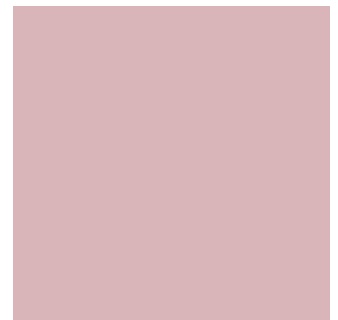
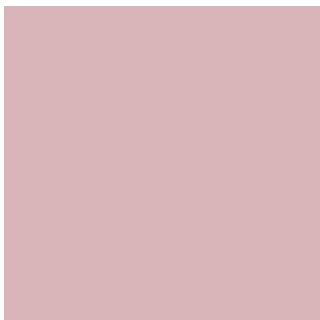
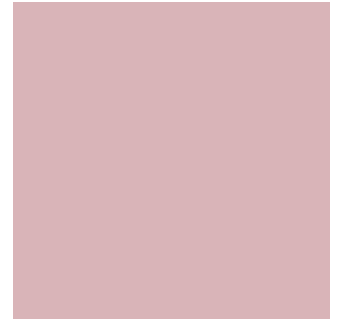
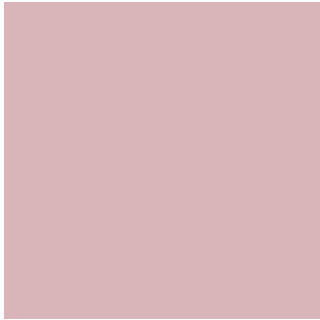


Mainly Meat
Brines & Rubs
Roasts, Steaks & Chops
Ground Beef & Pork



Mainly Meat

Steaks, roasts, chops, and chicken along with the rubs, brines, and seasonings for them take up most of the space here. Included is the recipe for roasting the same Thanksgiving Turkey we grew up with. In addition, a section on ground meats helps round out this chapter. That section includes the traditional (like a stab at recreating Dad's friend's Polish sausage, which we had every Christmas and Easter growing up) and the contemporary (Asian Meatloaf and Italian Sausage Burgers).

Ingredients

Any "Broth" = Low- or No-Sodium Broth. If you use salted broth or stock, be sure to hold back on any salt called for in the recipe and then season to taste before serving.

Chipotles in Adobo Sauce are dried chipotle peppers cooked in a sweet tomato sauce. Put leftovers in a single layer in a freezer bag and you can break off frozen peppers as needed.

"Dried Chiles." Used in brines and pickles, and ground for use in rubs, there are many varieties, especially in Mexican cooking. But when called for in brines, pickles, and rubs, this means small hot peppers, like arbol or cayenne. Small Asian peppers work too. I like to grow cayenne and then dry them myself.

"Olive Oil" vs "Extra Virgin Olive Oil." Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVO) has a fruity taste and works well in uncooked dishes, as it tends to burn more quickly than regular olive oil and lose its flavor when heated. Use regular olive oil for cooking.

Harissa is a paste originating in North Africa made of dried chiles, garlic, and oil, that may include spices like coriander and cumin.

"Grated Ginger" or "Prepared Ginger in Syrup." A company called The Ginger People produces what they call "Grated Ginger." It is already shredded. Add the sweetened syrup as well.

Sriracha is a sauce with the consistency of ketchup that balances sweetness with the flavor of ripe jalapeños, vinegar, and garlic. It is most often used to spice up Thai or other Asian dishes.

Szechuan Pepper-corns: Used in Asian cooking, these provide heat as well as a numbing sensation.

White Pepper: This type of pepper has a distinctive flavor. Try it in mashed potatoes instead of black pepper. It's spicy without the harsh bitterness of black pepper.

Brines & Rubs

Zuni Cafe's Brine for Pork
Brine with Fennel for Pork
Brine for Skinless Chicken Breasts
Barbecue Rub
Wet Rub with Chipotle and Citrus

Roasts, Steaks & Chops

Indian Spiced Turkey Breast
Sweet & Spicy Flank Steak
Porchetta
Porchetta Sandwich with Rapini
Thanksgiving Turkey
Joe's Fried Rib Eye Steaks
Mom & Dad's Baked Pork Steaks
Easiest Prime Rib
Nick's Beef & Swiss
Spicy Chicken with Sausage
Slow Cooker Barbecue Brisket

Magic with Cracker Crumbs

Fried Fish
Dad's Cracker Patties
Mom's Breaded Pork Chops or Chicken

Ground Beef & Pork

Dad's Hamburgers and Meatloaf
Baked Beef Tacos
Asian-Style Meatloaf
Home-Made Sausage, Two Ways
Garlic Sausage
Eric's Italian Sausage
Sloppy Joes, Two Ways
Grandpa Goggin's Sloppy Joes
Emily's Famous Sloppy Joes

Brought to you by . . .



Joe Beason



Karen Konschake



Antonina Purevich



Kim Goodreau



Nick Dorochoff



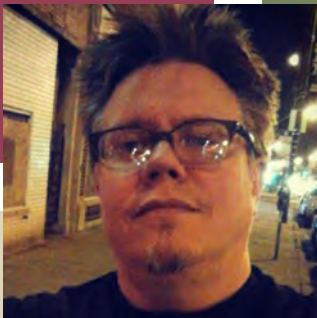
Gene Hollenberg



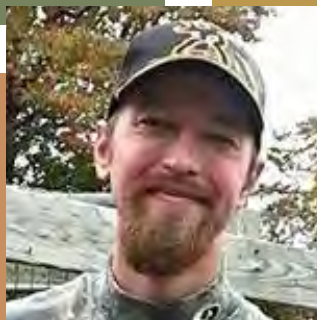
Karie Roach



Nick & Toni Dorochoff



Eric Ahlgren



Mike Goodreau



George Dorochoff

Brines & Rubs

Three Brines & Two Rubs

Brining meat makes for juicy and tender roasts and chops. The salt & sugar in the brine permeate the meat and carry the flavorings with it, making it tender, juicy, and flavorful. A longer soak is better for thicker loin roasts. Rubs rely more on ground spices to carry the flavor than on whole spices.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Brining times generally range from 6 to 48 hours: Chops 6 to 12 hours, roasts 24 to 48. Whole or cut up chickens are fine with a 2 to 4 hour soak, as too long can make the meat a bit rubbery.
- ☐ Use a mortar and pestle, if you have one, to crush the aromatics.
- ☐ Try brown sugar for more complex flavor, or use cumin, coriander, and fresh jalapeño for a kick.
- ☐ You can put a small plate on top of the meat to keep it submerged.
- ☐ Dry the meat and bring to room temperature before cooking. If grilling, oil the meat to help browning.

Method for Brines

1. Place the crushed aromatics in a small saucepan with one cup of the water and bring to a boil.
2. Take off heat and stir in sugar and salt until dissolved.
3. Put the seasoned water & remaining 4 cups water in a container large enough for the meat and submerge the meat in the brine.
4. Refrigerate for recommended period of time.
5. Remove meat from brine, dry with paper towels, and let it come to room temperature before cooking.

Zuni Cafe's Brine for Pork

5 cups water
2-3 bay leaves, crumbled
2-3 dried chiles
4-5 juniper berries
6 TBS sugar
3 TBS salt

Brine with Fennel for Pork

5 cups water
1 TBS fennel seed
2 tsp allspice berries
1 ½ tsp black peppercorns
2 bay leaves, crumbled
1-2 dried hot chiles
6 TBS sugar
3 TBS table salt

Brine for Skinless Chicken Breasts

5 cups water
2 cloves garlic crushed
1 tsp red chili flakes
1 ½ tsp black peppercorns
3 juniper berries
2 whole dried chilies
1 bay leaf
½ cup brown sugar loosely packed
¼ cup kosher salt

Two Rubs

I have no idea where I got the wet rub, but it works well on grilled pork or chicken. The BBQ rub is from The Joy of Cooking & is great for pulled pork (see Chapter 4) or ribs.

Barbecue Rub

Makes about 2 cups. Toast ¼ cup cumin seed in a frying pan until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Cool and grind, then add:

½ cup sweet or hot paprika	¼ cup salt
¼ cup packed brown sugar	¼ cup coarsely ground black pepper
¼ cup chili powder	2 TBS cayenne
	1 tsp ground mace

Wet Rub with Chipotle and Citrus

For 5 lbs of pork, bring juice of 2 oranges and two limes to simmer. Put in 1 jalapeño cut in chunks and steep for a few hours. Remove peppers and add:

2 tsp salt	1 tsp pepper	1 tsp onion powder
1 ½ tsp ground ancho pepper	1 tsp ground chipotle	1 tsp ground cumin
1 ½ tsp garlic powder	1 tsp smoked hot paprika	

Soak pork roast or chops, or skinless, boneless chicken breasts or thighs for an hour or two at room temperature before grilling. Leftovers make great tacos.

Turkey, Roasts & Steaks

Indian Spiced Turkey Breast

Recipe by Melissa Rubel in Food and Wine (November 2007).

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6 to 8.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 475°.
- ☐ Split breasts are easier to marinate and roast than a whole breast.
- ☐ Rubel's recipe calls for marinating the breasts on a baking sheet, but you can put them in a large zipper bag.

Ingredients

- 2 cups plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves
- 1 one-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 bone-in, skin-on turkey breast halves (about 3 pounds each)
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 TBS unsalted butter, melted

Method

1. In a food processor, puree the yogurt with the onion, garlic, ginger, lemon juice, and spices.
2. Place the turkey breasts on a large rimmed baking sheet. Pour the yogurt marinade over the turkey and rub it over both sides and under the skin. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours and up to 24 hours.
3. Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 1 hour before roasting.
4. Transfer the turkey breasts (with any marinade that sticks to them) to a large roasting pan, skin side up. Season with salt and pepper and drizzle the butter over the skin.
5. Roast for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 375° and roast for 50 minutes longer, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the breast registers 165°.
6. Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes. Carve and serve.

Sweet & Spicy Flank Steak

Based on a recipe by Melissa Clark on cooking.nytimes.com.

Ingredients

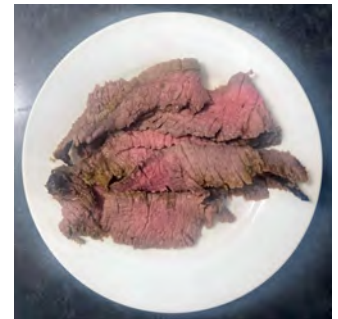
- 1 ½ lbs flank steak
- 1 ½ tsp kosher salt
- 3 TBS coarsely chopped scallions
- 1 TBS finely chopped, peeled ginger or Prepared Ginger in Syrup
- 1 large fresh jalapeño, coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 TBS light brown sugar
- Zest of ½ lime
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 1 tsp sriracha, harissa, or other hot sauce
- 2 TBS extra-virgin olive oil

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4.
- ☐ If you are in a hurry, 20 minutes in the marinade will do.

Method

1. Season steak with salt and set aside at room temperature.
2. In food processor, pulse remaining ingredients except oil. When all is finely chopped, with motor running, pour in oil and process until smooth.
3. Place steak in a zipper bag with marinade. Seal and distribute marinade evenly. Refrigerate for 2 hours to overnight.
4. Let steak rest at room temperature for an hour. Grill covered or broil 4 inches from heat, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Let rest for 5 minutes before slicing.



Porchetta

Based on two recipes, one by Omar Michael Miller of Dressel's Public House in St. Louis (Food Network) and one for Fennel-Rosemary Porchetta in Milk Street Magazine.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 10 to 12.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 350°.
- ☐ You will need butcher's twine and a roasting pan with rack.
- ☐ For info on how to butterfly the roast, see the video at "Butterflied Pork Butts in the Smoker" on smokingmeat.com.
- ☐ Porchetta recipes call for pork belly, pork loin roast, or pork butt. Pork butt provides the most even combination of meat and fat for a juicy and flavorful roast.
- ☐ Leftovers make great sandwiches. One suggestion is provided below.

Ingredients

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 pork butt, 6–8 lbs, bone removed | 2 TBS fresh ground fennel seed |
| ¼ cup kosher salt | 2 TBS fresh zest of lemon and orange |
| 2 TBS coarsely ground black pepper | |
| ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil | Sauce |
| ¼ cup chopped garlic | ¾ cup defatted pan juices |
| ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley | ⅓ cup lemon juice |
| ¼ cup chopped fresh rosemary | ¼ cup water |
| ¼ cup chopped fresh sage | 2 TBS extra-virgin olive oil |
| | 2 tsp ground black pepper |
| | 1 tsp ground fennel |

Method

1. Starting at the cut where the bone was removed, open the roast up and with a sharp knife continue slicing until you can open the flap of meat like a book. The goal is to have a single flat piece of meat the same thickness throughout.
2. Mix the salt and black pepper and use half of the mix to season the top side of the meat.
3. Combine the oil and remaining seasonings in a food processor to create a paste, and spread it on the meat.
4. Roll the meat up so the fat cap is exposed and tie with twine, beginning in the center and moving out to the ends to create an evenly sized roast.
5. Season the roast with the remaining salt and pepper.
6. Place the roast fat side up on a rack in the roasting pan and add enough water to cover the bottom of the pan by a half inch or more.
7. Roast uncovered for 3 ½ to 4 hours or to an internal temperature of 140°. Add more water to keep bottom of pan wet, as you will need pan juices for the sauce.
8. Let rest for 45 to 60 minutes.
9. While meat rests, make sauce by combining the ingredients in a pan and simmering for 5 minutes or so.

Porchetta Sandwich with Rapini

Ingredients

Olive oil
Garlic cloves
Rapini, cut into 3" pieces
Kosher salt
Sub rolls
Thinly sliced porchetta
Grated cheese (Gruyere, Swiss, or Provolone)
Pepper flakes & sliced pickled pepperoncini for garnish, if desired

Method

1. Heat oven to 425°. Measure about a TBS of oil for every two sandwiches into a small bowl and add a clove of garlic, pressed or minced. Let sit for 15 to 30 minutes.
2. Heat 1 TBS olive oil over medium-high heat and when smoking, add rapini and a generous pinch of salt. Fry, stirring frequently, until stems are a bit charred. Remove from heat.
3. Split the sub rolls and brush with garlic oil. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes until brown.
4. Place meat on one side of roll and rapini on the other. Top both sides with cheese.
5. Bake until cheese is melted. Garnish with pepper flakes and pepperoncini, if using. Close sandwich and serve.

Thanksgiving Turkey

Mom made her turkeys the way her mother did, with a cracker stuffing rich with eggs and sour cream and basted with Mogen David Concord wine and 7-Up. Mom started using regular red table wine and then later white wine, but the results were the same: dark brown slightly sweet skin on a juicy bird.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Plan on about 1 lb per person.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 325°. Cooking times below are for stuffed birds.
- ☐ Any roasting pan that will hold the bird comfortably will do.
- ☐ If you don't have a rack, tucking the wings under the bird helps.
- ☐ For stuffing recipes, including Grandma's Cracker Dressing, see Chapter 6, Salads and Sides.

Ingredients

14 lb Turkey
4 TBS kosher salt
½ of a 750 ml bottle of Mogen David Concord Wine
3 8 oz cans 7-Up
Stuffing of your choice

Roasting Times

One year, Nick under cooked the turkey: the meat was pink and flabby and the dressing wasn't cooked through. The bird had already rested for a half hour outside of the oven, so there was no putting it back in. Ruth manned the microwave, moving dishes of food in and out until we had enough to eat.

Kim made sure this never happened again. He became the keeper of the time table for the big birds we cooked (at right), and every turkey after that was done to perfection. Times for smaller birds are from The Joy of Cooking.

Method

1. Rinse and dry the bird with paper towels. Remove any large pieces of fat in the body or neck cavities. Reserve the neck and giblets for another use, like the gravy recipe provided here. If you don't have a rack for the pan, tuck the wings under the bird.
2. Rub 2 TBS kosher salt in the body cavity and 2 TBS on the outside of the bird. Fill the body cavity with stuffing of your choice and tie the legs together with kitchen twine.
3. Tilt the bird in the pan so the neck cavity is accessible. Fill the loose skin with stuffing and wrap excess skin underneath the bird. Settle the stuffed bird in the pan.
4. Pour about ¼ of the wine and 7-Up over the bird to cover the bottom of the pan by about a ½". Loosely tent with foil, shiny side facing out, and place in oven.
5. Baste every 30 to 45 minutes, using the pan juices or adding more wine and 7-Up in equal parts to keep about a ½" of liquid in the pan.
6. If the bird is not browning, remove the foil for a while, replacing it when the skin is brown and glossy. If it is browning unevenly, cover only the brown parts of the bird.
7. Thirty minutes before time is up, start testing using an instant-read thermometer. Dark meat is best at 165° to 175° and white meat at 157° to 160°.
8. When done, remove from pan, let rest for 20 to 30 minutes before carving.



Giblet Gravy

Wash the turkey giblets and neck, and place in a 3 qt saucepan with a small onion and some chunks of celery and carrot, if desired.

Add water to cover the ingredients by an inch, bring to a boil, then simmer for about an hour. Skim foam from the top as needed to keep the broth clear.

Strain the broth & discard the vegetables. You can dice the liver, heart, and gizzard finely and reserve for the gravy.

Wipe out the saucepan and melt 3 TBS butter. Add 3 TBS flour to make a roux, whisking over low heat until the roux browns a bit.

Add the broth slowly, whisking to avoid lumps. Cook until thickened & season with salt and pepper.

If using chopped giblets, add them and heat through before serving.

Cooking Times

6 to 7 lbs, 1 ¼ to 1 ¾ hours
7 to 10 lbs, 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours
10 to 14 lbs, 2 to 3 ½ hours
14 to 18 lbs, 3 to 4 ½ hours
18 to 20 lbs, 3 ½ to 5 hours

Cooking Times	
21 Lbs.	4 ½ to 5 hours
22 Lbs.	" " "
23 Lbs.	5 to 5 ½ hours
24 Lbs.	5 to 5 ½ hours
25 Lbs.	5 ½ to 6 ¼ hours

Joe's Pan Fried Ribeye Steaks

Joe has been doing up steaks this way for years. Leftovers are great in the Beef & Swiss sandwiches on the next page.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Two steaks serve 2 to 4; have ready a cast iron pan large enough to hold steaks.
- ☐ Use peanut or canola oil; they have high smoke points.
- ☐ You can use this method with pork chops, too. Use an instant read meat thermometer to cook the chops to 150°-155° for medium.

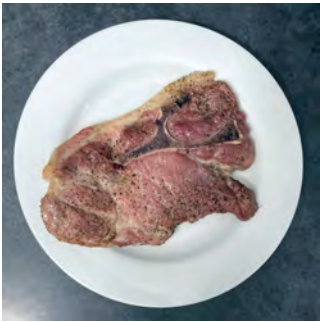


Ingredients

2 8 oz rib eye steaks,
about 1 ½ inches
thick
Kosher salt
Vegetable oil
Black pepper

Method

1. Liberally season both sides of the steaks with kosher salt. Let the steaks rest uncovered up to an hour at room temperature, or uncovered in the refrigerator up to 24 hours.
2. Heat a cast iron or other heavy skillet on high heat until very hot. Add only enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan & continue to heat until almost smoking.
3. Season the steaks with pepper and place them in the pan.
4. Cook for about 2 minutes on the first side, then flip the steaks and lower the heat to medium. Cook for an additional 2 ½ minutes or so for medium-rare, adjusting cooking time up or down to suit your taste. Medium rare steaks should be cooked to 130 to 135.
5. When done, remove from pan, tent with foil, and allow the steaks to rest for five minutes before serving.



Mom & Dad's Baked Pork Steaks

This was a regular dinner staple when we were growing up: it's cheap, easy, and tastes really good. Dad would serve it up with a salad and a side, often mashed potatoes with canned corn & peas or green beans.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Cook 1 steak for one or two servings.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 325°; have a rimmed 15" by 18" baking sheet ready. If you have wire racks, use them.
- ☐ Be sure the baking sheet can hold all the steaks in a single layer. Pork steak has a lot of fat, so using wire racks under the steaks is a good idea. (Dad's pan had an insert with holes in it.)

Ingredients

Pork shoulder or
blade steaks, about
¼" thick
Salt
Garlic powder
Black pepper

Method

1. Lay the steaks out on newspaper and season both sides liberally with the salt, garlic powder, and pepper.
2. Place steaks on the rimmed baking sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Turn the steaks, and bake for another 15 minutes, until brown and the juices run clear.

Easiest Prime Rib

Alexia got this recipe from from Dr. Gene Hollenberg, Principal at Nuner Elementary School, where she taught for many years. She's made the roast for her family to rave reviews.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Plan on ½ lb per person.
- ☐ Preheat the oven to 500° about 30 minutes before you plan to put the roast in the oven.
- ☐ After the roast goes into the oven, DO NOT open the door until the cooking time is over. Keeping it closed will help control any smoke from the high heat.

Ingredients

Prime rib roast
Salt
4 TBS (½ stick)
butter, softened
Garlic powder

Method

1. Rub roast generously with salt and allow it to come to room temperature, 3 to 4 hours.
2. Mix butter and garlic powder, and spread on the roast.
3. Place roast on wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and place in the pre-heated oven.
4. Roast at 500° for 5 minutes per pound, then turn the oven off.
5. Leave the roast in the oven for an additional 2 hours. Remove roast from the oven, loosely tent with foil, and let rest for 30 minutes before serving.

Nick's Hot Beef and Swiss

Some leftover beef and Italian rolls become a delicious hot meal.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Preheat oven to 425°; have a baking sheet ready.
- ☐ You can use deli roast beef if you don't have leftovers.
- ☐ Amounts depend on how many sandwiches you want. The veggies should cover one side of the bun.
- ☐ Jarred horseradish sauce is fine.



Ingredients

1 TBS olive oil per sandwich
1 large clove garlic for every two to three TBS olive oil
2 TBS mayo per sandwich
1 tsp horseradish, drained, per sandwich
Black or white pepper
Butter
Onions and mushrooms, sliced thin
Kosher salt
Thyme, fresh or dried
Italian or sub rolls
Vegetable oil
Leftover beef from roast or steaks, sliced thin
Swiss cheese

Method

1. Measure the olive oil into a small bowl and add garlic, using a garlic press or mincing it before adding.
2. Mix the mayonnaise, horseradish, and pepper to taste.
3. Brush cut sides of the rolls with the garlic oil and bake for 5 to 10 minutes until brown.
4. In a small frying pan, melt some butter and add the onions and a pinch of salt. Sauté until soft and slightly brown. Place in a bowl.
5. Repeat Step 4 in the same pan with the mushrooms, adding pepper and thyme to taste. Place in bowl with onions, and mix.
6. In the same pan, heat 1 tsp oil and toss the beef until it is warmed. No need to heat all the way through.
7. For each sandwich, spread one half of the roll with 1 TBS of the mayonnaise mixture, top with beef and then Swiss cheese. On the other half, place a slice of Swiss cheese and top with the onions and mushrooms.
8. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until the cheese is melted.
9. Serve with additional horseradish sauce.

Spicy Chicken with Sausage

Most recipes for this dish (in Italian, "Chicken Scarpariello") use bone-in skin-on thighs, and have you brown the skins and put the frying pan in the oven for the last 20 minutes of cooking to keep things crisp. My version cooks completely on the stove, the 20 minutes in the oven replaced by simmering 10 minutes covered and then 10 minutes uncovered to thicken the sauce. I also bumped up the flavor, adding seasonings to the chicken which absorbs the flavors well without the skin.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 2 to 3 generously; use the larger amounts of meat to serve 4. Have a 12" or 13" frying pan with lid ready. I like a cast iron pan for this dish.
- ☐ I use Mezzetta sliced hot cherry peppers to save on slicing and heat up the dish.
- ☐ If using bulk sausage, just remove the plastic and cut the sausage into pieces right on top of the foam tray—no need to roll them in balls.
- ☐ If using sausage links, instead of skinning and rolling the meat, you can brown them whole and cut each into 3 or 4 pieces. They will still be pink inside when you cut them, but will cook with the chicken.
- ☐ This dish is great served over polenta. Instant polenta only takes minutes to cook and tastes as good as made from scratch.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ to 2 lbs boneless chicken thighs (6 to 8 thighs)
- 4 tsp Kosher salt
- 1 TBS red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- ½ to ¾ lb loose hot Italian sausage (3 to 4 links)
- 1 TBS olive oil
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 1 large red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 2 TBS finely minced fresh sage leaves or 2 tsp dry rubbed sage
- 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 8 to 10 hot or sweet pickled cherry peppers, thinly sliced (about ¾ cup), along with ¼ cup pickling liquid from the jar
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 TBS sugar (optional)

Method

1. Spread each piece of chicken smooth side up on newspaper or a large cutting board. Sprinkle with one-half of the salt, pepper, oregano & pepper flakes. Press to adhere and flip pieces, repeating on the rough side. Set aside.
2. If using sausage links, remove meat from casings. Roll the loose meat into 9 to 12 pieces.
3. Heat oil in frying pan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add sausage and increase heat a bit. No need to cook them through, just give the pieces a good sear. Remove to a bowl that can hold the chicken as well.
4. Add chicken to pan smooth side down, and cook, without moving, until browned, about 4 minutes. Flip chicken and brown lightly on second side, about 3 minutes. Transfer to bowl with the sausage.
5. Return skillet to heat without draining it and add onion and bell pepper. Cook, stirring and scraping up browned bits with a wooden spoon or spatula until softened and starting to brown, about 4 minutes.
6. Add sage and garlic, stir to combine, and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.
7. Add pickled cherry peppers and their liquid, stirring and scraping up browned bits from bottom of pan.
8. Add wine and cook until liquid is reduced by half, about 2 minutes.
9. Add chicken stock and sugar (if using) & stir to combine. Return sausage to pan, toss to combine, then return chicken pieces to pan smooth side up, nestling them with the other ingredients.
10. Reduce heat to a simmer and cover, cooking for 10 minutes. Uncover and cook an additional 10 minutes to thicken the sauce.
11. Serve over polenta.



Slow Cooker BBQ Brisket

I made a brisket like this for an Easter dinner when Joe and I lived on Farwell. The recipe is from Cook's County (February–March, 2009). Alternate seasoning below is cobbled together from recipes on the web.

Ingredients

Rub and Brisket

- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 2 TBS minced chipotle chiles in adobo
- 1 TBS ground cumin
- 1 TBS paprika
- 2 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 4- to 5-lb brisket, fat trimmed to ¼ inch thick and lightly scored

Aromatics and Sauce

- 3 TBS canola oil
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 2 TBS tomato paste
- 1 TBS Nick's Chili Blend
- 1 TBS minced chipotle chiles in adobo
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 1 TBS cider vinegar
- ¼ tsp liquid smoke

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 8 to 10.
- ☐ Scoring the fat on the roast at ½-inch intervals will help seasonings penetrate the meat.
- ☐ The alternate seasoning makes for a savory roast instead of a sweet BBQ.
- ☐ I use two stacked disposable foil pans, which fit great.
- ☐ To make ahead, in Step 4, cook about an hour less, wrap the brisket in foil & refrigerate it & the juices separately. To serve, heat foil-wrapped brisket in a 350° oven about 1 hour. Remove the fat from the juice and add water to make 2 cups if necessary. Heat the juice separately then begin with Step 7.

Method

1. Combine rub ingredients and rub mixture all over brisket. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour or refrigerate up to 24 hours.
2. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Cook onion until softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Add tomato paste and cook until beginning to brown, 1 minutes, then stir in the next three ingredients and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds.
4. Mound mixture in the center of the slow cooker and cover with an inverted metal loaf pan. Place the brisket, fat side up, on the loaf pan. Add water, cover, and cook on high for 6 to 7 hours, or on low for 10 to 12 hours, until a fork inserted into the meat can be removed with no resistance.
5. Transfer the brisket to a 9" by 13" pan, cover with foil, and let rest 30 minutes.
6. Carefully remove loaf pan from the slow cooker and pour the contents into a large bowl. Let rest & skim fat off the top with a large shallow spoon. Add water to make 2 cups if necessary.

Savory Brisket Seasoning

Rub

- 2 TBS hot smoked paprika
- 2 TBS onion powder
- 2 TBS garlic powder
- 2 tsp pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tsp cayenne

Aromatics and Sauce

- 3 TBS canola oil
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 2 TBS tomato paste
- 2 tsp dried thyme
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large bay leaf
- ½ cup water
- 2 TBS ketchup
- 1 TBS Dijon mustard

7. Place brisket on cutting board and slice thinly across grain. Return to pan & pour 1 cup of the reserved juice over the meat.
8. Whisk remaining juice with the last 3 ingredients and season with salt & pepper. Serve brisket, passing the sauce.

Magic with Cracker Crumbs

Fried Fish

Dad would bring back fish from Minnesota frozen in milk cartons of ice when we were kids, and later took to freezing them wrapped in white paper. He would scale the fish and leave the bones in, but as we got older, he started to filet them instead, so we did not have to eat around the bones. He or Mom would fry the fish and serve it with Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. We would sometimes have a salad: iceberg lettuce with tomatoes, from Dad's garden in the summer, and cucumbers. Dad made the dressing from oil and tarragon vinegar when we were little, but later he developed a taste Kraft French dressing. (Maybe when we were older he had the extra cash to buy dressing instead of make it from scratch?) Since I haven't fished in years, I have to drive an hour north to Wadsworth, IL, to buy frozen blue gill, walleye, or lake perch. But once I fry it up, it still tastes like home. And thanks to Mike for straightening me out on the difference between single and double dipping (see below)!



Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4.
- ☐ Heat oven to 200° to keep cooked fish warm; have ready a 10" or 12" frying pan, preferably cast iron.
- ☐ If you buy a box of cracker meal instead of grinding your own, add about ½ tsp salt per pound.
- ☐ Use a blender or a zipper bag and rolling pin to crush the crackers into fine pieces. Crumbs made with a rolling pin will make heavier breading.
- ☐ Karen adds ranch dressing mix to the breading, using 1 envelope (1 oz) to ½ lb cracker crumbs.

Ingredients

1 lb fish fillets
Salt & pepper
½ lb cracker crumbs
4 or 5 eggs
1 TBS milk per egg
Vegetable oil for frying

Method

1. Lay the fish out on newspaper and season both sides generously with salt and pepper.
2. In a wide, shallow bowl, beat eggs with milk until well combined. (Maybe start with fewer eggs and add more if needed.)
3. Place a mound of crumbs on a pie plate, dish, or bowl big enough to hold a filet.
4. Have a fresh piece of newspaper ready. Take each filet, dip it in egg, then crumbs, then in egg and crumbs again. Be sure it is well-coated with crumbs, and lay it on the fresh newspaper.
5. Repeat with remaining fillets, adding an additional egg and milk if necessary.
6. Fill the frying pan to about a ¼" with oil and heat over medium-high heat until a crumb of breading sizzles.
7. Place fillets in the pan without crowding and cook until bottoms are browned and crisp, about 3 minutes, adjusting heat as needed.
8. Carefully flip and continue to cook until the other side is brown and crisp, another 2 to 3 minutes.
9. Remove the fillets to an oven-safe bowl lined with paper towels or a slice or two of bread in the bottom to absorb the grease. Hold in warm oven.
10. Repeat with remaining fillets.

Single or Double Dip?

Dad dipped the fish in crumbs, then egg, then crumbs again. But George figured if some breading was good, more was better. He started "double-dipping," dipping twice in egg and crumbs. The thicker coating makes for a more crispy coating than single dipping provides.

Amounts here are for double-dipping. You'll need fewer eggs if you want to single dip like Dad did.

Dad's Cracker Patties

Dad would mix the leftover egg with cracker crumbs to make "cracker patties." There was nothing better than a patty hot from the frying pan with melting butter on top.

To make them, into the leftover egg-milk mixture, add enough cracker crumbs to make a soft dough. Form the dough into patties and fry on both sides until cooked through.

Mom's Breaded Pork Chops or Chicken

Mom often made breaded pork chops or chicken during the holidays or for special occasions. Given the number of people to feed, she would make enough to fill the huge, stainless steel roaster that Dad also used for chicken and rice (Chapter 5). I still use a small roaster for just a few chops, but the notes below provide some other options.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Makes 4 chops; the recipe easily doubles.
- ☐ The same method can be used for chicken, but double the amount of crumbs, eggs and milk for 8 pieces.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 350°; have ready a covered baking dish big enough for the chops or chicken to fit slightly overlapped, and a frying pan, preferably cast iron, large enough to hold 2 to 3 chops or 3 to 4 pieces of chicken.
- ☐ See the notes regarding making the crumbs or using boxed cracker meal on the previous page.
- ☐ Karen adds ranch dressing mix to the breading for pork chops, using 1 envelope (1 oz) to ½ lb cracker crumbs, and using regular salt, instead of Lawry's.
- ☐ You can also spice things up a bit by sprinkling the chops with hot paprika or adding some hot sauce to the egg mixture.

Ingredients

4 bone-in loin pork chops, about ½" thick
Lawry's Seasoned Salt
Black pepper
½ lb cracker crumbs (from two sleeves of saltines)
2 to 3 eggs
1 TBS milk per egg
Vegetable oil for frying
About 2 TBS cold butter (six thin slices)

Method

1. Lay the chops or chicken parts out on newspaper and season both sides lightly with Lawry's Seasoned Salt and pepper.
2. Place a mound of cracker crumbs on a pie plate or dish big enough to hold a chop.
3. In a wide bowl, beat eggs with milk until well combined.
4. Have a fresh piece of newspaper ready. Take each piece of meat, roll in cracker crumbs, dip into egg mix, shaking off excess, and dip in cracker crumbs again. Be sure it is well-coated with crumbs, and lay on the fresh newspaper.
5. Repeat with remaining chops or chicken parts, adding an additional egg and TBS milk if necessary.
6. Fill the frying pan to just under ½" with oil & place over medium-high heat until a crumb of breading sizzles.
7. Place 2 or 3 chops or chicken parts in the pan and cook until bottom and sides are browned and crisp, about 3 minutes, adjusting heat as necessary to keep things sizzling.
8. Carefully flip and continue to cook until the other side is brown and crisp, another 2 to 3 minutes.
9. Remove browned meat to the roasting pan, laying them slightly overlapping like shingles.
10. Repeat with remaining meat, then dot with butter, cover the pan, and bake.
11. Check the temperature with an instant read thermometer after 20 minutes for chops and an hour for chicken. When chops reach an internal temperature of 150° if serving immediately, or 145° if allowing them to rest for 20 minutes or so, remove the pan from the oven. For chicken, cook white meat to 160° and dark meat to 170° and let rest for at least 20 minutes to reach 165° / 175°.
12. If allowing the chops to rest, tent with foil or leave the lid ajar to let steam escape.



Nickey caught a fish!
(Detroit Lakes, MN, 1989)

Ground Beef & Pork



Dad's Hamburgers and Meatloaf

Before getting started:

- ☐ Makes 4 burgers; meatloaf serves 6 to 8.
- ☐ Dad cooked these burgers on a rimmed baking sheet in the oven rather than frying them.
- ☐ Dad always had cracker crumbs on hand for frying fish. You can use bread crumbs instead, but add a bit more salt.
- ☐ If baking, preheat oven to 325° for burgers, 350° for meatloaf.
- ☐ Add chopped, sautéed green pepper, celery, or mushrooms, if you like.
- ☐ You can spread some ketchup or barbecue sauce on the meatloaf before increasing the temperature.

Ingredients

- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 1 TBS butter
- 1 lb hamburger
- Salt, pepper, and garlic powder
- 1 egg
- ½ cup cracker crumbs
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp yellow mustard

Method for Hamburgers

1. Fry onion in butter and add to meat.
2. Add salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste, and remaining ingredients. Mix lightly just until combined.
3. Form four patties. Make a dimple in them so they stay flat.
4. **Fry** in a medium frying pan over medium heat until done, flipping once during cooking, or **bake** on a rimmed baking sheet for 30 to 40 minutes or until done.

Method for Meatloaf

1. Double the ingredients for hamburgers.
2. Follow steps 1 and 2 for hamburgers.
3. Form into a loaf about 1 ½ inches high, 6 inches wide and 12 inches long.
4. Bake covered for 25 minutes, then raise to 375°, uncover, and continue baking until done, about 35 minutes.

Baked Beef Tacos

These beefy tacos come out of the oven crispy and delicious.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4.
- ☐ Heat oven to 400°; place a large baking sheet on the center rack while oven heats.
- ☐ Lining the sheet with foil helps with cleanup.
- ☐ Try adding Angry Chiles (Chapter 10) to the tacos before baking.
- ☐ Karie Roach tested these, and she suggested adding refried beans and sprinkling some cheese on the baking sheet to crisp things up.



Ingredients

Tacos

- 1 lb 90% lean ground beef
- 1 TBS Nick's Chili Blend or 1 oz pkg taco seasoning
- ⅔ cup water
- 1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 8 6-inch flour tortillas
- Oil for baking

For Serving

- ½ cup finely diced white onion
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- 2 cups shredded romaine lettuce
- Salsa or pico de gallo
- Sour cream
- Guacamole
- Angry Chiles (Chapter 10)

Method

1. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add the ground beef. Cook, breaking up the meat with a spoon, until cooked through, 5 to 6 minutes. Stir in the Chili Blend or taco seasoning and water and bring to a boil.

See Taco, next page.

Asian–Style Meatloaf

When Joe & I started dating, spending weekends together included cooking together. One day, I had a taste for meatloaf, and offered to make some for supper. That's when I found out how much he really did not like meatloaf. I found this recipe in the Chicago Tribune. It was adapted from a book called Chef's Tale by Peter Franey. Joe's love of Asian food won out, making this the only meatloaf that he actually looks forward to.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Preheat oven to 425°; have a small roasting pan or rimmed baking sheet ready.
- ☐ The recipe calls for a mix of meats, but you can use just beef with good results.
- ☐ You can substitute ground ginger for the fresh, using about ½ tsp.
- ☐ If using a roasting pan, you can add potatoes or carrots. Just cook covered for the first half hour.



Ingredients

Glaze

- 1 cup ketchup
- 2 TBS honey
- 2 TBS fresh lemon juice
- 1 TBS chopped garlic
- 1 TBS Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 tsp freshly grated ginger
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- ½ tsp lemon juice

Meatloaf

- ¾ cup finely chopped green onions
- ½ cup water chestnuts, drained & chopped
- 1 tsp finely chopped garlic
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 TBS vegetable oil
- ¼ cup rice wine or sherry
- 3 TBS soy sauce
- ¾ lb ground beef
- ¾ lb ground pork or turkey
- ½ cup fine fresh bread crumbs
- ¼ cup loosely packed cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 tsp freshly grated ginger
- ½ tsp ground Szechuan pepper or
- 1 tsp freshly ground white pepper

Method

Glaze

1. Mix the glaze ingredients except for lemon juice in a saucepan and bring to a boil.
2. Cool, and add lemon juice.

Meatloaf

1. Sauté first three ingredients in oil just until onions wilt. Set aside to cool.
2. Beat egg with oil, wine or sherry, and soy sauce to blend.
3. In a bowl, place the meat, cooled onion mixture, liquids, and remaining ingredients. Mix gently by hand just until combined.
4. Form the mixture into a loaf and place in center of pan. Spread sauce over loaf and bake until well done, about 50 minutes.

Taco, from previous page.

2. Reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook, stirring often, until thickened, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the skillet from heat and stir in the cheese.
4. Cover half of each tortilla with the ground beef mixture and fold in half. Use brush or paper towel to oil the folded top.
5. Carefully remove the baking sheet from the oven and place the folded tacos on the sheet, oiled side down.
6. Return sheet to the oven and bake until golden brown on the bottom, about 5 minutes. Then oil to the tops, flip, & continue baking until golden on the other side, 4 to 5 minutes more.
7. Serve with garnishes of your choice.

Random photo of some finger food, looking to be the best!



Home-Made Sausage, Two Ways

Dad had a Polish friend who made fresh garlic sausage. Mom always served it at Christmas and Easter, but we also had it throughout the year. After Dad's friend passed away, George bought a grinder and tried his hand at making sausage. This recipe is a mash-up of George's recipe with others, including a video from Swine & Bovine Barbecue. When it came time to test this recipe, I corralled our friend, Eric Ahlgren, to help out, and the Italian sausage he made was the best! So I included that recipe here, too.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Makes 5 lbs of garlic sausage, 7 lbs of Italian.
- ☐ Rinse the casings with water & be sure to run water through them. Soak in fresh water until needed.
- ☐ Leftover casings can be packed in kosher salt and refrigerated for next time.
- ☐ Be sure to use the plate with the largest holes in the grinder.
- ☐ Sausages freeze well for at least three months in a tightly sealed plastic bag.
- ☐ See the box at the bottom of the next page for cooking instructions.

Ingredients

Garlic Sausage

- 5 lbs pork butt, cut into 1" pieces
- 12 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 ½ oz kosher salt (4.5 TBS Diamond Crystal or 3 TBS + 1 tsp Morton)
- 3 TBS (about 1 oz) coarsely ground black pepper
- 10 feet of hog casings

Eric's Italian Sausage

- 2 TBS peppercorns
- 2 TBS fennel seed
- 1 TBS red pepper flakes
- 7 lbs pork butt, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 TBS sugar
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 ½ oz kosher salt (7 TBS Diamond Crystal or 5 TBS Morton)
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ¾ cup chopped parsley
- 10 feet of hog casings

Method

Eric's Italian Sausage

1. In a small saucepan, heat the peppercorns over medium-high heat until fragrant. Add the fennel and red pepper flakes & cook until toasted, about X minutes. Let cool.
2. Place cooled spices in a mortar and crush with a pestle until pepper is coarsely ground. Set aside.

For Both Recipes

1. In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients (except the white wine and parsley for the Italian sausage) and casings. Refrigerate mixture covered until thoroughly chilled, at least 2 and up to 24 hours.
2. Run the meat mixture through the meat grinder using the die with the largest holes.
3. **FOR ITALIAN SAUSAGE:** Place half of the meat in the bowl of a standing mixer equipped with the paddle attachment. Add half of the wine and half of the parsley and beat on medium-high for 3 to 4 minutes. Repeat this process with the remaining meat and wine.
4. Cook a test patty to taste for seasoning. Adjust seasonings, if necessary.
5. Run the mixture through the grinder again, then refrigerate the meat until chilled, 2 to 4 hours or overnight.
6. Using the sausage-stuffing attachment, slide a wet casing onto the spout. Tie the end and poke a hole in it to let air out. Pack the meat into the hopper solidly to avoid air pockets. Run the machine on medium-low speed to fill the casing, keeping some resistance on the casing so it fills completely. Avoid air bubbles.
7. If desired, twist the casings every few inches to create links that are even in size.
8. Prick the sausages with a pin or skewer all over to allow steam & fat to escape while cooking, or leave this step for just before cooking.

See Cooking Sausage, next page.

Sloppy Joes Two Ways

Joe found Emily's recipe on the Allrecipes web site, and I got Grandpa Goggin's recipe from my friend, Cindy Oman, which I fiddled with a bit.

Before getting started:

☐ Both recipes make 6 to 8 sandwiches. Have the buns ready!

☐ Using beef with a lower fat content (say half 85%/15% and half 94%/6%) is a good idea.



Grandpa Goggin's Sloppy Joes

Ingredients

- 1 TBS bacon grease or butter
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium jalapeño or Serrano pepper, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1½ lbs ground beef
- ½ cup ketchup
- 1 TBS Worcestershire sauce
- 1 TBS brown sugar
- 1 TBS yellow mustard
- 1 TBS cider vinegar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- Pinch of ground cloves
- Salt and pepper
- Cayenne or hot sauce to taste

Cooking Sausage, from previous page

Three ways to cook sausage:

Roast the sausage

uncovered in a 9" by 13" pan in a bit of water at 325° for about an hour, turning it once during cooking. **OR...**

Bake the sausage with

potatoes in a 9" by 13" pan. Place a bit of water in the pan and cover the sausage with thinly-sliced potatoes, seasoned with salt and pepper to taste. Cover with foil and bake at 325° for about an hour, until sausage is done and potatoes are tender. **OR...**

Method

1. Melt fat in a 3.5-quart saute pan and fry onions and peppers with a pinch of salt on medium-high heat until brown. Add garlic and stir one minute.
2. Add ground beef to pan. Liberally season with salt and black pepper, and cook and stir until meat is brown.
3. Cook for an additional 5 minutes or so to reduce the amount of liquid in the pan. If there is still a lot, tilt pan and remove about half of the liquid with a spoon, leaving enough to cover the bottom of the pan.
4. Add the remaining ingredients, except the cloves. Simmer partly covered for 20 to 30 minutes on low.
5. Add cloves and adjust seasonings with salt and pepper and cayenne or hot sauce if desired.

Emily's Famous Sloppy Joes

Ingredients

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1½ lbs ground beef | 1 cup water | 1 tsp white or cider vinegar |
| 1 large onion, chopped | 3 cloves garlic, minced | 3 TBS brown sugar |
| 1 red bell pepper, chopped | 1 TBS chili powder | 1 tsp dried oregano |
| 1 6 oz can tomato paste | 1 tsp paprika | ½ tsp salt |
| | 1 tsp ground cumin | ½ tsp ground black pepper |

Method

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, sauté the ground beef for 5 minutes. Add the onion and bell pepper, and sauté for 5 more minutes, or until onion is tender. Drain fat.
2. Add tomato paste and water and stir until paste is dissolved.
3. Add remaining ingredients, and continue to heat for 5 to 10 minutes until mixture is thick and heated through.

Cook the sausage on the stove: Put the sausage in a frying pan with a tight fitting lid. Cover the bottom of the pan with water and cook over medium heat, covered, until meat is no longer pink and water is mostly evaporated. Uncover, and raise the heat to brown the sausage on both sides before serving.

