THE INSPIRED COOKING MAGAZINE FOR ADULTS

SUMMER 2019

SEASONED

EASIEST-EVER DESSERT

Top off our Crisp-skinned Chicken Dinner with this delicious (and healthy) treat

TIME TO TOSS IT?

Is that chicken still good? Consult our handy guide

NO-COOK LUNCH

Prepared and on the table in 10 minutes

SEASONED presented by CHOPCHOP FAMILY

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Dear Readers,

A few weeks ago our staff was meeting with a group of directors of senior centers, looking for feedback and advice. We got to talking about food shopping, and how we could be most helpful to our readers in this department. One of the directors came up with an issue that we admit we had not thought about enough: the difficulty that many seniors have in getting to stores. Because of that, many tend to buy large amounts when they do get to the store.

Yet at the same time, most are making meals for only one or two. So, said our perceptive friend, advice on how to store perishable products and how long they will last would be very helpful. That made sense to us, and on page 5 of this issue, you'll find a chart that lets you know just how long various items will keep, either refrigerated or frozen. If you think of other ways that we could make the magazine more helpful to you, please let us know, and we'll do our best to incorporate your thoughts into future issues.

Happy cooking!

At *Seasoned*, we believe that cooking can be joyful and empowering; that home-cooked food is more nutritious and less expensive than prepared food; and that people will eat healthy food when it tastes good. Our mission, therefore, is to inspire every adult to cook and eat real food and to provide them with the skills that they need to do so.

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COOKING WITH FRIENDS

Corn-and-Basil Frittata

A frittata is like a big, baked omelet, and it makes an excellent and very satisfying breakfast, lunch, or dinner. We like the summery combination of corn and basil, but you can use other herbs (cilantro is great) or other vegetables such as diced summer squash or chopped asparagus—just cook these in a little oil first to soften the vegetables before you add them to the eggs.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES MAKES: 4–5 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon olive or canola oil
- 8 large eggs
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1½ cups corn kernels (frozen and defrosted, or freshly cut from 2 ears of corn)
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil leaves
- 4 scallions, white and pale-green parts only, trimmed and chopped
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 350 degrees. Lightly grease an 8 x 8-inch baking pan or 9-inch pie plate with the oil.
2. Crack the eggs, one at a time, into a large mixing bowl. Add the salt and whisk the eggs until they are pale yellow.
3. Add the corn kernels, basil, scallions, and cheese and mix again so these ingredients are evenly distributed in the eggs.
4. Pour the mixture into the pan and transfer it to the oven. Bake until the top is golden, the eggs are set, and the center is just firm, 25–30 minutes. (You'll know the eggs are set when you can move the frittata with the center just barely jiggling.) Serve warm, cold, or at room temperature; or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days.

QUICK BITES

Frozen peas

Bell peppers with hummus

Quinoa with yogurt

Radishes with salt and pepper

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Wondering if that item that's been hanging around your refrigerator or freezer is still safe to eat? Look no further than our handy guide.

Raw Whole Chicken	Fridge: 1–2 days	Freezer: 1 year
Raw Chicken Parts	Fridge: 1–2 days	Freezer: 9 months
Cooked Chicken Parts	Fridge: 3–4 days	Freezer: 6 months
Raw Ground Meat	Fridge: 1–2 days	Freezer: 3–4 months
Raw Chops	Fridge: 3–5 days	Freezer: 4–6 months
Cooked Meat	Fridge: 3–4 days	Freezer: 2–3 months
Raw Lean Fish BASS, COD, ETC.	Fridge: 1–2 days	Freezer: 6–8 months
Raw Fatty Fish MACKEREL, BLUEFISH, SALMON, ETC.	Fridge: 1–2 days	Freezer: 2–3 months
Raw Shrimp and Shellfish CLAMS, CRAB, LOBSTER	Fridge: 1–2 days	Freezer: 3–6 months
Cooked Seafood	Fridge: 3–4 days	Freezer: 2–6 months
Deli Meat (Unopened)	Fridge: 2 weeks	Freezer: 1–2 months
Deli Meat (Opened)	Fridge: 3–5 days	Freezer: 1–2 months
Soups and Stews	Fridge: 3–4 days	Freezer: 2–3 months
Lasagna or Casseroles	Fridge: 3–4 days	Freezer: 2–6 months
Breads/Baked Goods COUNTERTOP OR CABINET: 2–3 DAYS	Fridge: 7–10 days	Freezer: 3–6 months
Raw Whole Eggs	Fridge: 3–5 weeks	Freezer: 1 year
Hard-Boiled Eggs	Fridge: 1 week	Freezer: Do not freeze well
Salads EGG, CHICKEN, TUNA	Fridge: 3–5 days	Freezer: Do not freeze well

Why Can't I Freeze It Forever?

Technically, if your freezer is at 0 degrees F or below and the electricity never goes off, foods will last in there forever. However, after a certain amount of time even the best-wrapped foods will get what's known as "freezer burn." This is the term for what happens when air seeps into the packaging, covers the food with frost, and sucks the moisture out of it. After that, while the food may still be safe to eat, it will not have good flavor or texture when cooked or defrosted. The best way to stave off freezer burn for as long as possible is to remove as much air as you can from the package in which you freeze the food. This is one reason we favor zipper-lock bags for freezing, since it's easier to get the air out of them.

SIDE DISH

Stone-Fruit Salsa

In the summer, when stone fruits are plentiful and at their best, this sweet, tangy salsa is a great way to use them. You can use any combination of the recommended fruits. Keep the salsa sweet if you're planning to serve it with yogurt or waffles, or add the jalapeño pepper if you want to make it a little spicy for topping tacos, serving alongside grilled chicken or meat, or scooping up with whole-grain chips.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

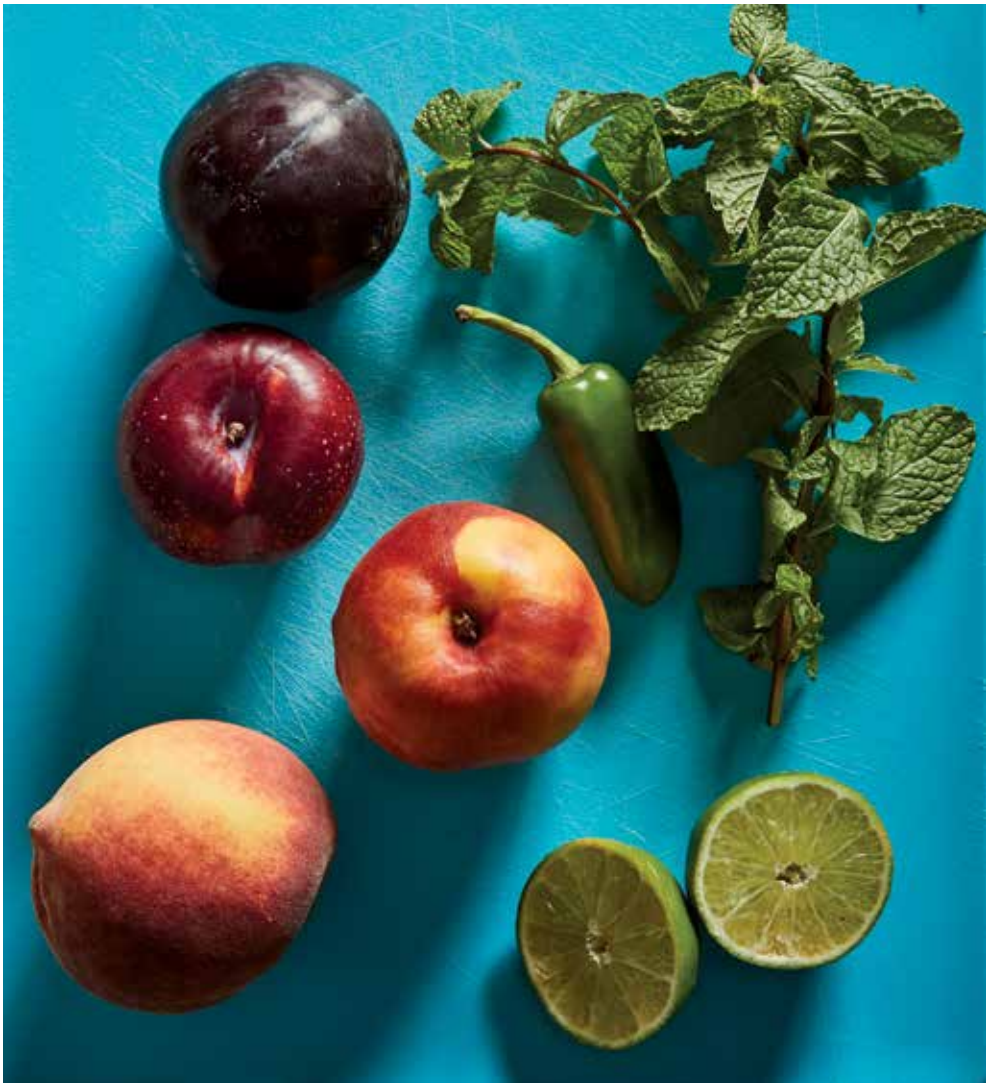
- 3 cups pitted, chopped stone fruit (about 6 peaches or nectarines, 8 plums or apricots, or 1 pound cherries)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 lime, juice and grated zest
- 1 jalapeño (seeds and ribs removed if you want it less spicy), stemmed and minced (optional)
- Pinch kosher salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all the ingredients in a large mixing bowl and stir together.
2. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to overnight.

How Hot Do You Want It?

Most of the heat in chile peppers comes from the seeds and the ribs that hold those seeds. So, if you want to have the flavor of the pepper but less of its heat, remove the seeds and ribs. The easiest way to do this is to cut the pepper in half lengthwise, then use a small spoon to scoop out the ribs and seeds. And of course it's always a good idea to wear rubber gloves when handling hot chiles (and be very careful not to touch your eyes).



7 Other Ways to Use Mint

- Add to boiling water and make mint tea
- Blend into smoothies
- Chop and sprinkle on scrambled eggs
- Add to other salad greens
- Chop and swirl into yogurt
- Sprinkle on citrus and berries for a healthful dessert
- Blend into salad dressing

NO-COOK LUNCH

Mexican Chicken Salad

This salad is inspired by some of our favorite Mexican flavor combinations: avocado and lime, corn and tomato. Even though we call this a chicken salad, you can actually skip the chicken and substitute a can of black beans (drained and rinsed) to make an equally delicious vegetarian version. This recipe can easily be doubled.

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES MAKES: 2 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup leftover diced or shredded chicken meat (1 to 2 pieces, depending on the size) *
- 1 medium tomato, cored and diced
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted, peeled, and diced
- ½ cup corn kernels, frozen and thawed or cut from a leftover boiled, steamed, or grilled cob
- 1 scallion, greens and whites, chopped, or 1 tablespoon chopped red onion
- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all the ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix gently.
2. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 2 hours.

* The chicken can be roasted, poached, or grilled—or use a rotisserie chicken from the supermarket. To shred, remove the skin, then use your hands, or two forks, to pull the meat apart in opposite directions.

Or Try This

Add any (or all) of the following to boost the flavor.

- ½ cup crumbled queso fresco or feta cheese or shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- ½ cup chopped bell pepper (any color is fine)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro or basil leaves
- 2 teaspoons fresh or pickled jalapeño pepper slices
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin

NO-COOK LUNCH

No-Bread Roll-Ups

There is really no simpler lunch than this, but it has plenty of flavor. If you are a fan of bread-and-butter pickles, make sure that you buy spears rather than slices when you're at the store, since they work much better in the roll-ups. You can easily increase this recipe to feed as many eaters as you want, rather than just one.

HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 10 MINUTES MAKES: 1 SERVING

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices provolone, Swiss, or cheddar cheese
- 2 slices turkey deli meat
- Dijon mustard (optional)
- 1 bread-and-butter or dill pickle spear
- 1 to 2 strips red, green, or yellow bell pepper (optional)
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lay out the 2 slices cheese on top of each other.
2. Put the turkey on top of the cheese and spread with mustard, if using.
3. Lay the pickle spear and bell peppers, if using, in the center of the turkey.
4. Roll up the cheese and turkey around the pickle and serve right away.

Or Try This

- Add arugula, baby spinach, shredded lettuce, or other delicate salad greens
- Add a bit of mayonnaise to the mustard before spreading.
- Add a few drops of your favorite hot sauce.

SOUP OF THE SEASON

Cold Cucumber-Avocado Soup

When it comes to cold soups, most of us think of gazpacho, the famous cold tomato-based soup from Spain. But you can make all kinds of cold soups, and they are particularly appealing in hot weather. This one is creamy from the avocado and yogurt, with just a little kick from the scallions and (if you use it) the hot sauce. It also lends itself particularly well to a variety of interesting garnishes, from diced mango to toasted pumpkin seeds or just a drizzle of olive oil.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES MAKES: 2 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small cucumber, peeled or scrubbed, and diced
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted, peeled, and diced
- 3 scallions, white and pale-green parts only, trimmed and sliced
- 1 cup vegetable broth or cold water
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (optional)
- Grated zest of ½ small lime
- 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Put the top on tightly, turn the blender to a medium setting, and blend until the mixture is as chunky or smooth as you like (a few long pulses for chunky, or about 1 minute for smooth). Taste the soup and add additional lime juice or salt if you think it needs it.
3. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days.

Or Try This

Use one or more of these as a garnish on each bowl of soup.

- Finely diced cucumber or avocado
- Diced mango
- Chopped fresh cilantro, parsley, or mint leaves
- Chopped chives
- Slivered scallion greens
- Toasted green pumpkin seeds (also called "pepitas")
- Croutons
- A drizzle of olive oil

Tip

Whenever you're using both the zest and the juice of a lime, lemon, or orange, be sure to zest the fruit before you slice it open to juice it.

LUNCH OR DINNER

Savory French Toast

Classic French toast is great for breakfast—so great that we decided to try a savory version that would work for lunch or dinner. We figured we could substitute Parmesan cheese and herbs for the vanilla and cinnamon in the classic breakfast version. It turned out to be both easy and delicious. Try using different kinds of bread, but be sure the bread is at least one day old; if it's too fresh, it won't absorb the egg mixture. If you want to fancy it up just a bit, the 5-Minute Cherry Tomato Salsa does the trick.

HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried or 2 teaspoons fresh chopped thyme or oregano
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons vegetable or olive oil
- 4 slices day-old whole-wheat or oatmeal bread

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Crack the eggs into a large mixing bowl. Add the milk, Parmesan cheese, oregano or thyme, salt and pepper, and beat with a fork until well combined.
2. Put a medium-sized skillet on the stove, add 1 teaspoon of the oil, and turn the heat to medium.
3. Dip the bread, one slice at a time, into the egg mixture a couple of times, letting it sit for a few seconds. Remove the bread from the egg mixture and let any excess drip back into the bowl.
4. When the skillet is hot, carefully add 2 slices of the egg-coated bread and cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes per side. Repeat with the remaining oil and bread.
5. Serve right away, topped with 5-Minute Cherry Tomato Salsa, if you like.

Or You Could

You can also make classic French toast with this recipe. Just leave out the salt and pepper and substitute ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract for the Parmesan cheese and ⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon for the dried herb.

5-Minute Cherry Tomato Salsa

This super-easy salsa adds a little jolt of flavor to our Savory French Toast, as well as scrambled eggs, or any kind of fish or vegetable.

HANDS-ON TIME: 5 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 5 MINUTES MAKES: ABOUT ½ CUP

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup halved cherry tomatoes (about 10)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley or cilantro leaves (optional)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice, red wine vinegar, or sherry vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to overnight.

Crisp-Skinned Chicken with Purple Cabbage Slaw and Roasted Peaches with Honey

Crisp-Skinned Chicken

In this recipe a simple mixture of garlic, dried herbs, and lemon juice adds a lot of flavor to the chicken. After you toss the chicken with that mixture, the oven does the rest of the work. You start baking the chicken skin side down, then flip it to skin side up halfway through. This way, the fat from the chicken skin renders during the first part, and the direct heat of the oven gets the skin very crisp during the second part. You can easily cut this recipe in half, but if you make the full amount, leftovers will keep, covered and refrigerated, for up to 4 days.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, thyme, or basil
- Juice and grated zest of ½ lemon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 6), trimmed of fat and patted dry with a paper towel*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 425 degrees.
2. Put all the ingredients except the chicken in a large bowl and mix well. Add the chicken and mix until well coated.
3. Place the chicken skin side down in a single layer in a large ovenproof skillet or baking pan. Put the chicken in the oven and bake for 30 minutes.
4. Take the skillet or baking pan out of the oven and use tongs or a spatula to turn the chicken over very carefully, so the skin is on top.
5. Put the skillet or baking pan back in the oven and bake until the chicken is well browned and crisp, about 30 minutes more. Serve right away.

* **NOTE:** When handling raw chicken, it is very important that you wash your hands well after you touch it, before you touch anything else.

Purple Cabbage Slaw

Purple cabbage, also known as red cabbage, has a slightly more pronounced flavor than other cabbages, which is why we like it in this slaw. But of course you can also make this with the more delicate green or Savoy cabbage—or you can start with a bag of coleslaw mix, which is just shredded cabbage and carrots. This is a great make-ahead side dish, since it gets better as it rests in the refrigerator, up to 3 days.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- ½ head purple cabbage
- 1 carrot, scrubbed or peeled, and thinly sliced
- 4 scallions, white and pale-green parts only, trimmed and chopped
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar, or red or white wine vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the cabbage half, flat side down, on the cutting board and cut it into the thinnest slices that you can.
2. Put the cabbage and the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and toss well.
3. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour and up to 3 days.

Or Try This

Bring variety and extra flavors to your coleslaw by adding one or more of the following:

- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ red onion, peeled and very thinly sliced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley leaves
- ¼ cup raisins, dried cranberries, or currants
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds or 1 teaspoon sesame oil

Roasted Peaches with Honey

It may seem strange to cook fresh peaches when they are at their peak of juicy flavor, but roasting them actually deepens that flavor. Even if you are only planning to have one or two for dessert you can roast them all, but only drizzle honey or maple syrup on the ones you're planning to eat right away. The rest will keep, covered and refrigerated, up to 5 days. Eat them as a snack, or sliced up on yogurt, or even as a garnish for grilled chicken. (If you have a grill, these are also fantastic grilled.)

HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 4 ripe peaches, halved and pitted
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 teaspoons maple syrup or honey

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 425 degrees.
2. Put the peaches, cut side down, in an 8 x 8-inch baking dish.
3. Put the baking dish in the oven and roast until the peaches are tender and have some brown on the cut sides, about 25 minutes.
4. Sprinkle the peaches with cinnamon, drizzle with honey or maple syrup, and serve right away.

MAKE-AHEAD MEAL

Roman Pasta

This is our version of a classic Italian *pasta all'arrabbiata*, which translates to "angry pasta," thanks to the addition of the spicy red pepper flakes. You can, of course, omit them if spicy is not your thing. You can also double all the amounts here, if you'd like to have more leftovers; the sauced pasta will keep up to 3 days.

HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES MAKES: 2–3 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound whole-grain penne (or another pasta shape)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon or more crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 teaspoon dried basil or ½ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley leaves
- 1 (14-ounce) can crushed or diced tomatoes, including the liquid
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook the penne according to the instructions on the package. When the penne is almost done, use a ladle or measuring cup to scoop out ¾ cup of cooking water from the pot into a small bowl and set aside.
2. Set a colander in the sink and drain the pasta.
3. Put a large skillet on the stove and set the heat to medium. Add the oil and when it is hot, add the tomato paste, dried basil (if using), and red pepper flakes (if using) and cook 5 minutes, stirring from time to time.
4. Add the crushed or diced tomatoes and reserved pasta water and stir well.
5. Add the cooked penne, Parmesan cheese, and fresh parsley or basil leaves (if using) and stir well. Serve right away.

Or You Could

- Right before you add the tomato paste, add 2 garlic cloves and 2 anchovies, both minced, and/or 1 cup thinly sliced fresh mushrooms, and cook 2 minutes.
- When you add the pasta, add 1 (6-ounce) can clams, drained; or 2 cups spinach, kale, or arugula; or 1 (15-ounce) can white beans, drained and rinsed—or go wild, and add them all.

Tip

If you open a small (6-ounce) can of tomato paste to make this recipe, you won't use all of it. Spoon tablespoons of tomato paste onto a plastic container lid (this makes them easy to pop off), then freeze until solid. Store the frozen spoonfuls of tomato paste in a zipper-lock bag in the freezer. Whenever you need just a tablespoon or two of tomato paste, it will be there ready to add or thaw.

ADVICE FROM AN EXPERT

Adam Ried on Eggplant

BY ADAM RIED

Like many of us of a certain age, I try to keep my diet as healthy as I can. I limit animal fats and sugar, steer as clear of simple carbohydrates as my willpower allows, and eat plenty of fiber-packed fruit and vegetables.

One summer stalwart in my pursuit of delicious vegetables is the eggplant.

Throughout the summer and into the fall, when eggplants are abundant, inexpensive, and at their peak of flavor, I cook them at least once a week. My favorite approach is to turn the flesh into a salad that I keep in the fridge ready to be used as a light lunch, a healthy snack, or a no-fuss dinner side dish.

There are plenty of options for this type of salad. The flavor of the eggplant itself is mild and neutral, so it takes well to a variety of seasonings and additions. The cuisines of most Mediterranean, Eastern European, and Middle Eastern countries include an eggplant salad. Generally speaking, the cooked eggplant is mashed or pureed, and usually seasoned with olive oil and lemon, at a minimum. Different countries then put their own flavor stamp on the salad—perhaps roasted red peppers and paprika in Spain, or rosemary and Parmesan cheese for the Italians, or the sesame paste called tahini in the Middle East, which gives you a salad called baba ghanoush that's popular here in the United States, too.

In other words, once you know how to cook the eggplant, the whole world of flavors is yours. And cooking them couldn't be easier: Poke some holes in the skin with a fork, and put them on a pan in a very hot oven (or on a hot grill, if you have access to one), and just leave them until they are so tender they collapse.

In this simple recipe we add yogurt, garlic, and fresh mint for a vaguely Greek—or some might say Iranian—flavor. The yogurt adds an additional health benefit to the dish.

One extra step that's worth the minimal effort is draining the cooked eggplant before seasoning it. Just put it in a mesh strainer or colander over a bowl and stir and fold the eggplant for a minute or two. This forces excess liquid out of the flesh, giving the salad an especially rich, lush, satisfying texture.

Adam Ried was a longtime editor at *Cook's Illustrated* magazine and for twelve years the food columnist for *The Boston Globe Magazine*. He is also the author of two cookbooks and co-author of a third, and is an original cast member and kitchen equipment specialist on two currently running PBS cooking shows, *America's Test Kitchen* and *Cook's Country*. Starting with our next issue, Adam (who already creates our Quench recipes) will write a regular column for *Seasoned* focusing on imaginative uses for ingredients you already have in your pantry or freezer.

Poke the eggplants all over with a fork.

Bake the eggplants until they are blackened and collapsed.

Greek-Style Eggplant Salad with Yogurt

You could call this eggplant dish a salad, dip, spread, or puree, and you'd be right in every case. Whatever label you choose, it's great for lunch, spread in a whole-grain pita with sliced tomatoes and lettuce, arugula, or baby spinach; as a snack with sliced fresh vegetables or triangles of whole-grain pita for dipping; or as a vegetable for dinner alongside simply cooked chicken, fish, or meat.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES MAKES: ABOUT 5 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium eggplants (about 2½ pounds)
- ¾ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 450 degrees. Cover a large rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil.
2. Poke the eggplants all over with a fork, put them on the prepared baking sheet, and put them in the oven.
3. Bake the eggplants until they are completely collapsed and the skins are blackened, 45 minutes to 1 hour, turning them over (tongs are the easiest tool for this) halfway through. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and set aside until the eggplants are cool enough to handle.
4. Set a colander or strainer over a large bowl. Halve the eggplants lengthwise and use a large spoon to scrape out the flesh and scoop it into the colander or strainer. Throw away the skins.
5. Mash the eggplant flesh with a spoon to help release the liquid until the liquid has nearly stopped dripping, about 3 minutes. Discard the liquid in the bowl and add the drained flesh to the now-empty bowl.
6. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 4 days.

Halve eggplants and scoop out the flesh.

Use a colander or strainer to drain the juices.

Or You Could

- **Make it Italian:** eliminate yogurt, substitute parsley for mint, and add 1½ teaspoons minced fresh rosemary and ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese.
- **Make it Spanish:** eliminate yogurt, decrease lemon juice to 2 teaspoons, substitute parsley for mint, and add ½ cup finely chopped roasted red peppers and 1 teaspoon each paprika and ground coriander.

Cooking Takeaways

- **Eggplants vary considerably in both size and shape.** So when shopping, go for eggplants that look about the same; this will promote more even cooking. Also be sure that the eggplants you choose have taut, shiny skins and no bruises.
- **Eggplant has a high water content**, so draining some of that natural liquid from the cooked flesh helps achieve a dense, smooth texture in the finished dish.
- **Garlic's flavor varies a bit based on how you cut the cloves.** Large pieces taste a little milder, whereas breaking it down into tiny bits, by mincing it or putting it through a garlic press, gives a stronger flavor that we like in this dish.

Eggplant Variations

Eggplants come in a huge variety of sizes, shapes, and colors. Most common in both supermarkets and farmers' markets in the U.S. are the deep purple, bulbous globe eggplants. Other varieties you might see include the smaller, dark purple Italian; the long, slender Asian varieties; and the small, round Indian types. The flavor differences are relatively minor, though for easiest handling the globe and Italian are the best choices.

QUENCH

Any-Melon Agua Fresca

This drink is popular in Mexico and some other Latin American countries; if you've ever eaten in a taqueria (taco shop), you may have seen different flavors of it in the clear drink dispensers. *Agua fresca* means "fresh water" in Spanish — which gives you a sense of how light and refreshing this drink is. You can use any melon, as long as it's ripe and flavorful. You can even mix two kinds together. BY ADAM RIED

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES MAKES: 2 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (¾ to 1 pound) cold, seedless melon chunks, including watermelon, honeydew, or cantaloupe
- ½ cup very cold water
- 1½ teaspoons fresh lime juice
- Pinch kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon honey (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Put the lid on tightly. Turn the blender to medium and blend until the mixture is smooth.
3. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 4 hours. If you refrigerate it, give the drink a quick stir before serving.

SNACK

Cherry Tomatoes with Spiced Salt

Did you know that a dip can be made of dry ingredients? Here, the flavoring comes from a simple mixture of spice and salt that sticks to the vegetables through the magic of . . . water. Simple, healthful, and completely delicious, this is one of the great snacks of summer. And of course, though we think cherry tomatoes should always be in the mix, you can add whatever other vegetables you like. Here we used a small cucumber and some crunchy jicama. You can even try it with melon and skip the water because melon is juicy enough already.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES MAKES: 2 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon curry powder, five-spice powder, chili powder, or ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 2 cups (1 pint) grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 small cucumber, peeled (optional) and sliced thin
- 1 jicama, peeled and sliced into chunks (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the salt and spice in a small bowl and mix well.
2. Put the water in a separate small bowl.
3. Arrange the vegetables on a plate.
4. Dip the cut side of the vegetables into the water, then into the flavored salt. Eat right away.

Meet Jicama

Jicama (pronounced hee-ca-ma) is a juicy, potato-like root vegetable that is very popular in Mexico and, more recently, in the United States too. It has thick brown skin and crunchy white flesh, and its flavor is slightly sweet, a bit like a water chestnut. It's great both raw and cooked. Jicama can be stored whole in a cool, dark, dry place for up to 3 weeks. Peel it before eating; you can store cut pieces, wrapped and refrigerated, for up to 1 week.

Kitchen Tips and Tricks

Sometimes it's not the big techniques, but the little tricks that count most in the kitchen. Here are a few we like that we learned either from experience or from other cooks.

Make Tomatoes Last Longer

Place tomatoes stem side down when you store them. That way, air and moisture won't be able to enter the stem scar, and they will last longer. Storing them at room temperature also makes them last longer.

Defrost Food Faster

The safest way to defrost meat (or anything else) is in the refrigerator. Unfortunately, this can take anywhere from 8 to 24 hours. But you can cut that time by about 30 percent by putting the food on an aluminum sheet tray or, even better, in a cast iron skillet. Metals are great conductors of heat and will draw energy from the surrounding environment into your frozen food. This works particularly well with meat, but will also work well with soups, stews, and anything else frozen flat.

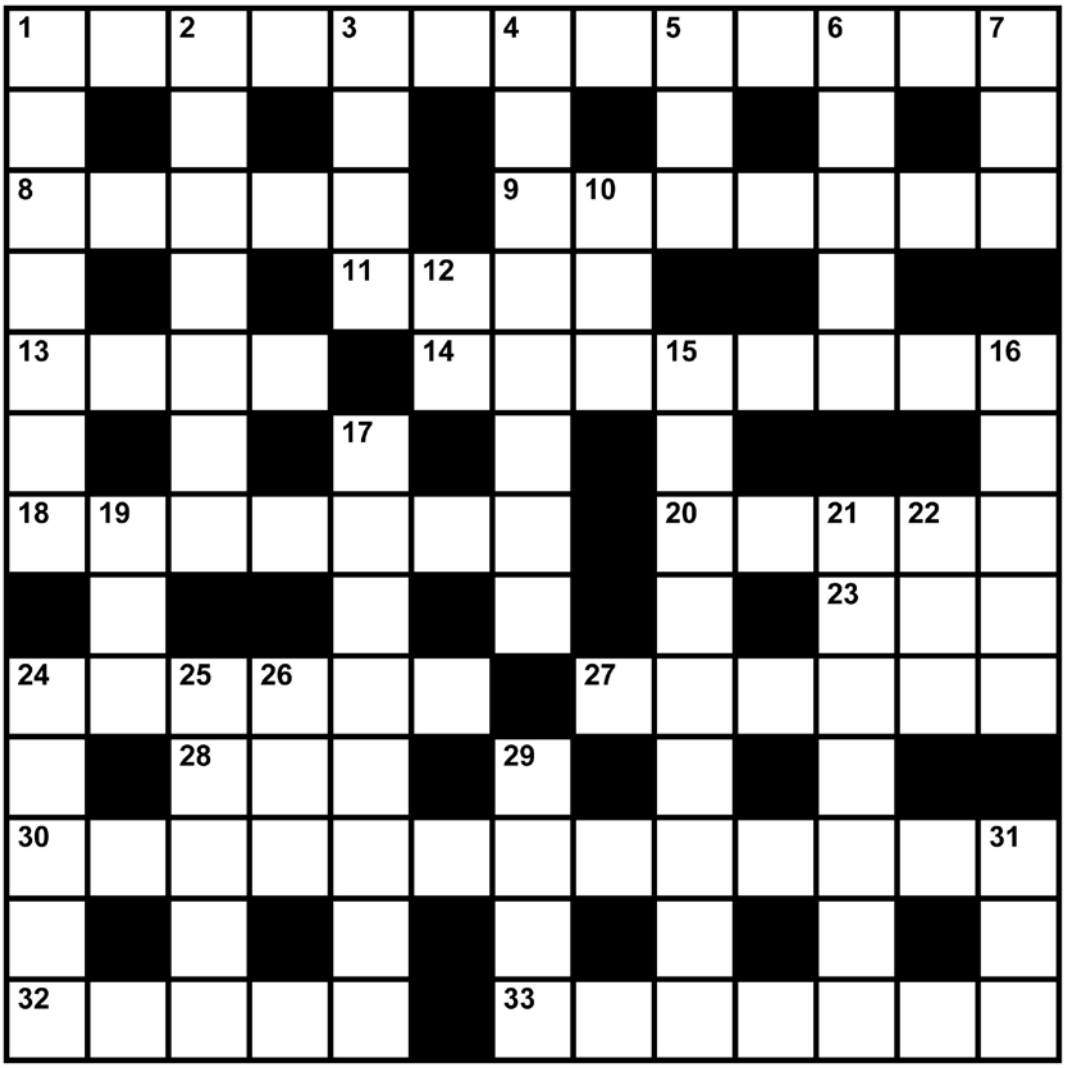
Clean Cutting Boards

Bacteria can build up if you don't properly clean your wooden cutting boards. Cut a lemon in half and dip the cut side into coarse salt. Use it to scrub your cutting board clean, then rinse. (This is a good use for lemons that you have juiced.)

Save that Sauté

When you're sautéing food and find that it's getting too brown before it's fully cooked, toss in an ice cube to cool the pan down. The water will quickly evaporate, and your food won't burn.

CROSSWORD BY MYLES MELLOR



Across

1 Vital equipment for chopping things up in the kitchen, 2 words
8 Cook stove
9 Freestanding cabinetry in the kitchen to expand counter space
11 Word after bake or garage
13 Aroma hopefully
14 Puts away the dishes in the kitchen for example, 2 words
18 Porterhouse alternative
20 Bartletts and Boscs
23 Pecan or cashew
24 Expensive eggs used in appetizers
27 Word to describe the taste of something incredible!
28 Place to stay the night
30 They go round and round to mix the greens, tomatoes, nuts, feta cheese, etc. - 2 words
32 Step
33 Popular cheese

Down

1 Orange root vegetables
2 Indian cuisine oven
3 Summer treats for the kids
4 Cooking on the BBQ
5 One of the O's in EVOO 6 Bacon features
7 Bro's kin
10 Observe
12 Temperature control, abbr.
15 Dishwasher or fridge, for example
16 Tomato concoction
17 It's used for draining pasta or washing salad greens
19 Savings account
21 Licorice-flavored seed
22 Depart quickly
24 Expenses
25 Fancy home
26 One ___ million, 2 words
29 Give details
31 Aristocratic title

Answers: Page 30

GET MOVING

Exercise #1: Obstacle Course

Arrange a series of cones or other obstacles such as small household objects like cups or plates in a straight line about four feet apart. Starting at one end of the course, weave through the obstacles in an "S" pattern without touching them. Difficulty can be increased by decreasing the distance between the obstacles.

Exercise #2: Toe and Heel Walking

This is a great exercise for strengthening the feet and lower legs. Simply walk on tiptoes for several steps before switching to walking on your heels for several steps. Then switch from toe walking to heel walking every step or so. Increase the difficulty by closing your eyes or turning your head from side to side as you walk.

Silicone Spatula

Most of us don't think much about which spatula to buy, but in fact it's one of the most-used tools in the kitchen, so it's worth a little thought. We are fans of the GIR Ultimate Spatula. The head is strong enough for mixing, but the edges are flexible so it's easy to scrape mixtures out of pans. Plus it has an easy-to-clean, antimicrobial unibody design and lifetime guarantee. There's even a lefty version.

Large-Print Measuring Cups and Spoons

Seeing the markings on measuring cups and spoons can be hard enough even if you have perfect eyesight. If you have even slightly impaired vision, it's a constant struggle. The solution is easy: measuring cups and spoons with large print. There are many options. We like the dry measuring cups and measuring spoons from Chef Craft and the 2-cup liquid measuring cup from MaxiAids.

Crossword key

1 C	U	2 T	T	3 I	N	4 G	B	5 O	A	6 R	D	7 S
A	■	A	■	C	■	R	■	I	■	I	■	I
8 R	A	N	G	E	■	9 I	10 S	L	A	N	D	S
R	■	D	■	11 S	12 A	L	E	■	■	D	■	■
13 O	D	O	R	■	14 C	L	E	15 A	R	S	U	16 P
T	■	O	■	17 C	■	I	■	P	■	■	■	A
18 S	19 I	R	L	O	I	N	■	20 P	E	21 A	22 R	S
■	R	■	■	L	■	G	■	L	■	23 N	U	T
24 C	A	25 V	26 I	A	R	■	27 D	I	V	I	N	E
O	■	28 I	N	N	■	29 S	■	A	■	S	■	■
30 S	A	L	A	D	S	P	I	N	N	E	R	31 S
T	■	L	■	E	■	E	■	C	■	E	■	I
32 S	T	A	I	R	■	33 C	H	E	D	D	A	R

A special thank you

We needed a beautiful and functional place to teach classes and test our recipes, and, thanks to our wonderful sponsors, we now have the perfect space. Thank you to our brilliant designer, Stephen Brockman from Deborah Berke Partners in New York City, for designing our beautiful new kitchen, and to Lee Cook and everyone else at Buildout Construction for their tireless grace and stellar work.

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WHAT ARE . . .

Shallots

Shallots are a member of the onion family. They have a sweeter, milder, and more complex flavor than onions, with a slight undertone of garlic. That makes them an easy way to bring a subtle but distinct flavor to all kinds of dishes. Commercially grown shallots are relatively large and regularly shaped, while those grown in gardens or on organic farms are usually smaller and more irregular but tend to have deeper flavor.

6 Ways to Use Shallots

- Mix a minced shallot into ground beef or turkey before making burgers
- Halve 2 or 3 shallots and add to vegetables before roasting them
- Mix a bit of minced shallot into yogurt and drizzle over grains or roasted vegetables
- Make pickled shallots: Thinly slice and cover shallots with any kind of vinegar or citrus juice. Let sit at least 1 hour and up to 1 week. Drain and mix into tuna, chicken, and other salads.
- Substitute for onions or leeks in recipes
- Add to the cavity of a chicken before roasting