

## Cookbook 2020

### Preface

Given the increased time we've all spent at home, and my love of cooking continues to develop, I wanted to share a few of my favorites. I'm not sure I'll combine them like this into one packet in the future, but let's see. My cooking mindset ranges from "sweat for a few hours in the kitchen" to "screw it, I'll make this sauce and combine it with some good stuff." I hope you enjoy cooking these recipes as much as I do!

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#### Bread:

- Banana Bread (That's a bread, right?) (V)

#### Apps:

- Bruschetta on Crostini (V)
- Swedish Meatballs

#### Mains & Marinades:

- Death by Chimichurri (V)
- Lamb Kebab (may as well call them Grilled Lamb Meatballs) and Tahini Sauce (V)
- Pasta Avellino
- Sous Vide 50-hour Brisket

#### Sides

- Zucchini and Lemon (V)

(V) = Vegetarian

## **Banana Bread**

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: ~1:30 + cooling time

Borrowed from a recipe that Nikki found online, this bread uses peanut butter to give the bread an extra smooth taste. She makes this almost every week as a breakfast staple in the house.

### **Ingredients:**

2 to 3 very ripe bananas, peeled  
1/3 cup melted unsalted butter  
1/2 cup milk  
1 large egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup sugar  
1/2 cup creamy peanut butter  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
Pinch of kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
3/4 cup chocolate chips

### **Directions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray or grease a 4x8-inch loaf pan
2. Make the batter: Mash the bananas in a mixing bowl using a fork. Whisk in the melted butter, milk, egg, and vanilla. Mix in the sugar.
3. In another mixing bowl, using the hand or stand mixer (or a whisk), beat peanut butter until smooth. Beat this into the banana mixture.
4. Scrape the bowl down and beat in the baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and flour. Fold in the flour until completely combined, followed by the chocolate chips.
5. Bake the loaf: Spread the batter in the prepared pan and bake on the center rack of the oven for 55 to 60 minutes, tent with foil and bake another 5-10 minutes until the bread is deeply golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean
6. Cool the loaf: Remove the bread from the oven and place on a rack to cool completely before turning out.
7. Enjoy! Store the leftover bread wrapped well in plastic at room temperature for 3-4 days.

## **Bruschetta on Crostini**

Active Time: 15 – 20 minutes

A super easy one, and a summer favorite. Crostini can be prepared in advance of a party and then topped with the tomato at serving time.

### **Ingredients:**

#### **For the Crostini:**

1 Loaf Fresh French Bread  
~1/3 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)

#### **For the Tomato Topper:**

3-4 Plum Tomatoes, cut into 1/2 inch or smaller cubes  
8-10 Fresh Basil Leaves, finely chopped  
2 Garlic Cloves, minced  
1 Tbsp EVOO  
1 Tsp Balsamic Vinegar  
½ tsp Sea Salt  
½ tsp Ground Pepper  
Parmesan Cheese, finely grated

### **Directions:**

#### **For the Crostini:**

- 1- Preheat the toaster oven or oven to 375° F
- 2- Cut the French Bread into 1/4" to 3/8" slices
- 3- Liberally brush both sides of the bread with oil and place onto baking sheet
- 4- Cook 8-10 minutes, turning once in the middle until golden

#### **For the Tomato Topper:**

- 1- Combine cut tomatoes, basil, garlic, olive oil, balsamic, salt and pepper in a bowl
- 2- Stir and check for taste

#### **Make the dish:**

- 1- Place a tablespoon of tomato topper on each Crostini. Top with parmesan and serve!

### **Notes:**

Un-topped Crostini will hold for 1-2 days in airtight container. Tomato topper will hold for ~3 days covered and refrigerated.

## Swedish Meatballs

Active Time: 1 – 2 hours

Total Time: 2:30 – 3 hours

A family recipe that I've tweaked with a few French influences. The full recipe making more than 100 x 1" balls is great for a party, but the half size is more manageable if you're looking for a dinner + leftovers for lunch.

Ingredient	Full Recipe (100-120 1" balls)	Half Recipe (50-60 1" balls)
Fresh White Breadcrumbs (Made from Italian Bread)	1 Cup	1/2 Cup
Whole Milk	1 Cup	1/2 Cup
Ground Beef	2.25 Lbs	1.125 Lbs
Ground Pork	0.75 Lbs	0.375 Lbs
Yellow Onion	2 Medium, Finely Chopped	1 Medium, Finely Chopped
Eggs	2 Extra Large, Beaten	1 Extra Large, Beaten
Salt	4 Teaspoons	2 Teaspoons
White Pepper	3/4 Teaspoon	3/8 Teaspoon
Allspice	3/4 Teaspoon	3/8 Teaspoon
Nutmeg	Sprinkle	Half a Sprinkle?
Homemade Beef Stock	4+ Cups	2+ Cups
Butter	3-4 Tablespoons	2-3 Tablespoons
Vegetable Oil (for Frying)	1 Tablespoon	1 Tablespoon
Flour	2 Tablespoons	2 Tablespoons
Worcestershire Sauce	2-3 Teaspoons	1-2 Teaspoons
Soy Sauce	2 Teaspoons	1 Teaspoon
For Gravy: Garlic Powder, Ground Pepper, Salt	To Taste	To Taste

Make the Breadcrumbs:

1. Cut fresh Italian bread into 3/4" slices and place in a 300 degree oven for 2-3 minutes
2. Cut slices into 1" cubes and pulse in a food processor to break down a bit. Crumbs should be coarse
3. Place onto a foil lined cookie sheet and into a 300 degree oven for 10 minutes, shaking halfway through
4. Remove from oven, and allow crumbs to cool before using. Removing them from the hot sheet but leaving them on the foil will help them cool.

Make the Meatballs:

1. In a small bowl or measuring cup soak breadcrumbs in milk for 5 minutes
2. In a large bowl (at least 7 quarts) combine meats, eggs, onion, salt, pepper, allspice, nutmeg, and bread mixture. Combine well with a fork.
3. Wet hands with cold water and shape into 1-inch meatballs. Put finished plates of meatballs into the fridge -- cold meatballs hold together better when cooking!

Cook the Meatballs and Make the Gravy:

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of butter and 1 tablespoon of oil in a French oven until hot but not smoking
3. Brown the meatballs in batches, taking care not to overcrowd them in the pan, turning them once or twice as needed. Remove each batch of meatballs and hold in a bowl. Add more butter or oil as/if needed (shouldn't be)
4. While browning the meatballs prepare a roux: equal parts of (soft) butter and flour (1-2 Tablespoons). Smash into a paste with a fork.
5. When complete drain oil
6. Carefully add beef stock to pan, bring just to a boil as you scrape the brown bits off the bottom of the pan
7. Using a balloon whisk vigorously stir in the roux to thicken the pan sauce. So as not to over thicken add the roux in parts, working up to the desired level of thickness- you might have some roux left over.
8. Check Seasoning on sauce-- Add Soy, Worcestershire, Salt, Pepper, and Garlic Powder as needed.
9. Add the meatballs and any juices from the bowl to the pan sauce
10. Place uncovered in the oven for 30-40 minutes to finish cooking

Serve with Egg Noodles for a meal.

## **Death by Chimichurri**

Active Time: 15 minutes

A favorite in this house, and if done right, a sauce you'll wake up at 3AM swearing about how good it was, and how much you hate yourself right now... But it does keep the vampires away! Great with steak, chicken, or fresh bread.

2 Cups of packed fresh Italian parsley leaves, de-stemmed, and finely chopped

2-3 Medium shallots, finely minced

4-5 large cloves of garlic, finely minced

2 Tbs fresh oregano leaves, de-stemmed and ground

1-2 Tsp red pepper flakes (or fresh dried peppers) ground

2-3 Tbs coarse salt

1/4c Red Wine Vinegar

1c extra virgin olive oil

Combine all of the above in a bowl and stir in oil and red wine vinegar until combined. Holds in the refrigerator for ~4 days.

Pro Tip: use the Cusinart to chop the parsley, shallot, and garlic, and spice grinder for the oregano, pepper, and salt.

## **Lamb Kebab (may as well call them Grilled Lamb Meatballs) and Tahini Sauce**

Active Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes

A personal favorite that I normally eat with French fries and an Israeli salad, and when I'm visiting Israel, will often end up at a beach bar looking across the Mediterranean Sea fighting the jetlag. A note on Tahini that I learned the hard way. There's "Raw Tahini" which is the sesame paste that can be made from scratch and Tahini Sauce which normally leverages store bought Tahini and combines it to make a sauce/dressing that is great with the lamb and Israeli salad. When I first made this, I made the raw Tahini too – which, after explaining it to my Israeli manager was called a "psychopath" because "nobody does that!" He was right – for good reason... It's a pain to make.

### **Ingredients:**

#### **For the Kebab:**

1/3 cup finely chopped parsley  
1 medium onion, finely chopped (about 1.5 cups)  
1.5 Lbs ground Lamb  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp pepper  
1 tsp cumin  
4 garlic cloves, minced or finely grated

#### **For the Tahini Sauce:**

1/2 cup raw store-bought tahini  
1-2 garlic cloves, finely grated  
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice  
6+ Tbps ice water  
Salt to taste (1/2 to 1 Tsp)

### **Directions:**

#### **For the Kebab:**

1. Preheat a grill
2. Spray 8 metal skewers with cooking spray and set aside
3. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and incorporate well with your hands
4. Form meat mixture into 15-18 equal sized oval patties and thread ~3 patties per skewer
5. Grill skewers until cooked through, 3-4 minutes per side
6. Remove from grill, slide off skewers and serve

#### **For the Tahini:**

1. Whisk together ingredients in a small bowl. Consistency should be pourable but still thick like a syrup

Note: Tahini holds for 3-5 days in the fridge.

## **Pasta Avellino**

Active Time: 30 - 45 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes – 1 hour

A local restaurant had a similar dish they pulled off their menu. Devastated, I worked to recreate this fabulous dish which is always sure to please.

### **Ingredients:**

6-8 Asparagus Spears, cut into 1" long sections

2-3 Large Garlic Cloves, finely chopped

1/2 Medium Yellow Onion, finely chopped

2 Cups Penne Pasta

4-6 Slices of Prosciutto, cut into .5 x 1" strips

1 Pound Boneless, Skinless, Chicken Breast, trimmed and cut into small strips, seasoned with salt and pepper

3 oz. Smoked Mozzarella Cheese, cut into 1/2 inch cubes

2 tablespoons chicken broth (optional)

1/2 - 3/4 of a cup of Marsala Wine

Olive Oil

Butter

Salt & Pepper

### **Directions:**

1. Bring a 3 quart pot of salted water to boil. Add asparagus and blanch, 2-3 minutes. Pull asparagus and hold in an ice bath. Add pasta to boiling water, cook 9-11 minutes, until al dente. Drain asparagus bath into colander and then drain pasta on top of asparagus.
2. Heat 3 Tbs of olive oil in a French oven or other large skillet till the oil is hot, but not smoking. Sear chicken, turning once, 2-3 minutes per side till golden. Pull chicken and hold in a bowl.
3. Add prosciutto to moderately hot pan, cook till smoking and mostly crisp, pull, hold in bowl with chicken.
4. Turn heat to medium, add ~1 Tbs butter to pan, wait till most foaming has subsided, then add onion and garlic. Cook 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally until golden.
5. Turn heat to medium/high and deglaze pan with marsala wine, scraping up brown bits for added flavor, 2 minutes
6. Turn heat to low and add to the pot the smoked mozzarella, chicken/prosciutto and associated juices, and pasta/asparagus mixture. Simmer partially covered 4-6 minutes, stirring occasionally, until cheese is melted and dish is well incorporated. Season to taste, and serve hot.



## Sous Vide 50-hour Brisket

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 53+ hours

I'm sorry, say that slower. 50 hours? Too fast. *Slower*. Yes, this is actually a 53 hour dish. Start cooking it at 1pm, 2 days before you plan to eat it: start it Friday for dinner on Sunday. It uses a Sous Vide (pronounced Soo-Vid) cooker, which basically turns a water bath into a hot meat aquarium. I've started cooking more and more with this method in 2020, and it's wonderfully simple and the results are always great. We even made a full chicken on Thanksgiving in the Sous Vide!

### Special Tools:

Sous Vide cooker (we have an Anova)

Vacuum packer (optional, but it makes it easier)

### Ingredients:

1 Beef brisket, trimmed

1/3 cup coarsely ground black pepper

1/4 cup kosher salt

1/4 oz pink curing salt (Prague Powder #1) – Optional

1/4 teaspoon liquid smoke

### Directions:

1. Set the cooker to 135° F
2. Combine pepper, salt, and pink salt
3. Rub brisket with mixture and vacuum pack with the liquid smoke
4. Cook for 50 hours
5. Remove brisket from hot water bath and move to an ice bath for 30 minutes, changing ice once if necessary. Preheat an oven to 225° F
6. Remove brisket from bag, pat dry, and place on a roasting pan, and finish in the oven until a dark bark forms
7. Carve against the grain and serve!

### **Zucchini and Lemon**

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 25-30 minutes

Our side of the year! Simple, fresh and great.

#### **Ingredients:**

2 small zucchini  
1 lemon, juiced  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp Aleppo Pepper

#### **Directions:**

- 1- Using a potato peeler, peel the zucchini into ribbons. Put into a medium bowl
- 2- Add lemon juice, salt and Aleppo pepper and mix well
- 3- Marinate for 15 – 20 minutes and serve!