in the Black community are a persistent issue, often linked to a range of socio-economic factors, systemic biases, and lifestyle choices. The proverbial soul food diet, characterized by deep-fried, fatty, and calorie-laden dishes, is frequently blamed.

However, understanding the broader context is essential, considering the diverse communities within the Black American population, including immigrants with roots in Africa, the Caribbean, and others nationalities, who have resided in the United States for generations. Acculturation significantly impacts the dietary habits of immigrants and their descendants, as their food preferences and consumption patterns often undergo substantial changes, adapting and evolving, until these eating patterns become integral parts of their daily diets.

Multiple scientific studies highlight the impact of adopting Westernized diets on health, particularly among Black immigrant populations. The shift from traditional to nontraditional cuisines correlates with increased susceptibility to health problems due to the inclusion of more processed foods and high-fat diets. In contrast, the elderly who maintain a traditional diet tend to be healthier.

But the limited knowledge and flawed interpretations of dietary practices have labeled the traditional foods of the African Diaspora, encompassing Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and the Southern United States, as unhealthy. A closer look reveals a different story.

Traditional Eating Patterns

The traditional diet among Black Americans from the southern United States combined African culinary traditions, influenced by French and Spanish cuisines. This diet is characterized by abundant fresh vegetables straight from the garden, including cabbage, okra, tomatoes,

peppers, and various leafy greens such as dandelion, mustard, collard, and turnip greens. These vegetables provide an array of essential vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Preservation techniques like pickling were employed for vegetables such as okra, beets, green tomatoes, radishes, cabbage, carrots, and cucumbers, ensuring they could be enjoyed throughout the year.

Coastal regions of South Carolina and Georgia brought their unique touch to this cuisine through “Low Country” cooking, which spotlighted seafood like oysters, crabs, and shrimp and paired them with tubers and legumes like sweet potatoes and sweet potatoes and legumes like black-eyed peas, which when combined with rice makes the regional favorite Hoppin' John. The culmination of these diverse ingredients and culinary practices resulted in a nutrient-rich, plant-based diet with little meat—aligning it with current nutrition recommendations.

Vegetarian and Mediterranean Eating Patterns

The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) recommends three healthy eating patterns, each with unique culinary appeal and cultural influences. Two are the Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern and the Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern.

The Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern emphasizes diverse vegetables, including dark green, red, orange, legumes, and starches. It encourages the consumption of whole fruits and grains, with at least half being whole grains. The diet includes fat-free or low-fat dairy products like milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy beverages. It also incorporates a range of protein sources such as seafood, lean meats, poultry, eggs, legumes, nuts, seeds, soy products, and oils.

The Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern can incorporate not only traditional American foods but also a variety of cuisines throughout the African Diaspora. Despite these diets originating from very distinct cultures, they mirror the principles of the DGA Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern.

The Healthy Mediterranean Style Eating Pattern is inspired by the traditional ethnic cuisine of countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean diet emphasizes plant-based foods such as vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds, fruits, and whole, unprocessed grains. It also includes fish and other seafood. Olive oil is the primary source of dietary fat. Dairy products like yogurt and cheese are consumed in low to moderate quantities. Generally, less than four eggs are eaten per week. Red meat is consumed infrequently and in lesser amounts. Wine is used in low to moderate quantities, and concentrated sugars or honey are used sparingly.

While the Mediterranean diet is often associated with countries like Greece, Spain, Italy, and France, the influence of North Africa on this dietary pattern is equally significant. The traditional diet of North Africa, much like the Mediterranean diet, emphasizes fruits, vegetables, cereals, beans, nuts, and seeds. Olive oil, a staple in Mediterranean cuisine, also features prominently in North African cooking.

Generational Health Disparities

Examining the consumption of recommended food groups across different ethnic groups reveals alarming trends. People of color, especially Black children, face a heightened risk of missing essential nutrients from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy, putting them at risk of under-consuming nutrients of concern for cognitive and physical development.

The definition in these vital food groups are a crucial factor in addressing health disparities within the Black community, associated with higher rates of diet related chronic diseases like hypertension, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Studies show a clear connection between adequate nutrition in the early stages of life and an increased likelihood of maintaining good health, persistent functionality, and continued well-being into old age.

According to the DGA, healthy dietary patterns incorporating dairy are associated with reduced risk for several chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes—disease states that impact people of color disproportionately. Despite these benefits, dairy avoidance is prevalent in the Black community—primarily due to perceived lactose intolerance.

Lactose intolerance is an actual condition that can include digestive discomfort and social stress; however, lactose intolerance does not need to be a barrier to dairy intake. Most people with lactose intolerance can consume small amounts of milk without experiencing any discomfort. Nutrient-rich dairy foods such as lactose-free milk, aged cheeses, and cultured yogurt are also naturally low to no lactose, which can be included in the Mediterranean diet and incorporated into many traditional dishes across the African Diaspora.

Reclaiming Traditional Foodways

One way to address the health disparities in the Black community is a return to the roots of African Diaspora foodways. While various parts of the Diaspora have their own signature dishes, the overall diet pattern is based on a similar structure of legumes, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, olive oil, nuts, herbs, spices, and fish. This dietary pattern aligns with the DGA's recommended healthy vegetarian and Mediterranean eating patterns.

This cookbook serves as a practical tool for promoting healthy eating habits across the lifespan. For younger generations, it can be a way to connect with their cultural heritage while learning about nutrition. Older adults, on the other hand, can find inspiration for meals that support overall health and wellness. When individuals can connect their diet with their cultural heritage, they're more likely to embrace it, maintain it, and take pride in it.

Each traditional recipe in this cookbook provides a balanced supply of essential nutrients. They seamlessly blend vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and dairy into wholesome dishes that are nutritious and delicious. Take, for example, the African Peanut Stew (page 66) made with yogurt, milk, and heavy cream. This recipe features a medley of vegetables, proteins, and spices, creating a comforting, nutrient-rich meal. The tanginess of the yogurt, the smoothness of the milk, and the richness of the heavy cream elevate this traditional peanut stew to new culinary heights.

The kid-friendly Jerk Chicken Pizza (page 49) is another excellent example. This recipe is a clever and delicious way to incorporate under-consumed fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy into a meal that children will love. It's a winning strategy for better health and a fun, tasty way to introduce kids to the flavors of their heritage.

Each traditional recipe in this cookbook provides essential nutrients recommended for health and wellness. This cookbook aims to make this transition easier by providing delicious, nutrient-dense recipes that honor cultural foods while promoting overall health and wellness.

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Author and Owner of CBR Nutrition Enterprises

CHEF CONTRIBUTORS



Karin Arias is a Dominican, Spanish-speaking certified diabetes care and education specialist at the Institute for Family Health. Ms. Arias is a registered dietitian, trained chef, recipe developer, and mentor. She works diligently to provide culturally relevant, quality diabetes care to the patients in New York City community.



Chef Momo Camara is originally from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire in Africa but grew up in Brooklyn, New York. Chef Momo graduated from Johnson & Wales University and has cooked international cuisine professionally ever since. Currently, he opens multiple restaurant concepts throughout the country and develops menus for many high-profile clients.



Chef Rey Darthard worked in the oil and gas industry for 15 years before his memories of cooking with his mother and grandmother led him to his true passion: cooking. Chef Rey graduated from the Art Institute of Houston's culinary program in 2004 and has spent the last 20 years as a sports performance executive chef. He has also worked with several professional sports teams. Chef Rey believes that the power of food connects people and brings them together.



Nada Mays is a registered dietitian, professionally trained chef, and owner of Nutrition by Nada. Ms. Mays is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and chair-elect for Hunger and Environmental Nutrition. She blends her background in public health, culinary arts, and clinical nutrition with her experiences as a former Peace Corps volunteer in the Kingdom of Eswatini, Africa, to provide personalized and culturally inclusive nutrition support.



Yanikie Tucker is a self-taught home cook who got her start with cooking at an early age in her grandmother's rural Jamaican kitchen. Ms. Tucker now runs a food blog, Jamdown Foodie, and social media pages teaching her followers how to make authentic Jamaican recipes.



Jamaican

Jamaican food is down-home comfort food. My love for cooking started at an early age in my grandmother's kitchen in rural Jamaica. She taught me everything I know about the roots of Jamaican food and cooking. The love for spice, slow cooking, and the resourceful use of all parts of the animal contribute to the heartiness and depth of flavor that characterizes Jamaican food. Celebrating Jamaica's rich culture and bold flavors is something I love to share through authentic recipes on my blog.

Yanikie Tucker | Food Blogger @Jamdownfoodie



CHEESY ISLAND JAMBALAYA

Serves: 4-6 | Prep Time: 20-25 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces | 1 small green bell pepper, diced | 1 cup thinly sliced okra |
| 13 ounces andouille sausage, sliced into rounds | 1 small red bell pepper, diced | 1 ½ cups uncooked white rice, washed |
| 2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning | 4 cloves garlic, minced | 4 tablespoons butter |
| 1 tablespoon jerk paste/wet seasoning | 3 scallions, diced | 2 cups Mexican-style shredded cheese |
| 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined | 1 (14 ounce) can crushed tomatoes | 3 cups low sodium chicken broth |
| 2 tablespoons canola oil | 1 teaspoon salt | |
| 1 medium onion, diced | ½ teaspoon ground black pepper | |
| | 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves | |
| | ½ teaspoon Scotch bonnet pepper sauce | |
| | 2 teaspoons Gravy Master sauce | |



PREPARATION

1 In a medium bowl, season chicken and sausage with Cajun seasoning and half of the jerk seasoning paste. In a separate bowl, season shrimp with the remaining jerk seasoning and set aside.



2 Heat oil over medium heat in a large Dutch oven. Brown sausage in oil and set aside on a plate. Brown chicken on both sides in oil, about 3-4 minutes, and set aside on a plate.

3 In the the same pan, sauté onions, bell peppers, garlic, and 2 scallions until soft and transparent.



4 Stir in tomatoes and season with salt, pepper, fresh thyme, Scotch bonnet sauce, and Gravy Master.

5 Stir in the okra slices, chicken, and sausage. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.



6 Deglaze the pan with the chicken broth and add in washed rice and butter. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil, covered. Keep the heat on high until the rice has absorbed the liquid. Once the liquid has cooked off, reduce the heat to low, add in seasoned shrimp and keep covered.

7 After about 10 minutes, remove the lid and gently stir through to combine the shrimp into the rice. Cover and allow the rice to continue to steam for about 5-7 minutes until the grains are tender. Fold in about ¾ of the cheese before removing the rice from the heat and allow the cheese to melt.



8 Plate the rice on a large platter and top with remaining cheese and diced scallion. Serve immediately.





FRIED COD WITH JERK REMOULADE

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 25 minutes | Cook Time: 7-10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Remoulade

2 cups full fat plain Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
¼ cup honey mustard
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
1 to 2 teaspoons wet jerk seasoning
1 teaspoon prepared horseradish
1 teaspoon pickle juice (sweet)
1 large clove garlic, minced and
smashed
Salt to taste

Dredge

4 pounds cod filets
1 ½ cups flour
1 teaspoon freshly cracked pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
½ teaspoon paprika
3 cups oil for frying

Batter

2 cups flour
½ cup corn flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 ½ cups light beer, very cold



GUAVA HAND PIES

Serves: 16 | Prep Time: 15-20 minutes | Cook Time: 25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 4 frozen sheets puff pastry dough (14 ounces total)
- 2 (14 ounce) blocks guava paste
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
- 1 (8 ounce) container mascarpone cheese
- 1 egg with 1 tablespoon water
- ½ cup turbinado sugar for topping



PREPARATION

1 Remove puff pastry from the freezer, and allow to thaw at room temperature. Preheat oven to 400 F.

2 Slice guava paste block into thin rectangular slices. Set aside. In a small bowl, use a spoon to combine the cream cheese and the mascarpone cheese. Set aside. Whisk egg and water in a small bowl and set aside.

3 On a lightly floured surface, place one sheet of puff pastry dough. Use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to cut the pastry into 8 equal pieces.

4 Place 2 thin slices of guava paste and 1 ½ tablespoons of cheese mixture onto each piece of pastry. Brush the edges with egg wash.



5 Score the remaining 4 pieces of pastry. The scores will serve as vents to release the air as the pastry bakes.

6 Use the scored pastry to top the filled pastry. Trim away any uneven areas or excess pastry and seal the edges of the pies with a fork. Brush the tops of the pies with egg wash and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.

7 Repeat steps 6-9 for the remaining sheets of pastry until all the pies are made.

8 Place the pies on a parchment-lined baking tray and bake for 15-20 minutes, until golden. Remove from the oven and serve when slightly cooled.





ISLAND HOT CHOCOLATE

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 10-12 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Hot Chocolate

4 ounces bittersweet chocolate bar
½ teaspoon grated nutmeg
2 cups whole milk
1 cup water
1 cinnamon stick

1 pinch kosher salt
⅓ cup condensed milk
2 tablespoons brown sugar
Cocoa powder

Whipped Cream Topping

½ cup heavy cream
2 teaspoons powdered sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract



PREPARATION

1 Grate chocolate onto a sheet of parchment paper or roughly chop the bittersweet chocolate bar if using. Add nutmeg and set aside.

2 In a saucepan over on medium-low heat, add milk, water, and cinnamon stick. Bring to simmer.



3 As liquid boils, whisk in grated chocolate, nutmeg, cocoa powder, and salt and simmer for an additional 5-7 minutes.

4 Using a spoon, remove the cinnamon stick before sweetening the chocolate with condensed milk and brown sugar.

5 For whipped cream, using a heavy whisk, whisk all of the ingredients until cream is cloudy and stiff peaks form. Top the hot chocolate with the whipped cream and enjoy.





ISLAND Lasagna

Serves: 4-5 | Prep Time: 15-20 minutes | Cook Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Meat Sauce

1 tablespoon neutral oil
1 medium onion, diced
½ large green bell pepper
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound lean ground beef or ground turkey
½ pound sweet Italian sausage-links (discard casing)
1 teaspoon all-purpose seasoning
1 teaspoon jerk paste

1 (28 ounce) can tomato sauce
3 ounces tomato paste
1 (14 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
2 teaspoons Tuscan seasoning
½ teaspoon freshly cracked pepper
1 tablespoon brown sugar
Salt, to taste

Lasagna

½ pound no-boil lasagna noodles
15 ounces ricotta cheese
2 (14 ounce) cans Jamaican callaloo, drained
24 ounces mozzarella cheese, grated
4 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated



JERK CHICKEN PIZZA

Serves: 6 | Prep Time: 45 minutes | Cook Time: 25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Dough

16 ounces store-bought pizza dough
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 tablespoons cornmeal

Jerk Chicken

1 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs (about 5)
½ cup chicken stock
2 green onions
1 small shallot
1 whole Scotch bonnet pepper (or habanero pepper)
2 cloves garlic
10 sprigs fresh thyme
½ teaspoon ground allspice

1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon paprika
¼ cup water
1 teaspoon browning sauce
2 tablespoons neutral oil

Sauce

¼ cup ketchup
¼ cup BBQ sauce
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
2 tablespoons white onion, grated (about a quarter of a small onion)
1 tablespoon brown sugar

Topping

8 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced
1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
¼ cup roasted red bell peppers, thinly sliced
1 green onion



PREPARATION

1 Remove the dough from the refrigerator and allow it to come to room temperature.



2 In a blender cup or food processor bowl, add green onions, shallot, Scotch bonnet pepper, garlic, crushed allspice, thyme, salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, paprika, browning sauce and water. Blend or pulse into a smooth paste.

3 In a medium bowl, pour jerk paste over cleaned chicken thighs. Massage the paste into the chicken. Cover and allow the chicken to marinate for at least 30 minutes.

4 While the chicken marinates, make the sauce. Add all the sauce ingredients to a medium saucepan. Stir well and simmer on low heat for 5 minutes or until the sauce thickens and reduces. Remove sauce from the heat and allow it to fully cool.

5 In a large skillet, heat neutral oil over medium low heat until slightly smoky. Add chicken thighs to the pan and sear on both sides until brown, about 4-5 minutes on each side. Once the chicken is seared, add chicken stock to the pan, increase the heat to high, leave uncovered and cook until all the stock cooks off, about 5 minutes. Remove the chicken from the pan to a plate and allow it to rest before slicing into ½ inch pieces and setting aside to fully cool.

6 While the chicken and sauce cools, prep the cheeses and roasted bell peppers. Slice the fresh mozzarella, grate the Parmesan cheese and mozzarella block. Slice roasted red peppers and set aside.

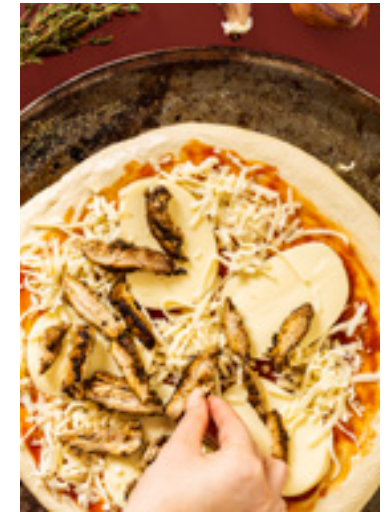
7 Preheat the oven to 475 F.

8 Lightly grease a heavy pizza pan and dust with cornmeal.



9 Shape the dough on a lightly floured surface or a square piece of parchment paper by using your palms to press it flat, starting at the center and working your way to the edges of the dough. Gently pat and turn the dough until it is 14 inches in diameter. Transfer

the dough to the pizza pan and press your fingertips into the dough to prevent bubbling during baking. Pinch the edges of the dough to form a slightly raised rim.



10 Place a spoonful of sauce on the dough using a ladle or large spoon. Starting at the center of the dough, use the back of the spoon to spread the sauce in a circular motion until the surface of the dough is covered. The layer of sauce should be thin to avoid a soggy pizza.

11 Arrange the fresh mozzarella over the top of the pizza. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella evenly around the fresh mozzarella. Liberally top with slices of chicken and roasted red bell pepper slices. Finish pizza assembly by adding shredded Parmesan cheese and chopped green onions. Place pizza in the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes until crispy and golden brown.

12 Remove pizza from the oven and top with sliced green onions and more Parmesan cheese if desired. Slice and serve hot.



JERK SHRIMP RASTA PASTA

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 15-20 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 pound medium shrimp	3 tablespoons olive oil, divided	¼ green bell pepper, thinly sliced
1 cup chicken or vegetable stock	2 tablespoons butter	¼ yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
2 bay leaves	½ cup shallots, diced	2 cups Parmesan cheese, grated
1 teaspoon fish seasoning	3 cloves garlic, minced	½ cup mascarpone cheese
½ teaspoon salt	Kosher salt to taste	1 teaspoon lemon zest
1 ½ teaspoons paprika, divided	1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes	2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves, divided use
½ teaspoon garlic powder	2 teaspoons flour	½ teaspoon fresh cracked pepper
½ teaspoon onion powder	1 cup heavy cream	
1 teaspoon bottled jerk paste	¼ red bell pepper, thinly sliced	
16 ounces penne or rigatoni pasta		



PREPARATION

1 Clean shrimp by removing shells and rinsing them in cold water. Reserve the shells to make a stock. In a small saucepan, add shrimp shells, stock, and bay leaves. Place on low heat and bring to a boil. Once the shells turn pink and the stock boils, remove stock from the heat, strain, and set aside.



2 Pat shrimp dry then place in a medium bowl. Season with fish seasoning, pinch of salt, 1 teaspoon paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, and jerk paste. Use a spoon to mix seasonings onto the shrimp well and set aside.

3 In a large stock pot, bring 8 cups of water and a heavy pinch of kosher salt to a boil. Once boiled, add pasta and cook until al dente, about 8-10 minutes. Drain pasta, save 1 cup of pasta water. Drizzle 1 tablespoon olive oil on pasta and set pasta aside.

4 In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Once oil is slightly smoky, sear shrimp for 2-3 minutes on each side. Remove the shrimp from the heat and set aside.



5 Using the same pan, reduce the heat to medium-low and add butter and diced shallots and sauté for 1 minute until fragrant. Add minced garlic and cook for an additional 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Season with a pinch of salt, red pepper flakes and ½ teaspoon paprika and 2 teaspoons flour. Cook for an additional 30 seconds, stirring.

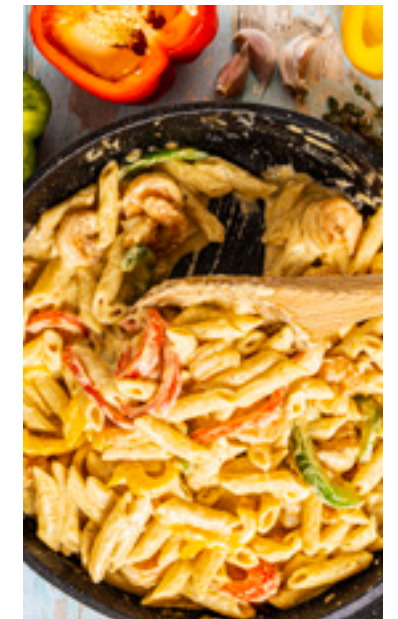
6 Deglaze pan with strained shrimp stock and allow the stock to come up to a simmer. Cook the stock aromatics for 2-3 minutes.

7 To the pan add 1 cup of heavy cream. Allow the sauce to come to a simmer, for about 5 minutes.



8 Add in red, green, and yellow bell pepper slices. Cook the peppers in the cream for an additional 2 minutes until the peppers slightly soften. Stir in the grated Parmesan and mascarpone cheese.

9 Add in the lemon zest and 1 tablespoon thyme leaves and give the pan a good stir. Allow the sauce to cook for 2-3 minutes. It should thicken and slightly reduce with the melting of the cheese.



10 Add in shrimp followed by the pasta and toss in the sauce. If the sauce is too thick and doesn't coat pasta evenly, spoon in reserved pasta water by the tablespoon until a thinner consistency is reached. Allow the pasta and shrimp to warm through, about 1-2 minutes, and remove from the heat.

11 Finish with the remaining tablespoon of fresh thyme, a pinch of freshly cracked black pepper, and more cheese if desired. Serve hot with crusty bread.



PASSION FRUIT SPONGE CAKE

Serves: 10-12 | Prep Time: 20-25 minutes | Cook Time: 40-45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Sponge Cake

2 ½ cups cake flour
2 ½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
1 pinch of salt
1 cup (2 sticks) salted butter, room temperature
1 ¾ cups granulated sugar
4 large egg yolks, room temperature
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 cup full fat milk, room temperature

1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 large egg whites, room temperature
⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar

Passion Fruit Cream

1 cup passion fruit juice, seeds and pulp removed
1 tablespoon lemon juice
4 large egg yolks

4 large eggs
1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
1 pinch of salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 ½ cups + 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, room temperature
1 ½ cups heavy cream, very cold
Passion fruit pulp
Mint leaves



PREPARATION

1 **To make the Sponge Cake** preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease two 8-inch round cake tins and line with parchment paper rounds. Be sure to grease the bottoms and sides as well.

2 Whisk the cake flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside.



3 Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar together on high speed for about 5 minutes.

4 Scrape down the sides of the bowl using a spatula. Beat in the 4 egg yolks one at a time, letting each egg yolk fully mix into the batter before adding the next. Beat in the vanilla extract until combined.

5 Add $\frac{1}{3}$ of the dry ingredients and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the milk and mix on low speed until combined.

6 Add $\frac{1}{3}$ more of the dry ingredients and the rest of the milk and mix on low speed until combined.

7 Add the rest of the dry ingredients and mix on low speed until combined. The batter will be thick. Use a hand whisk to ensure all of the ingredients are fully combined.

8 In a separate clean bowl, whisk the egg whites and cream of tartar on high speed until fluffy peaks form. Gently fold the egg whites into the thick cake batter. Avoid over-mixing to avoid deflating the eggs.

9 Spoon batter evenly into cake tins.

10 Bake the cakes for 25-27 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

11 Allow cakes to cool completely in the pans set on a wire rack. The cakes must be completely cool before adding the cream.

12 **To make the Passion for Fruit Cream** place medium pot of water over a medium-low heat and bring to a simmer. Place a heatproof glass or stainless-steel bowl over the pot. The bowl should not touch the water.

13 Combine the passion fruit juice, lemon juice, egg yolks, eggs, sugar, salt, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract in the heatproof bowl, whisking immediately to prevent the sugar from cooking the egg yolks.

14 Cook the mixture gently while whisking constantly, until it reaches 180 F on a candy thermometer or has the consistency of pudding. This may take about 15 minutes.

15 Remove the bowl from the heat and set aside. Whisk occasionally, until the mixture is slightly cooled. Strain custard through a sieve into a clean blender cup.

16 Cut the butter into small chunks and add to custard a few pieces at a time, blending well for a few seconds after each addition to incorporate the butter. The custard should be pale and thick once all the butter is incorporated.

17 Transfer to an airtight container, press a piece of plastic wrap onto the surface of the cream, and cover. Refrigerate until chilled and you are ready to assemble the cooled cakes.



18 Place the heavy cream and remaining vanilla extract in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Whisk on medium speed until stiff peaks form. Gently fold in the chilled passion fruit custard. Use the cream to layer and cover the cakes like frosting. Garnish cake with passion fruit pulp and mint leaves.



WEST AFRICAN

Growing up in Zimbabwe, I always looked forward to spending time at my grandmother's farm during school breaks. The food she prepared made me feel special and loved and grew my love for different cuisines from all African cultures. My grandmother had three cows that she milked every day, and she fermented some of the fresh milk daily in a clay pot in her grass hut kitchen. Fermented milk curds were the most delicious part of any meal she would prepare and were always included on our plate. Whether on top of rich peanut butter porridge for breakfast, on homegrown brown rice for lunch, or as a dessert after dinner, dairy foods were always part of family meals and rooted at the center of the meals provided for us.

Kuda Mako-Mushaniga, MPH, MS, RDN | SVP of Scientific Affairs, National Dairy Council



PUFF PUFF WITH CRÈME ANGLAISE and SALTED CARAMEL

Serves: 10 | Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Dough

1 ½ cups warm water, divided
¼ cup + 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 package dry active yeast
2 cups all-purpose flour
⅛ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon nutmeg
2 quarts vegetable oil

Crème Anglaise

1 ½ cups whole milk
1 ½ cups whipping cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large egg yolks
3 tablespoons granulated sugar

Salted Caramel

2 cups granulated sugar
12 tablespoons unsalted butter,
room temperature
1 cup heavy cream, room
temperature
1 tablespoon flaky sea salt



PREPARATION

1 Mix ½ cup warm water with 1 teaspoon sugar and the yeast in a small bowl. Cover and set aside until the yeast is bubbly, about 4-6 minutes.

2 In a medium bowl, mix the flour, remaining sugar, salt, and nutmeg.

3 Mix the proofed yeast and the remaining cup water together until well combined. Add yeast mixture to the dry ingredients and stir until the batter is lump-free.

4 Cover the dough and allow it to rise for 1 hour. (The risen dough has a distinct sweet smell, which will let you know the dough is ready for frying.)



5 In a large pot, heat oil over medium-high heat (about 360 F). Scoop 2 tablespoons batter and drop into oil. Cook for 1-2 minutes or until browned, then flip to cook the other side. Remove from oil with slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

6 **To make the crème anglaise**, combine the milk and cream in a medium saucepan. Add vanilla extract when and bring milk mixture to simmer. Remove from heat.



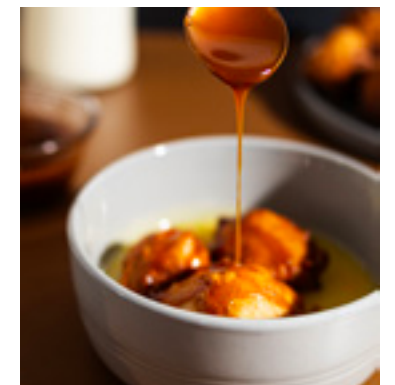
7 Whisk egg yolks and sugar in a medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk the hot milk mixture into yolk mixture. Return custard to the saucepan and stir over low heat until custard thickens, about 5 minutes (do not boil). Strain sauce into bowl. Cover and chill.

8 **To make salted caramel**, add the sugar in an even layer over the bottom of a medium saucepan. Heat the sugar over medium heat, whisking it as it begins to melt. Keep whisking, even as clumps form—it will melt back down as it continues to cook. Stop whisking once all the sugar has melted. Swirl the pan occasionally while the sugar cooks until it turns a deep amber color and has a slightly toasted aroma. (Be sure to not overcook and burn the caramel.)

9 Add the butter all at once and whisk until completely melted. Remove the pan from heat.

10 Slowly pour the cream into the caramel and whisk until it has been fully incorporated and the sauce is smooth. Add the sea salt and whisk to incorporate. Set aside to cool for approximately 20 minutes.

11 To serve, spoon ½ cup of the crème anglaise onto a plate or bowl, place 3 or 4 Puff Puffs on the crème anglaise, drizzle some caramel, and sprinkle with powdered sugar, if desired.





WEST AFRICAN PEANUT STEW

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 60 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 cup plain yogurt | 1 tablespoon ground black pepper | ½ cup tomato paste |
| 2 tablespoons chopped thyme | 8 bone-in chicken thighs, cleaned | 1 cup tomatoes, finely chopped |
| 1 tablespoon chopped sage | 1 cup vegetable oil | 2 cups creamy peanut butter |
| 2 tablespoons chopped rosemary | 2 cups celery, chopped | 1 quart chicken stock |
| 2 tablespoons ground ginger | 2 cups medium carrots, finely chopped | 1 cup whole milk |
| 2 tablespoons paprika | 2 cups onions, finely chopped | ½ cup heavy cream |
| 3 tablespoons garlic powder | 3 tablespoons garlic, chopped | 1 acorn squash, quartered |
| 2 tablespoons kosher salt | 1 bunch parsley | 3 Scotch bonnet peppers |



PREPARATION

1 In a small bowl combine yogurt with thyme, sage, rosemary, ginger, paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Add yogurt mixture to the chicken thighs, mix well, and set aside.

2 In a large braising pot, heat oil on medium high and add the chicken thighs 4 pieces at a time, skin side down. Brown on both sides for approximately 5 minutes.

3 Once all the chicken has been browned, remove from pot and set aside.

4 In the same pot over medium high heat, sweat the celery, carrots, onions, garlic, and parsley until soft and onions are translucent.



5 Add the tomato paste and caramelize for approximately 4 to 5 minutes.

6 Add the peanut butter and caramelize for another 4 to 5 minutes.

7 Add the chicken and chicken stock, milk, and cream. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.

8 Add the squash and peppers and continue simmering for an hour until chicken is fully cooked and tender. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.





SOUL FOOD

Every summer, I always enjoyed visiting my grandmother in Virginia. I got to see her in the kitchen preparing dishes I didn't get to eat often living up north. She knew I had an interest in cooking, so she showed me how to make her famous biscuits. Diligently watching, I saw firsthand how cream, butter, flour, and salt made the most tender biscuits, turning a simple breakfast into a comforting meal experience shared with the whole family. Collard greens, black-eyed peas, and chitlins were some of the many culinary adventures she shared with me. The fresh and savory ingredients of soul food were prepared by enslaved Africans and passed down through generations to my grandmothers' kitchen. The flavors of her recipes blend unique cuisines from throughout the African Diaspora, each one precious and rich in culture and heritage.

LaChell Miller MS, RD, CC | Director of Health & Wellness at American Dairy Association North East



AIR FRYER BUTTERMILK FRIED CHICKEN

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs,
with skin
2 cups buttermilk
2 eggs
1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon black pepper
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon onion powder

1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
Olive oil- or canola oil-based
cooking spray



PREPARATION

1 Preheat the air fryer to 375 F.

2 Pat chicken dry with paper towels.

3 In a wide shallow dish, whisk together the buttermilk, eggs, salt, and pepper. In a separate shallow bowl, whisk together the flour, garlic powder, paprika, onion powder, salt, and pepper.

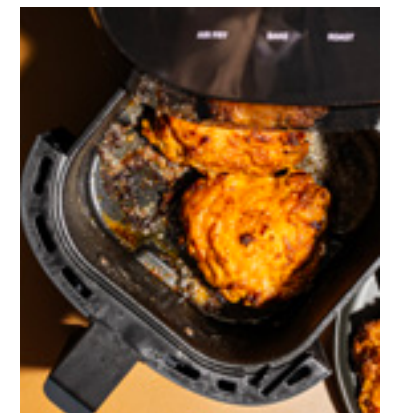
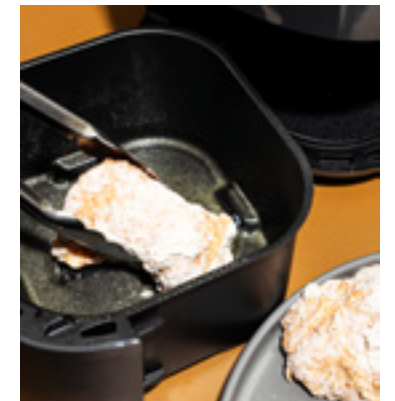
4 One at a time, coat each chicken thigh with the flour mixture, dip into the buttermilk mixture, letting excess drip off, then dredge in the flour mixture again. Repeat until all chicken thighs are coated.



5 In batches, spray the chicken thighs with cooking spray and place in an even layer in the air fryer basket or tray. Be sure to leave room between the pieces of chicken for airflow to create crispiness. Air-fry for 20 minutes, then flip chicken and spray with

cooking spray again. Cook for another 5-10 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 165 F and the chicken is golden brown.

6 Repeat with remaining chicken.





CHEDDAR CORNBREAD

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 package corn muffin mix, plus ingredients to make mix
1 small onion, thinly sliced
½ cup red pepper, thinly sliced
½ cup green pepper, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon oregano
1 ½ cups shredded reduced-fat mild Cheddar cheese, divided
Nonstick cooking spray



PREPARATION

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Prepare corn muffin mix batter as directed on package.

2 Spray an 8-inch square or round pan with nonstick cooking spray. Pour batter into pan. Bake 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Do not remove combread from the pan.

3 While bread is baking, spray a nonstick pan with cooking spray over medium-high heat. Add onions and peppers, and sauté until soft. Stir in oregano; set aside.



4 Sprinkle 1 cup of the cheese over baked bread; top with vegetable mixture and remaining ½ cup of cheese. Bake 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Cut into 2-inch squares to serve.





CRAB MACARONI AND CHEESE

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 ½ cups dry macaroni
¼ cup butter
¼ cup flour
3 cups whole milk
¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon mustard
¼ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
2 ½ cups shredded sharp cheddar
cheese, divided

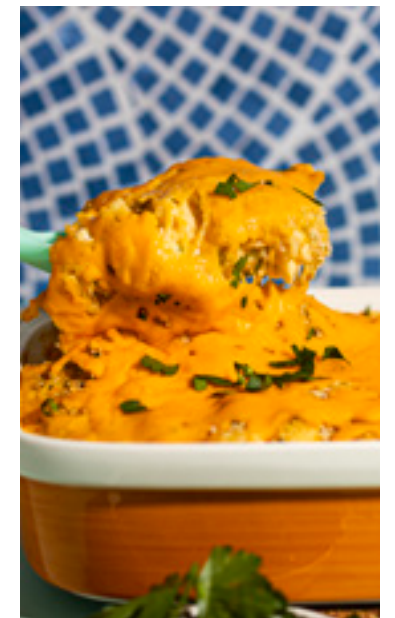
16 ounces jumbo lump crab meat
¼ cup breadcrumbs
Chopped parsley to garnish



PREPARATION

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Cook macaroni according to package directions. Drain cooked macaroni and set aside.

2 In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add flour and whisk together to form a paste and cook until lightly brown. Whisk milk in portions until mixture is blended and creamy. Remove from heat.



3 Add salt, pepper, mustard, and Old Bay seasoning to milk mixture. Whisk together with 2 cups of shredded cheese until smooth in consistency. Stir in crab and cooked macaroni until well combined.

4 Pour mixture into a 9x13 baking dish. Top with breadcrumbs and the remaining ½ cup cheese. Bake until topping is browned and cheese melts, approximately 30 minutes. Garnish with parsley.



FRIED OKRA

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 45 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

64 ounces peanut oil
(for frying)

4 tablespoons celery seed
3 tablespoons garlic powder
3 tablespoons paprika

1 teaspoon chili flakes

2 tablespoons dried thyme

2 tablespoons salt

2 tablespoons cracked black
pepper

1 pound okra, washed and
cut in half lengthwise

3 cups of flour

2 cups milk

4 eggs, beaten



PREPARATION

1 Pour oil into a deep pot and heat over medium-high heat, until oil temperature reaches 350 F.

2 In a small bowl, mix celery seed, garlic powder, paprika, chili flakes, thyme, salt, and pepper to make seasoning.

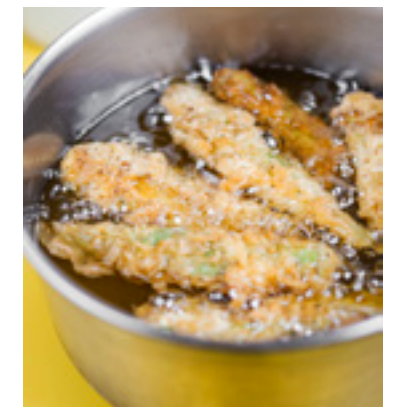
3 In a large bowl, toss okra with half of the seasoning. In a separate bowl, mix the remaining seasoning with flour.



4 Pour milk into a separate large bowl. Place eggs in a separate large bowl.

5 Line up bowls in order: okra, milk, flour, eggs. Take a handful of seasoned okra and dunk in milk, toss in flour, coat with egg, and then toss in flour once more.

6 Place battered okra in oil and fry until crisp and golden brown. Repeat steps 5 and 6 with remaining okra. Serve with hot sauce if desired.





GRILLED BUTTERMILK CHICKEN

Serves: 4-6 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ½ to 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast

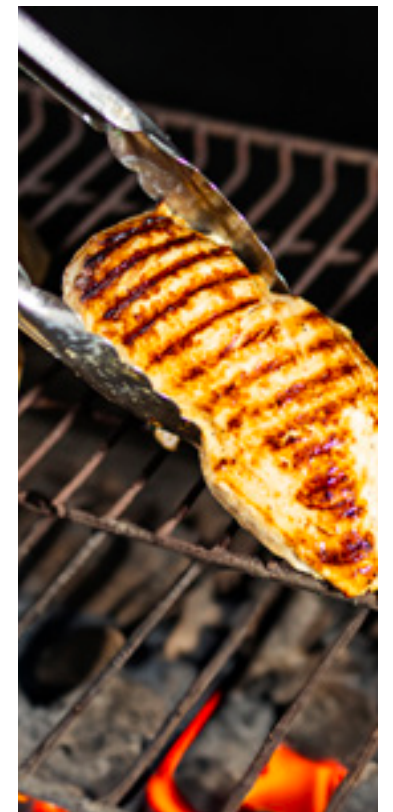


PREPARATION

1 In a bowl or large resealable bag, add buttermilk, maple syrup, Dijon, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and garlic and mix well. Add chicken and coat completely. Place in refrigerator to marinate for 2 to 12 hours.

2 Remove chicken from refrigerator and allow it to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking.

3 Heat a grill over medium heat and lightly oil the grates.



4 Place chicken on the grill and cook 7 to 8 minutes on one side. Turn and cook on the other side 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a platter, tent with foil, and allow to rest 5 minutes.



HIBISCUS COOKIES

Serves: 30 cookies | Prep Time: 40 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes | Resting Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

Cookies

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup nonfat dry milk powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter,
room temperature

8 ounces cream cheese, room
temperature
2 cups granulated sugar
2 eggs, room temperature
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Glaze

1 ounces hibiscus flowers
2 ounces boiling water
1 cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon lemon zest



PREPARATION

- 1** **To make the Cookies** preheat oven to 365 F. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, dry milk powder, salt, and baking powder. Set aside.
- 2** Using a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment or an electric hand mixer, cream the butter and cream cheese together until light and fluffy.
- 3** Add sugar, eggs, and vanilla and mix until combined. Scrape the bowl down and stir by hand to combine well.
- 4** Add the dry mixture to the wet and mix on low until just combined. Use a spatula to scrape the bottom and give the mixture one last mix. Cover cookie dough and chill for at least an hour.
- 5** Roll 2-tablespoon portions of dough into balls until all batter is used. The dough will be sticky, so coat your hands with oil. Place cookies 2 inches apart on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for 15 minutes. Let cookies cool on a wire rack.



- 6** **To make the Glaze** place hibiscus flowers in a heatproof bowl, pour hot water over flowers, cover, and steep for 5 minutes before straining.
- 7** Mix sugar, lemon zest, and hibiscus tea. (Adjust glaze consistency by adding more tea if needed.)
- 8** Once cool, dunk cookies top down into glaze and place back on wire rack to set.



MULTI-COOKER CHEESY SHRIMP GRITS

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 15-20 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Shrimp

1 pound jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 tablespoon Old Bay seasoning (or Creole seasoning)
2 slices thick-cut bacon, diced
1 small yellow onion, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons chicken broth
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
2 tablespoons lemon juice
¼ cup low-sodium chicken broth
½ teaspoon hot sauce
Salt and pepper, to taste
⅓ cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Grits

1 ½ cup grits
⅔ cup milk (or heavy cream)
½ cup low-sodium chicken broth
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon butter



PREPARATION

1 Pat shrimp dry with a paper towel. Add shrimp to a bowl and sprinkle with Old Bay seasoning. Toss together, then set aside.

2 Set Instant Pot on sauté mode. Add bacon and cook until crisp. Use a slotted spoon to remove bacon and place on a plate lined with a paper towel. Set aside.

3 Using the residual bacon fat, sauté the onions and peppers until translucent, about 2-3 minutes in the Instant Pot. Add the garlic and sauté for an additional minute, or until fragrant.



4 Add the white wine to deglaze, removing any browned bits. Allow most of the moisture to evaporate. Turn off the sauté mode.

5 Stir in crushed tomatoes, lemon juice, chicken broth, and hot sauce.

6 Place a 2-inch trivet in the Instant Pot above the tomato mixture.



7 In a medium heatproof glass bowl that can fit into the Instant Pot, stir together the grits, milk, chicken broth, and cheddar cheese. Place the bowl on the trivet.

8 Place the lid on top and seal the valve. Cook on manual HIGH pressure for 10 minutes. Allow the pressure to release naturally.

9 Open the lid and remove the grits and trivet; set aside. Stir the shrimp into the tomato mixture. Replace the lid and allow shrimp to cook with the residual heat for 10 minutes. Set the Instant Pot on the "keep warm" setting.

10 While the shrimp is cooking, stir the butter into the grits and fluff with a fork.

11 Stir in the bacon and heavy cream. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

12 Serve grits topped with shrimp and sauce. Garnish with parsley.





SOUTHERN CREAMED COLLARD GREENS

Serves: 8-12 | Prep Time: 10-15 minutes | Cook Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

4 bundles of collard greens,
tough stems and ribs removed
¼ cup butter
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 large shallots, minced
1 cup Greek yogurt

¼ teaspoon of nutmeg
Kosher salt and freshly cracked
black pepper
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
½ cup Italian cheese blend



PREPARATION

1 Wash and clean collards thoroughly. Chop them finely and set aside. Preheat oven to 350 F.

2 Melt the butter in a large skillet.

3 Add the garlic and shallots and cook over medium heat until softened, then add chopped collard greens and toss for 4-5 minutes.

4 Add the Greek yogurt and bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Cook until reduced by half, about 25 minutes. Watch carefully as the mixture can quickly boil over.



5 Season generously with nutmeg, salt and pepper. Add to 9x13 baking dish and blend in Parmesan cheese.

6 Cover top of collard greens with Italian cheese blend.

7 Place in oven and bake for 30 minutes.





STRAWBERRY SALAD WITH CREAMY DRESSING

Serves: 12-16 | Prep Time: 10-15 minutes | Cook Time: 5 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Dressing

3 cups fresh strawberries (sliced in half)
¾ cups apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon maple syrup
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon dried mustard
1 ½ cups olive or avocado oil

Salad

16 ounces mixed greens
16 ounces spinach
Fresh strawberries, for garnish
1 cup halved mozzarella balls
½ cup chopped walnuts



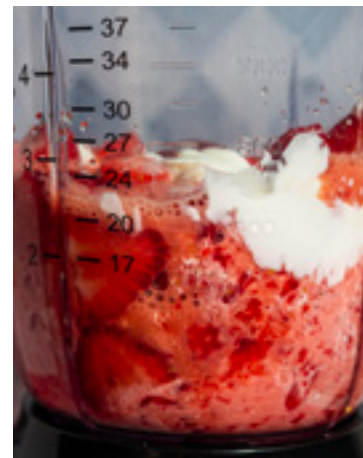
PREPARATION

1 In a blender, puree strawberries, vinegar, maple syrup and lemon juice, yogurt, and dried mustard.

2 Slowly add avocado oil to strawberry mixture to emulsify. Chill for 30 minutes.

3 Place mixed greens and spinach in a stainless bowl and toss with dressing.

4 Garnish with fresh strawberries, mozzarella, and walnuts.





SWEET POTATO BREAD PUDDING

Serves: 8-10 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

Bread Pudding

8 cups French bread, brioche or challah, cut and cubed (day-old stale bread works best)
4 ½ cups milk
1 (15 ounce) can sweet potato puree, or 2 medium-size sweet potatoes cooked until fork tender then pureed
6 eggs, beaten
½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup dark brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg

Pecan Topping

⅓ cup chopped pecans
¼ cup butter, room temperature
¼ cup brown sugar

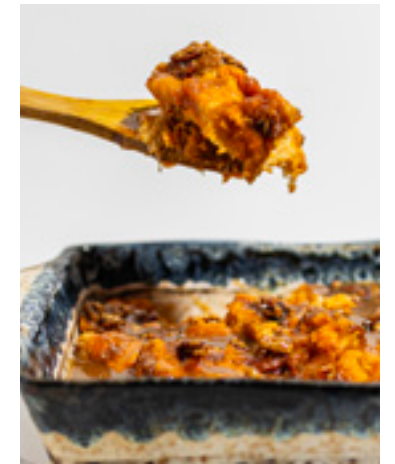
Brown Sugar Glaze

¾ cup brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
½ cup heavy cream
½ cup (1 stick) butter
1 tablespoon vanilla extract



PREPARATION

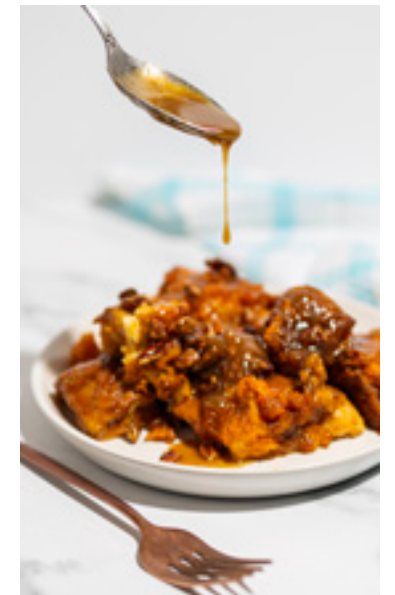
- 1** Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2** Grease a 9 × 13-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Arrange the bread pieces evenly in the pan.
- 3** In a large bowl, mix together milk, sweet potato puree, eggs, both sugars, vanilla extract, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
- 4** In a small bowl, mix the pecans, butter, and brown sugar together. Set aside.
- 5** Pour the milk mixture over the cubed bread. Then dot the pudding with the pecan mixture. Cover with foil and let soak for 20 minutes.
- 6** Remove the foil from the baking pan, top the pudding with the remaining pecan mixture and bake for 45-50 minutes uncovered, until the center is set.
- 7** While the bread pudding is baking, make the glaze. Put both sugars, heavy cream, and butter together into a medium saucepan.



- 8** Stir together over medium heat until all of the ingredients have melted or dissolved and the mixture is smooth and simmering.

- 9** When the sauce begins to thicken, remove it from the stove. Add the vanilla extract and stir well. Set aside.

- 10** Remove the bread pudding from the oven, top it with the glaze and serve.





CREOLE

It really is true that behind every family there is a generation of great family recipes. For me it has been about nourishing the soul through the Power of Food. When we think of Cajun/Creole, the first thing that comes to mind is Louisiana cuisine, which is heavily influenced by French cuisine. It is the training ground for the five “mother sauces” seen throughout the cuisine. Whenever I prepare this cuisine, I always begin with “The Holy Trinity.” It typically consists of onions, bell pepper, and celery. Personally, there is no better way to deepen the flavors of a dish than through a rich mirepoix and layering some type of dairy. We have more in common with each other than we think, and the common thread that connects us universally is food.

Chef Rey Darthard | Sports Performance Executive Chef and Cookbook Author



ANDOUILLE GRAVY OVER SMOKED GOUDA GRITS

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 15-20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Andouille Gravy

4 pounds andouille sausage, sliced
1 small white onion, diced
1 sweet red pepper, diced
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Salt
2 teaspoons garlic paste
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup chicken broth
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/4 teaspoon Creole seasoning
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Smoked Gouda Grits

2 cups milk
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup grits (old fashioned or
stone ground)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 cups smoked Gouda cheese,
shredded



PREPARATION

1 For the gravy, in a large skillet over medium-high heat, brown the sliced andouille sausage on both sides for 5-7 minutes. Add in the diced onions, sweet red peppers, and butter. Stir everything together and sauté the vegetables until they are tender and fragrant.



2 Stir in the garlic paste and then add in half of the flour and stir it into the sausage mixture. You may not need all the flour; it all depends on how thick you prefer your gravy. Once you have a pasty consistency, pour in the chicken broth, and using a whisk continuously, mix the flour into the gravy to ensure that the flour is fully mixed into the broth. The gravy should be a cream color at this point. If you would like a thicker gravy, add more flour at this step. Season with Creole seasoning and black pepper.



3 Reduce the heat to low, pour in the heavy cream, and stir or whisk everything very well. Keep the gravy warm on the stove while you prepare the grits.

6 Spoon the grits into a bowl, top with the andouille gravy, and enjoy. This dish is best served warm.

4 For the grits, in a medium pot, over medium-high heat, bring the milk and broth to a rolling boil. Stir in the grits and butter then reduce the heat to medium-low and continuously stir to ensure there are no clumps and that the grits are cooking evenly.

5 Once the grits are tender and creamy, reduce the heat to low and add in the shredded smoked Gouda cheese. Carefully stir in the cheese until combined and creamy, then remove from the heat.





CHEESY CRAB GRITS

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Grits

2 cups old-fashioned grits
6 cups milk
3 cups seafood stock
2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 teaspoons paprika
Salt to taste

Crab Topping

3 Tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup cherry tomatoes
½ cup corn
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1 Tablespoon dry thyme
½ teaspoon chili flakes
½ teaspoon celery seed

1 pound crab meat
½ cup pureed tomato
1 cup seafood stock

Garnish

4 ounces cheddar cheese,
shredded
1 bunch green onion, chopped



PREPARATION

1 **To make the Grits** In a medium pot, add grits, milk, seafood stock, garlic powder, and paprika and stir over medium heat for 15-20 minutes (or until thick). Adjust salt to taste.

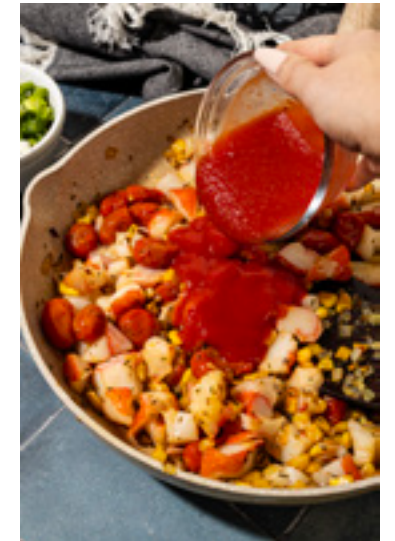
2 **To make the Crab topping** In a large sauté pan over high heat, add butter, onion, cherry tomatoes, corn, garlic, thyme, chili flakes, and celery seed. Sauté until onion becomes translucent and fragrant.

3 Add crab meat and sauté for 2-3 minutes.

4 Add pureed tomato and seafood stock to sauté pan and bring to a simmer.

5 Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

6 Plate warm grits into a dish and top with crab mixture. Garnish with cheddar cheese, and green onions.





CRAWFISH RISOTTO

Serves: 6 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 35 minutes

INGREDIENTS

3 cups seafood stock	1 tablespoon dried thyme	3 ounces Parmesan grated
2 tablespoons butter	2 cups Arborio rice	1 pound crawfish meat
1 medium onion, chopped	2 cups milk	Salt to taste
3 cloves garlic, chopped	1 cup peas	1 bunch green onion
½ teaspoon cracked black pepper	5 ounces smoked Gouda, shredded	



PREPARATION

1 In a medium saucepan, bring seafood stock to a simmer and set aside.

2 Place a large sauté pan on high heat. Add butter, onion, garlic, black pepper, and thyme. Sauté until onions are translucent and fragrant.

5 Repeat steps 3-4 with remaining stock, then switch to using milk.

6 Repeat until rice is tender and custard-like. (This can take approximately 30 minutes of consistent stirring while adding liquids. Time is what makes it delicious).

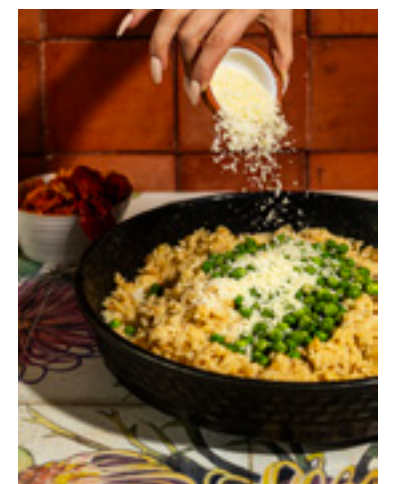
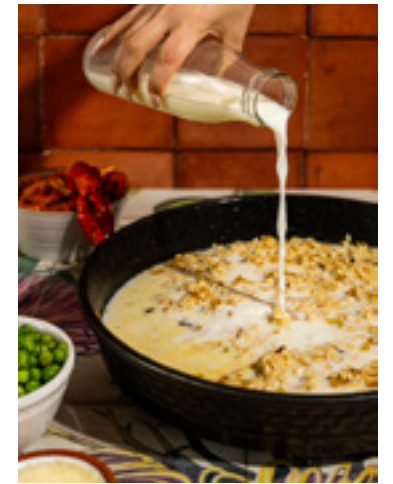


3 Add Arborio rice to the sautéed onion mixture. Stir and toast rice for approximately 2 minutes.

4 Pour one cup of hot stock over the rice mixture and stir on medium heat until 75% of the liquid is absorbed.

7 Stir in peas, Gouda, Parmesan, and crawfish and cook until risotto bubbles.

8 Adjust salt to taste. Plate onto a large dish, garnish with chopped green onion, and serve immediately.





CREOLE BREAKFAST CHEESY PASTRIES

Serves: 4-6 | Prep Time: 15-20 minutes | Cook Time: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
6 ounces andouille sausage,
cut into small cubes
¼ red bell pepper
¼ green bell pepper

1 small red onion, finely chopped
½ teaspoon Creole seasoning
1 large sheet puff pastry, defrosted
in the fridge overnight
7 large eggs, divided

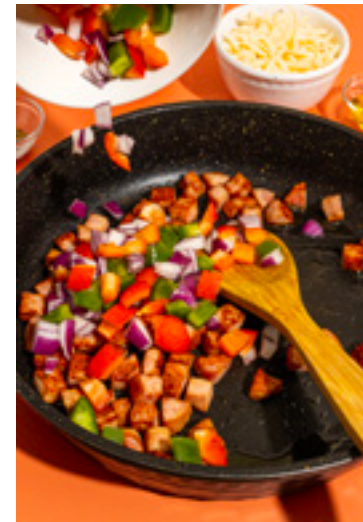
1 cup Colby jack cheese, shredded
1 cup mascarpone cheese
Salt and pepper to taste



PREPARATION

1 Preheat the oven to 400 F.

2 In a large skillet over medium heat, add olive oil and heat for about 30 seconds. Add in cubed andouille sausage and allow it to sear while occasionally tossing with a spoon or spatula until there is visible browning on the sausage, about 2-3 minutes. Keep a close watch on this so it doesn't burn.



3 To the same pan, add red bell pepper, green bell pepper, red onion, and Creole seasoning. Allow the veggies to sweat and sauté with the sausage until softened. Remove the sausage mixture from the heat and allow it to completely cool while you prep the pastry.

4 Place the pastry on a lined baking tray. Fold the edges of the pastry inward, about 1 inch from the edge, on all 4 sides. Make an egg wash by whisking one egg and a splash of water. Egg wash the rims of the pastry and prick the center of the pastry several times with a fork, before chilling the pastry for 10 minutes. While the pastry chills, work on the cheese filling.

5 In a medium bowl, combine Colby jack cheese with the mascarpone cheese and remaining egg wash. Use a heavy spoon to make sure the cheeses are fully incorporated.

6 Remove pastry from the fridge and using a spatula, evenly spread the cheese mixture in the center of the pastry, slightly away from the raised edges.

7 Layer on the cooled andouille sausage sautéed as evenly as you can across the top of the pastry. Bake the pastry for 12 minutes.

8 Crack the remaining 6 eggs into the gaps on the pastry. Sprinkle lightly with pepper and return the tray to the oven for an additional 9-13 minutes. (13 minutes will produce a solid egg yolk if you do not like your egg yolks runny.)

9 Slice the tart into 6 pieces and serve immediately.



HALIBUT IN TOMATO GRAVY OVER CREAMY POLENTA

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 20-25 minutes | Cook Time: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Polenta

2 cups water, plus more as needed
2 cups milk, plus more as needed
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup polenta
¼ cup crème fraîche
⅓ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated

Halibut and Gravy

2 pounds halibut fillet
1 tablespoon Maggi fish seasoning
½ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon dried thyme
¼ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon black pepper
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided

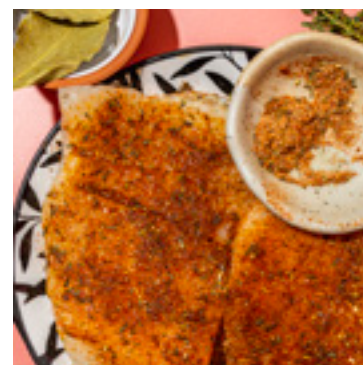
2 small shallots, small diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon paprika
10 ounces cherry tomatoes, washed and halved
2 cups low-sodium veggie stock
2 bay leaves
¼ cup heavy cream
7 sprigs thyme
Zest from 1 lemon



PREPARATION

1 To make the polenta, in a medium saucepan, bring the water, milk, and butter to a boil over high heat.

2 Add salt to the water and whisk in the polenta. Whisk constantly for 3 to 4 minutes to prevent lumps.



3 Partially cover the polenta and allow it to simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. When that once the polenta is cooked and the grains are tender, add the crème fraîche and Parmesan cheese. Adjust consistency by adding milk or water to taste.

4 To make the halibut, rinse and pat the filets dry. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil, coating all sides. Combine fish seasoning, Old Bay, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, thyme, oregano, and black pepper in a small bowl. Mix with a spoon to fully combine. Sprinkle fish liberally on both sides with the seasoning blend. If you have leftover blend, store it in an airtight container and use it for your favorite seafood preparations.

5 In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil until smoky. Sear the fish on both

sides, about 1-2 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and set aside on a plate.

6 To make the gravy, in the same pan, add the remaining oil and shallots. Saute until softened. Add in garlic, red pepper flakes, and paprika and stir until fragrant. Add in tomatoes and cook until the outer skins start to slightly blister. Deglaze the pan with veggie stock. Add in bay leaves and bring to a simmer.

7 Allow the sauce to reduce slightly before adding in heavy cream, thyme, and lemon zest. Taste for salt and pepper and add if desired.

8 Return the fish to the pan and gently coat the filets with the tomato sauce. Cook the filets in the sauce for 1-2 minutes and remove from heat. Serve fish over polenta immediately.



SHRIMP CREOLE PASTA BAKE

Serves: 4 | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 ½ teaspoons Creole seasoning blend

8 ounces penne pasta

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

½ medium green bell pepper, small dice

½ medium red bell pepper, small dice

½ medium onion, small dice

2 tablespoons butter

1 ½ cups heavy cream

2 cups grated Parmesan cheese

½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

½ teaspoon Tuscan seasoning

Salt to taste

Freshly cracked pepper to taste

½ cup shredded white cheddar cheese

¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped (optional)



PREPARATION

1 Pat shrimp dry and season with 2 teaspoons Creole seasoning. Fully coat the shrimp in the seasoning blend and set aside.

2 Bring water to a boil in a large stock pot with a large pinch of kosher salt. Add pasta and boil until al dente. While the pasta boils, preheat the oven to 400 F. Drain pasta and set aside.



3 In a large skillet over medium heat, add the olive oil and seasoned shrimp. Allow the shrimp to sear unturned for about 1 minute. To the same pan, add garlic, bell peppers, onions, and a pinch of salt. Allow the veggies to sweat for about 2 minutes and give the pan a good stir to toss the shrimp and veggies together. Cook for an additional minute, remove the shrimp and veggies to a large plate, and set aside.

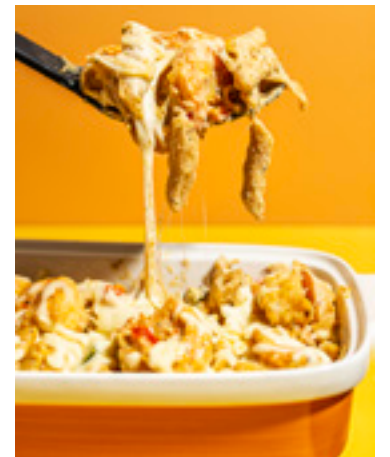
4 Return the pan to the heat, add butter, and allow it to melt. Add heavy cream and whisk in Parmesan cheese, red pepper flakes, Tuscan seasoning and the remaining ½ teaspoon Creole seasoning until the cheese is melted. Add salt and pepper to taste.



5 To the cheese sauce, stir in the cooked shrimp and veggies. Turn off heat and gently fold in the cooked pasta to coat it completely in the sauce.

6 Transfer the pasta to a greased 9x13 inch casserole dish. Top with the shredded white cheddar cheese. Bake for 5-8 minutes until the cheese is melted.

7 Remove from oven and top evenly with chopped parsley if using. Serve hot.





DOMINICAN

Some of my favorite memories revolve around food. Cooking Dominican dishes with my mom or grandmother was a time to show and share love. Many things have changed since I first went to school to become a dietitian. One of these is that I now know that my cultural foods are healthy and can be inclusive of all food groups, including dairy. Recreating my childhood recipes acts as a love letter from my ancestors to me. The sound of garlic, oregano, and salt being ground up in a pilón brings me joy and makes me feel just a little bit closer to my homeland, Quisqueya la Bella.

Karin Arias, RDN, CDN, CDES | Blogger and Trained Chef | @sabrosohealthyvibes



CHEESY YUCA MASH

Serves: 6 | Prep Time: 30 minutes | Cook Time: 5 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ pounds yuca root
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese



PREPARATION

1 Using a large sharp knife, trim off the ends of the yuca root. Then cut the root crosswise into three pieces.

2 Set each piece of yuca cut side up. Use a paring knife to score the peel, including the waxy outer brown skin and the inner pink layer. Carefully wedge the knife between the pink layer and the yuca flesh and remove the skin from the yuca flesh.



3 Repeat with the remaining pieces and cut all pieces into halves lengthwise. Rinse yuca root under cool running water.

4 In a medium pot over medium-high heat, add yuca, salt, and enough water to cover the yuca by about an inch.

5 Boil until the yuca is soft and can easily be pierced with a knife, approximately 25 to 35 minutes.

6 In the last 5 minutes of cooking time, warm the milk in a

small saucepan over medium-high heat. Once warm, set aside.

7 Transfer the yuca to a large bowl. If any of the yuca pieces have a fibrous stem in the middle, remove it. Reserve about 1 cup of water yuca was cooked in and set aside.

8 Mash yuca and add butter and milk. If mash becomes too thick, add a little of the water the yuca was boiled in.

9 Stir in cheese and serve.



DOMINICAN OATMEAL

Serves: 2 | Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 cups milk
¼ cup water
1 medium cinnamon stick
6 small whole cloves
½ cup quick oats
1 inch lime rind (outer green skin of lime)
1 pinch salt (optional)
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
(or more to taste)



PREPARATION

1 In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine milk, water, cinnamon stick, and cloves.

2 Bring to a boil, stirring often. Reduce heat until liquid is simmering and add oats, lime rind, and salt, if using.



3 Cook until oats are soft, approximately 8 minutes. Remove from heat and divide between 2 bowls. Add sugar to taste.





MANGO AND ORANGE YOGURT POPS

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 4-8 hours

INGREDIENTS

2 cups orange, peeled and diced
2 cups frozen mango, thawed
½ cup fresh orange juice
2 cups vanilla Greek yogurt
½ cup granulated sugar

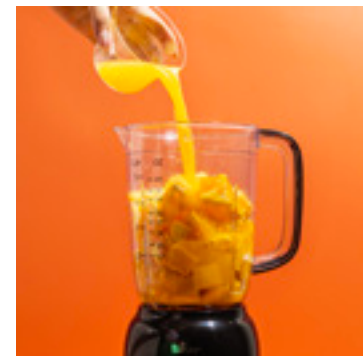
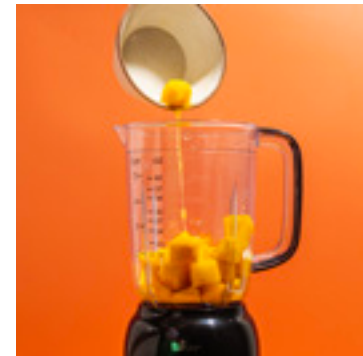


PREPARATION

1 Place oranges, mangos, orange juice, Greek yogurt, and sugar in a blender.

2 Blend until smooth.

3 Pour mixture into an ice pop mold, insert sticks, and freeze until solid, about 4 to 8 hours.





MORIR SOÑANDO

Serves: 2 | Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 5 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cold milk
2-3 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup ice
2 cups fresh cold orange juice



PREPARATION

1 In a large, cold pitcher, combine milk, sugar, and vanilla extract. Whisk until sugar dissolves.

2 Add ice and pour in orange juice, stirring continuously, until completely mixed.

3 Serve immediately.



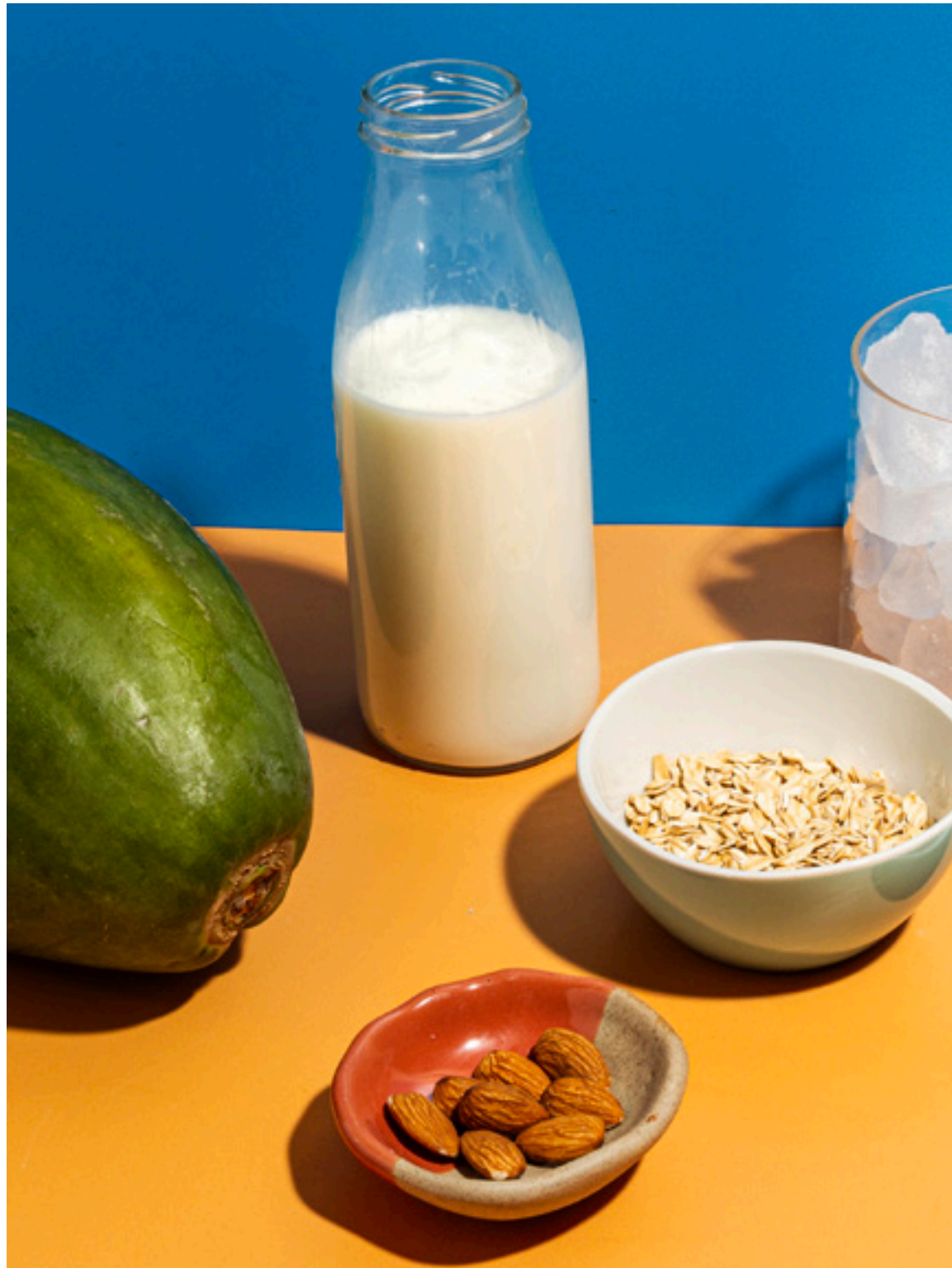


PAPAYA SMOOTHIE

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 5 minutes

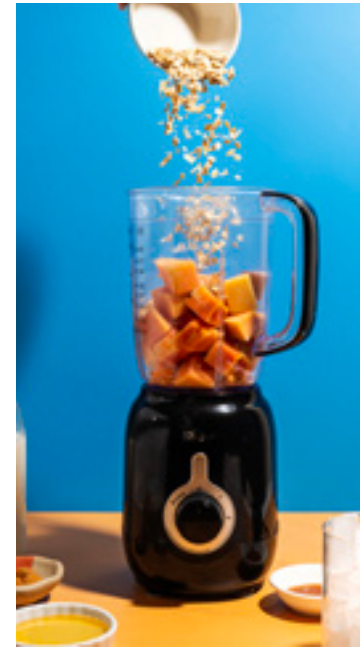
INGREDIENTS

6 cups ripe papaya, peeled,
seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes
2 $\frac{2}{3}$ tablespoons raw oats
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
8 whole raw almonds
2 cups milk
2 cups ice
2 $\frac{2}{3}$ tablespoons honey



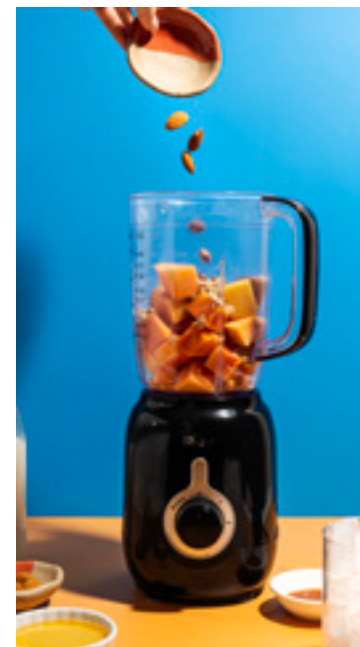
PREPARATION

1 Place papaya, oats, vanilla extract, almonds, milk, ice, and honey in a blender.



2 Blend on high speed until smooth, approximately 10 seconds.

3 Serve immediately.





PASSION FRUIT and COCONUT PARFAIT

Serves: 2 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

½ cup old-fashioned oats
½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
⅓ cup almonds, chopped
¼ teaspoon cinnamon

1 pinch salt
1 tablespoon coconut oil, melted
⅓ cup honey
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups Greek yogurt, divided

¼ cup passion fruit pulp
4 teaspoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon coconut extract



PREPARATION

1 Heat the oven to 300 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2 In a large bowl, add oats, shredded coconut, almonds, cinnamon, and salt. Mix until well combined.



3 In a small bowl, add coconut oil, honey, and vanilla extract, and whisk until well combined. Pour over the oat mixture and stir until oats are evenly coated.

4 Pour mixture onto baking sheet and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Stir granola every 10 minutes.

5 In a blender, add 1 cup of yogurt, passion fruit pulp, and sugar. Blend until smooth. Place in refrigerator for 20 minutes.

6 Once the granola has finished baking, allow it to cool completely.

7 In a small bowl, add the remaining 1 cup of yogurt and mix in coconut extract.

8 Divide coconut-flavored yogurt between two bowls. Top each bowl with a layer of granola, a layer of passion fruit-flavored yogurt, then granola. Serve immediately.





SWEET PLANTAIN CASSEROLE

Serves: 8 | Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

3 cloves garlic
½ teaspoon dried oregano
(Dominican oregano, if available)
1 ½ teaspoons salt, divided
½ teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons canola oil

2 tablespoons lime juice
1 pound ground turkey
½ small red onion, minced
1 large cinnamon stick
12 small whole cloves
1 tablespoon granulated sugar

6 medium ripe yellow plantains with
black blotches, peeled and cut in half
1 tablespoon butter
2 cups mozzarella cheese
¼ cup Parmesan cheese



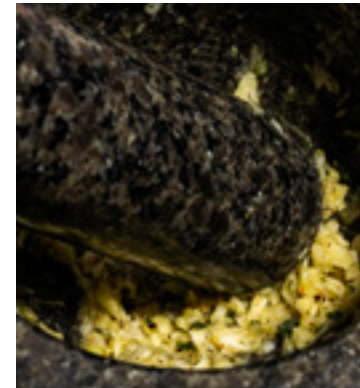
PREPARATION

1 Heat the oven to 350 F.

2 Grind garlic, oregano, ½ teaspoon of salt, and black pepper in a mortar and pestle until a paste forms. (If you don't have a mortar and pestle, mince the garlic and use a fork to mash it into a paste with the oregano, salt, and black pepper.)

3 In a large nonstick skillet, add oil, garlic paste, lime juice, and ground turkey. Mix until all ingredients are incorporated.

4 Place the skillet over medium heat and cook turkey, stirring to break up clumps, until no longer pink, approximately 3 to 5 minutes.



5 Stir in minced onion. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has been absorbed, approximately 10 minutes. Set filling aside.

6 In a large pot, add 1 teaspoon salt, cinnamon stick, cloves, sugar, plantains, and enough water to cover plantains by 1 inch.

7 Boil the plantains until fork tender, approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

8 Immediately use a slotted spoon to remove plantains from the water and transfer them to a large bowl. Make sure to remove any cloves and the cinnamon. Add butter and mash until smooth.

9 Grease an 8 x 12 x 1-inch baking pan. Place half of the plantain mixture in the baking pan, spreading to cover the pan evenly.

10 Add the meat filling, spreading evenly over the plantains. Cover with the remaining plantain mixture, then the mozzarella. Top with the Parmesan.

11 Bake, uncovered, for approximately 15 to 20 minutes, or until the cheese has completely melted.

12 Remove from the oven. Let casserole rest for five minutes, then serve.



HEALTHY PERSPECTIVES

During Janet Reid-Hector's career as Assistant Professor & Director in Healthcare Management & at Rutgers University after the word Leadership, she has made sure her research includes nutrition and maternal complications in women of color.

"Nutrition plays a significant role in placental health, influencing factors such as pre-eclampsia and hypertension which are major causes of maternal complications and the second leading cause of rising preventable maternal deaths among women of color worldwide."

Dr. Reid-Hector observes that specific nutrient deficiencies of calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A, folic acid, zinc, and iron during pregnancy alter placental development and function, leading to adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as gestational hypertension and maternal mortality. Calcium is an important blood pressure regulator, while vitamin D supports calcium homeostasis by increasing calcium absorption in the intestine and modulating placental immune system and inflammation during placental development. Incorporating adequate intake of dairy in cultural recipes and foods provides much needed calcium and vitamin D, which are nutrients critical to maternal health.

JANET REID-HECTOR, ED. D, RD | NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF BLACK IN DIETETICS AND NUTRITION

As her position as a Medical Director and Pediatrician, Dr. Priscilla Mpasi knows that proper nutrition is important for young children because rapid growth and development happens in the first five years of life. She encourages families to start breastfeeding/formulary, followed by a slow introduction of foods from MyPlate—fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, grains, and dairy. She notes the importance of milk and water at every meal, starting with whole cow’s milk at the age of one.

Dr. Mpasi does face challenges with this population as she often sees a greater intake of processed foods and increased presumption of lactose intolerance, particularly with Black families. Education is key to overcoming these challenges, as is encouraging families to get creative in the kitchen while learning to use less processed foods, introducing new whole foods, and not removing dairy foods without a proper diagnosis to ensure adequate nutrition is met. She also emphasizes the importance of families including cultural foods during family mealtimes because often these foods are healthier than the Americanized diet and easier to tweak versus recommending a list of unfamiliar foods.

“We commonly say you are what you eat. Culture is a big part of that—so I advise health professionals keep culture in mind when having conversations with families seeking healthy eating advice.”

DR. MPASI, FAAP | NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

As a school nutrition consultant, Tamara Melton is proud that school meals are providing millions of children across the U.S. with much needed nutrition from fruits, veggies, grains, and dairy. Ms. Melton believes that dairy helps fill important nutrient gaps, including protein and vitamin D, while adding some joy to the school day.

“When my ten-year-old daughter runs into the house so excited to tell me about lunch, it’s usually on a day when the kids were served strawberry milk. The smile on her face says it all.”

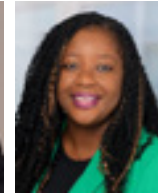
You will always find several dairy items in the Melton family fridge. Even with varying degrees of lactose intolerance, they enjoy plenty of kefir and cultured yogurt. A favorite snack is golden milk faux “lattes” made with warmed ultrafiltered milk and turmeric, which allows her family to enjoy this cozy drink without tummy troubles. Healthy eating is made easy with dairy foods for the Melton family and the students she serves.

TAMARA MELTON, MS, RDN, LD | DIVERSIFY DIETETICS COFOUNDER

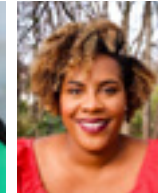
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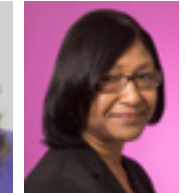
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DR. PRISCILLA MPASI,
MD, FAAP



JANET REID-HECTOR,
ED.D, RD



DIYA BASU

Nada Mays is a private practice registered dietitian and public health specialist. She has observed a large void and deficit in care supporting minority communities and people of color who are older adults. Ms. Mays focuses on providing culturally inclusive dietetic counseling to bridge this gap and delivers the high-quality, personalized care patients want and deserve.

Her clients are at an increased risk of malnutrition due to biological changes related to aging. These changes include reduced appetite, nutrient absorption, financial insecurity, and physical, mental, emotional, and environmental barriers to nutrition. Dairy is an easily accessible, nutrient-dense food that provides many nutrients for older adults of color who are commonly deficient in calcium, vitamin D, protein, and potassium, to name a few. Deficiencies and malnutrition increase the risk of falls, injuries, illness, poor healing, and a general decline in quality of life. Prevention of malnutrition is vital in caring for any population, including older adults.

“Cultural foods play a significant role as a vehicle for nutrients and should be the cornerstone of all nutrition recommendations. Patients will not eat foods that they do not enjoy.”

NADA MAYS, MS, RDN, LDN | PRIVATE PRACTICE DIETITIAN, CHEF, AND SPEAKER

CONSTANCE BROWN-RIGGS, an award-winning registered dietitian nutritionist as well as certified diabetes care and education specialist, is the author of several books on diabetes. Over the course of her career, Ms. Riggs has established herself as an expert in nutrition, diabetes, and the cultural issues that impact the health and health care of people of color.

KUDA MAKO-MUSHANINGA is a registered dietitian and public health specialist at the National Dairy Council, a non-profit organization founded by dairy farmers. Ms. Mako-Mushaninga has a passion for improving health equity and nutrition security on behalf of the public by promoting healthy eating patterns, which include dairy foods.

TAMARA MELTON is a registered dietitian and educator with over 15 years of experience in academia and healthcare technology. Ms. Melton is the co-founder and executive director of Diversify Dietetics. This 501(c)3 nonprofit provides programming to support Black Indigenous People of Color students and young professionals as they navigate the dietetics educational and career pathways. Prior to Diversify Dietetics, she spent ten years at Georgia State University, working as an advisor and admissions counselor, professor, and administrator.

LACHELL MILLER is a registered dietitian and certified culinarian. Her background includes print publishing, and clinical nutrition, and she has served as a supermarket dietitian. Ms. Miller is currently the Director of Health & Wellness at American Dairy Association North East, providing nutrition education to health professionals and leading diverse health culinary initiatives. She was elected President-Elect of New Jersey Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, on June 1, 2023.

DR. PRISCILLA MPASI is the Medical Director for the Clinical Alliance and the Medicaid Accountable Care Organization (ACO) and is a Primary Care Pediatrician at Christiana Care Health System. Her primary work focuses on health equity promotion to ensure improved healthcare system navigation and access to social health resources for medically vulnerable populations, disadvantaged patients, and historically minoritized communities. Dr. Mpasi currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the National Medical Association and is also a national leader for the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Medical Association.

DR. JANET REID-HECTOR is Assistant Professor and Director of the Master of Sciences Degree in Healthcare Management and Leadership at Rutgers University. For 20 years, Dr. Janet Reid-Hector worked at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey as the Assistant Director. Currently she is a certified online instructor and co-developed the Rutgers University Certified Healthcare Manager® (CHM) Credential Program. Dr. Janet Reid-Hector was elected Chair of the National Organization of Blacks in Dietetics and Nutrition (NOBIDAN) on June 1, 2022 and served the Academy on the President's Strategic Advancement Group for the Diversity and Inclusion focus.

DIYA BASU is an industry veteran with over a decade of experience in marketing, which has led to spearheading award-winning campaigns. As the Director of Digital & Content Marketing at Savor and American Dairy Association North East, she has led the charge of multicultural marketing and DEI initiatives, fostering inclusivity and connection with diverse audiences. In addition to being a mentor for various marketing associations, Diya works closely with non-profits throughout the tri-state area to combat food insecurity and currently sits as an associate board member of Jersey Cares.