BAKERS ON A MISSION

2026

Baking with Julie

BAKING MEMORIES, ONE DELICIOUS BITE AT A TIME

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My Story…Your Story

It's never too early to learn how to bake. Here I am, at 3 years old, making biscuits with my mom in the kitchen of our little trailer. Who knew that such a humble beginning would end up with me baking in the massive kitchen in Hoboken, NJ, with the Cake Boss himself, Buddy Valastro, in front of millions of people on TV?

To say I have a passion for baking would be an understatement. I still get excited every time I whip up a perfect batch of silky-smooth Italian meringue buttercream, or when I pull a golden loaf of bread out of the oven. I smile when I see my husband and kids drawn to the kitchen by the aroma of Cinnamon Roll Biscuits, or watch my daughters, who are all taller than me, fight over who gets to lick the mixer bowl.

For me, baking is about sharing delicious food with the people I love. And I've been purposeful about teaching my children how to be confident in the kitchen. By age 10 many of my kids could not just make their own breakfast, but make their own crepes. There is no reason that any one of you can't be more than capable of creating delicious dishes of your own, both to feed yourself and to share with others.

Every young person dreams of being independent. "I can't wait until I can drive!" "I can't wait until I have my own car!" "I can't wait to live on my own!" But before you are able to achieve those dreams, you don't have to be dependent on someone else to make you a cookie, or a biscuit, or dinner, or lunch, or breakfast. You can feed yourself and you can help nourish others. And those are skills you can carry into adulthood.

In this cookbook, my goal is to equip you with a set of basic skills that will set you on your way to a lifetime of baking. Some of you are already accomplished in the kitchen. I guarantee you will learn a number of helpful hints to add to your growing knowledge. Some of you don't know how to boil water. Not a problem! This will be a safe place to make mistakes. That's the only way we learn!

As much as I am a baker at heart, I'm also a teacher at heart. I homeschooled my 7 children for over 20 years, as well as being a leader/teacher in a number of large groups. I have taught numerous baking classes, both at ETSU and in other settings. And I've done over 125 live instructional baking and cooking demonstrations on WJHL-11's TV show, *Daytime Tri-Cities*. One of my greatest joys is empowering people to discover the joy of baking for themselves.

I believe the seeds of greatness are planted into each one of us, even before we are born. But our destinies coming to pass isn't guaranteed; it takes hard work, dedication, and risk-taking on our part. And our value isn't based on how many followers we have on Instagram, the number of subscribers to our YouTube channel, or our longest streak on Snapchat. Who wants to be measured by such a small yardstick?

Your dreams aren't probably to become a well-known baker, but the lessons we learn in the kitchen can apply to all areas of life: don't focus on perfection, but on progress; when you come up short, try again; don't be afraid to take risks; and you reach your highest potential when you are able to bless others.

I hope you came hungry, because now it is time to BAKE!

Blessings,

My Baking Philosophy

Flavor Rules. No matter what I prepare, be it a pancake or a wedding cake, my priority is that it tastes great. Appearance matters, but for me, flavor matters more. Something might look great, but if the flavor isn't there, why bother? When appropriate, I taste my recipe as I go and make adjustments as necessary. I pick ingredients that maximize flavor and recipes that aren't just 'sweet', but have other flavor profiles as well.

Make it from scratch. The flavor is better and you can also save money. While it's fine to use mixes for convenience, in this course you will learn how to make it yourself.

Use quality ingredients…but keep an eye on your budget. Real butter, pure extracts, fresh lemons, etc.; I spend the money where it matters, but look for the most frugal way to get that ingredient. If a more-expensive option makes an appreciable difference in the final product, I consider it.

Quality tools don't have to be expensive. My frugality applies to hardware as well as to food. Sure, some of my tools cost a bit, but many of my favorites comes from commercial kitchen suppliers that cost way less than what you often find in department stores. And they work better, as well.

Don't eat it every day, so make it worthwhile when you do. Let's be real: few of the recipes in this course are ones you should consume on a daily basis. Obesity is an issue in my family tree so I believe strongly in having a healthy lifestyle. My philosophy is since you DON'T eat these sorts of things often, make it memorable when you do. Don't waste those precious calories on a plastic-wrapped overly-processed snack cake. Make something with care, using quality ingredients and packed with flavor. And take the time to savor it!

Baking is not about perfection. Thank goodness! If it was, there would be no bakers. Anytime you are learning something new, you are going to make mistakes. And I still make mistakes from time to time, even on recipes I know well. The main point is to learn from your mistakes without taking it 'personally'. Usually your mistakes are still edible, and if they're not, oh well! Just move on and try again. Sometimes a little extra frosting is all it takes to go from disaster to triumph!

The Rules of Baking

1. **Read through the recipe BEFORE you start.** Do you have all the *ingredients* you need? Do you have all the *equipment* you need? Do you have all the *time* you need?

2. **Wash your hands.** Make sure your prep area is clean as well.

3. **Preheat your oven, if appropriate.** It's no fun to have your batter in the pan but your oven is cold.

4. **Get your hardware together.** Prepare your pans. Set out your tools.

5. **Get your ingredients together.** You can pre-measure everything, or at least have the ingredients out so they are ready to go.

6. **Follow the recipe and don't skip steps.** If you follow step #1, you will be less likely to make this mistake. Many beginners leave out or mismeasure ingredients or don't notice important, yet subtle, instructions in the recipe.

7. **Taste as you go, when you can.** You don't need to taste raw biscuit dough, but I taste most of my batters, fillings, frostings, etc., before they are baked or cooked, so I can catch mistakes (oops! I forgot the salt!) and to make adjustments (that frosting needs more almond extract, or my apple filling needs more lemon juice for tartness.)

8. **Set a timer for the oven…just a little BEFORE it should be done.** Setting a timer keep you from being distracted (you get a phone call or the kids need something.) Checking a couple of minutes early helps prevent possible overbaking. I highly recommend calibrating your oven, using an oven thermometer to check if 350° on the dial actually means 350° *inside* the oven.

9. **Know where hot things will go BEFORE you pick them up.** Have a spot prepared to set your hot pan. And be aware that hot pads and oven mitts can develop holes. Ask me how I know this!

10. **Remove the baked goods from their pan/sheet at the right time.** Most things need a certain amount of time to set up. If you move them too early, they can break apart. But if you wait too long, these same things can cool too much and actually stick and be hard to remove.

11. **Remember…Baking is NOT about perfection!** Some of your efforts will be awesome! Some will be disasters, or fall short of what you envisioned. The important thing is to learn from your mistakes. Did I forget to add an ingredient or use the wrong one? Was my timing off for mixing, chilling, or baking? Did I place my pan in the right place in the oven? Is this a recipe issue and I need to find a better one?

12. **Make notes for the next time.** If you discovered something such as to not overmix, add more cinnamon, or cut back on oven time, make a note of it in your recipe. I will write down the recipe doubled or cut in half if I do it often, or how much the recipe yielded for my purposes. Some people use recipes like a journal, to chronicle special family celebrations, noting when and for whom the recipe was prepared. I wish I had done this when my kids were younger. My mom wrote a touching letter to me in the cover of one cookbook she gave me, which I cherish to this day. ☺

Getting a 'Quick" Start…with Quick Breads!

What are 'quick breads'? Quick Breads are baked goods that are quick to make and bake. They usually use baking powder and/or baking soda to make them rise, as opposed to yeast, which takes much longer to be effective. Quick Breads include pancakes, waffles, corn bread, muffins, cookies, biscuits, some loaf breads, biscuits, etc.

What is the wet/dry method? This is the basic mixing method that many quick breads use, and it's very simple. You mix the wet ingredients together in one bowl. You mix the dry ones together in another bowl. You pour the wet into the dry and mix together. That's it! All of our recipes in this chapter will employ this method.

I see some recipes use baking powder, some use baking soda, and some use both. Why? It's because each has qualities that lend themselves to certain kinds of batters. Both leavening agents cause bubbles of carbon dioxide gas to form, and thus, your baked goods to rise. Baking powder actually has baking soda in it, along with one or more acids. It is double acting, meaning it starts to react when it is moistened in your batter. It has a second reaction when it is exposed to heat in your oven.

Baking soda, however, reacts as soon as it is moistened in your batter. It is often used when an acid is present, such as chocolate, molasses, buttermilk, regular cocoa, etc. Sometimes baking soda is used to neutralize these acids. Baking soda is four times stronger than baking powder, which is why it's used in smaller amounts. Because it reacts immediately, batters made with baking soda only should be baked right away.

Some recipes, based on their acid content and other characteristics, benefit from using both. Some are best using only one. Do not substitute these for each other! This is about chemistry, not personal taste. If you don't bake often, buy baking powder in small cans as it will degrade in potency over time. Both soda and powder should be kept airtight in a cool, dry place.

Things to watch for in the wet/dry method: *Do not overmix!* Some batters will be lumpy and that's OK. Overmixing will cause toughness, as it develops more gluten. *Whisk dry ingredients thoroughly,* to make sure your leavening and salt is evenly distributed.

Buttermilk Pancakes

Yields about 9 small pancakes

Here's your first chance to use the wet/dry method! If you want your batter thinner, just use more buttermilk. And honestly, as you're using the batter, it will begin to thicken slightly. Adding a little more buttermilk as you go will keep the batter pourable. When I make these at home, I usually triple the recipe. Any extras can be frozen for a quick breakfast another day.

Preheat your griddle or skillet. In a bowl, beat:

1 egg

Add and whisk in:

1 cup buttermilk

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

In another bowl, whisk together:

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. baking soda

½ tsp. salt

Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ones and whisk just until the dry ingredients disappear. A few lumps may remain. You can add more buttermilk if you want the batter to be thinner.

To know if your griddle is ready, sprinkle a few drops of water on the surface. If they 'dance', it's ready. If they don't, it's not hot enough. If they instantly disappear, your griddle is too

hot. You can use non-stick spray if you like, put on right before use. (Butter tends to burn.)

Use a ladle or scoop and put about a ¼ cup of batter down on your griddle for each pancake, leaving space so they don't grow together.

When the edges start to appear dry and bubbles form and break on the surface, your pancake is ready to flip. The second side takes little time to finish. Remove pancakes to a serving plate and cover with aluminum foil to keep them warm until all pancakes are done.

For variations, you can sprinkle chocolate chips, blueberries, chopped pecans, crumbled bacon or even whole kernel corn on the cooking pancakes before you flip them, or mix them into the batter. At my house I prefer the 'sprinkling' method so you can use the same batter and create multiple types of pancakes.

If you don't have buttermilk on hand, you can substitute ¾ cup regular milk and use 1 tbsp. of baking powder, leaving out the soda completely.

Cake 411

Pan Prep: Preparing your cake pan is CRITICAL to a successful outcome! To insure your cake doesn't stick, you need to grease the pan with shortening and then toss flour around to coat. I line my pans as well, using a circle of wax paper or parchment put in after I grease the pan. I grease the paper then toss with flour. The paper removes easily from the cooked cake.

How do I know my cake is done? Good question! First of all, the middle will firm up and the edges will begin to pull away from the sides of the pan. You can certainly insert a toothpick or 'cake tester' into the middle and see if it comes out clean. Anymore, I look for the edges to pull away slightly, then barely touch the top of the cake with my bare finger to see if it's firm enough. It can have a slight give, but not much. If your cake is jiggly in the center, it needs to bake a few more minutes at least.

Crowning a Cake. To stack a layered cake, you need to make sure the tops of the cakes are flat. To achieve this, you 'crown' the cake by trimming off the curved, domed top. Use a sharp serrated knife, like a bread knife and keeping it flat, slice through the top at the top edge of the side, turning as I go to keep things level. You can cut at an off angle doing this, so be aware. For a two-layer cake, I flip the top cake so I am frosting its very level and baked bottom. Raw cake edges are no fun to frost!

What if my cake is sunken? That can happen, too, usually because the cake's structure wasn't strong enough to stay up while the edges firmed up first. I have tested my recipes so they perform well in my home kitchen. But if you aren't accurate on measuring, or your baking powder is old, or your oven temperature is off, or you opened the oven door too long and too early while your cake was baking, or you removed the cake too early….as you can see, there are a lot of variables at play. Which is why following the recipe exactly is so important! Baking is chemistry in action.

A Cold Cake is a Happy Cake: Cold cakes are more stable and easier to frost. Chilling cakes during the frosting process and storing them cold after keep cakes in their best form. NEVER FROST A WARM CAKE. It MUST be cool or the frosting will slide right off!

Easy Chocolate Layer Cake

Makes one 9-inch round

In one large bowl, thoroughly whisk together:

1 cup white sugar

1 cup all-purpose flour

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

½ teaspoon baking powder

¾ teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon salt

In a different bowl, mix these next "wet" ingredients together well, and add them to the dry ingredients all at once:

1 large egg

½ cup warm coffee

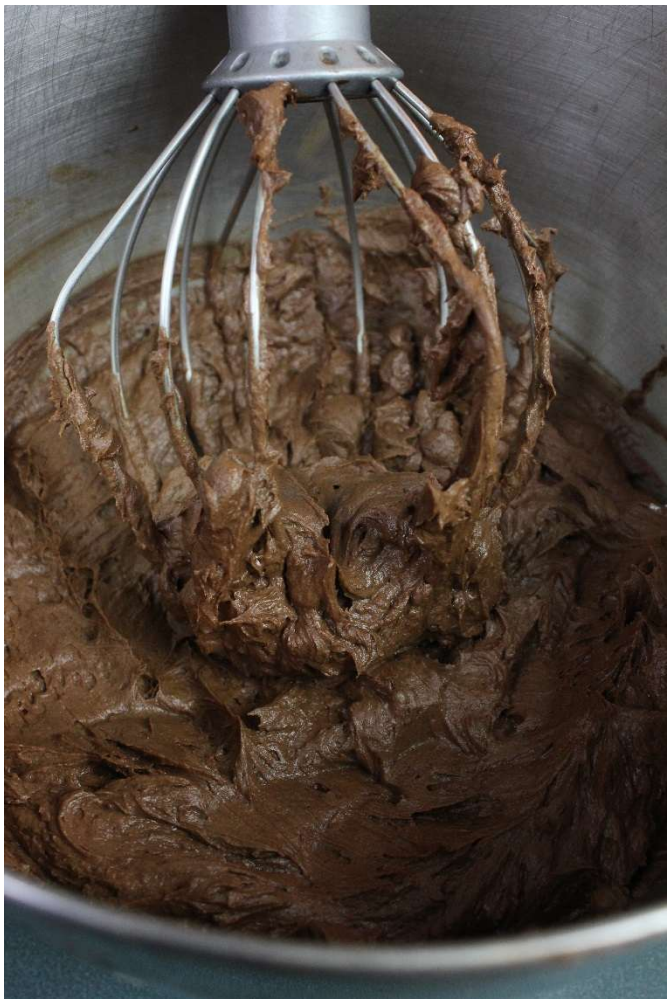
½ cup milk

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 teaspoon vanilla

Whisk until the dry and wet ingredients are thoroughly combined. Batter will be thin. Place in a greased, lined, and floured pan and bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes or until set in the middle. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes then turn out, right side up, on a cooling rack. Cake is very moist and perfect with some hot fudge sauce and whipped cream!

Easy Chocolate Buttercream



Super simple, rich and chocolatey, with a creamy, spreadable texture, this quick and easy buttercream is so good, you might just spread it on everything! OK, maybe not that good, but I've heard it's awesome on graham crackers. I love that this uses inexpensive cocoa powder, which is so much easier and cheaper than having to melt chocolate.

In a mixer bowl, mix together well, until very creamy:

1 ½ cups unsalted butter, room temperature

2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa (sift it in if it's lumpy)

Add in and mix:

3 ½ cups powdered sugar

Add in and mix:

3 tbsp. milk or cream

2 tsp vanilla extract

For a thinner consistency, add in more milk or cream, a teaspoon or so at a time, and remix. Store covered until ready to use.

Velveteen Rabbit Cupcakes

Yields about 30 cupcakes

The *Velveteen Rabbit Cupcake* was inspired by a dear friend who had a daughter with an allergy to red food dye. I took a basic Red Velvet batter, removed the dye, then added other flavors to make it more interesting. The result has quickly become a family favorite at my house, and I'm sure your family will enjoy it, too!

Preheat your oven to 350° F and line your muffin tin with cupcake liners. In a bowl, whisk together:

3 cups all-purpose flour

1 ¼ tsp. baking soda

1 ¼ tsp. salt

1 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder

In a separate mixer bowl, mix together well:

½ cup vegetable oil

2 ¼ cup sugar

1 ¼ cup buttermilk

3 eggs

1 ½ tsp. apple cider vinegar

2 tsp. vanilla

Mix in the dry ingredients just until combined. Fold in:

⅔ cup shredded carrots

⅔ cup sweetened coconut, toasted

⅔ cup chopped toasted pecans

Fill cupcake liners ⅔ full and bake for about 20 to 25 minutes or until done. Remove to rack to cool. Makes about 30 cupcakes. Frost with Cream Cheese Frosting. (page 17)

Cream Cheese Frosting

In a mixer, with your paddle attachment, mix together:

1 lb. unsalted butter, room temp.

2 lbs. powdered sugar

1 tbsp. vanilla

Add and mix, until well combined:

1 ½ lbs. cream cheese, room temp.

Frosting, and items using it, should be refrigerated until ready to serve.

On a Roll, with Biscuits and Pies

Math in the Kitchen

Measuring: Baking is basically chemistry in action so being accurate in your measurements is not an option. This is especially true when measuring baking soda and baking powder. Even an 1/8 of a teaspoon difference will change how something bakes. Use level measurements by taking a knife edge and dragging it over the top of your cup or spoon.

We measure using measuring cups for dry ingredients, measuring spoons for small amounts up to a tablespoon, and glass or clear plastic measuring 'pitchers' for liquid ingredients. You can't just grab a coffee cup and call it a cup, or a soup spoon and call it a tablespoon. I also use a special kitchen scale for weighing ingredients.

When measuring flour, don't pack it into the cup. Spoon it in, or gently scoop it in, then level it off. Brown sugar is just the opposite, where you do want to pack it in firmly. When measuring liquids, watch for the 'meniscus' and make sure it is level with the line. You won't always have the exact measuring cup or spoon you need. Usually you don't have a ¾ cup, so just do ¼ and ½. Being able to add, subtract and multiply fractions is a needed skill.

Reducing/Increasing Recipes: Many times you need to adjust the recipe to yield a smaller or larger amount than stated. Here's a few examples: If I need half the yield, divide each ingredient by 2. If I need twice the yield, multiply each ingredient by 2. But what if I need only 50% more? Then multiply by 1.5. What if I need a third less? Multiply by .66 or 2/3.

Measuring Equivalents:

3 teaspoons = 1 tablespoon 4 tablespoons = ¼ cup 8 tablespoons = ½ cup

16 tablespoons = 1 cup ½ tablespoon = 1 ½ teaspoons

2 cups = 1 pint; 4 cups = 1 quart; 8 cups = 2 quarts = ½ gallon; 16 cups = 4 quarts = 1 gallon

1 cup of liquid = 8 ounces 1 large egg = ¼ cup (usually!)

Butter: 1 pound of butter has 4 sticks. Each stick is ½ cup, or 8 tablespoons, or 4 ounces.

½ stick is a ¼ cup, or 4 tablespoons. ⅓ cup is 5⅓ tablespoons. 4 sticks is two cups.

1 tablespoon of butter is ½ ounce.

Common abbreviations:

teaspoon = **tsp** or **t**; *tablespoon* = **Tbsp.** or **T**; *pint* = **pt.**; *quart* = **qt**;

ounces = **oz.**; *pound* = **lb;** *cup* **= c**; *fluid ounces* = **fl. oz.**; package **= pkg.**

Time: Set a timer a little before the minimum given and check so you don't overbake.

Buttermilk Biscuits

Yields 12 biscuits

Nothing says the South more than Buttermilk Biscuits! As they are my first baking memory, biscuits hold a special place in my heart. Though today I use a baking sheet and a silicone mat to bake mine, I still have the original cast iron griddle irons my momma used when I was young.

You'll notice in the picture that my biscuits are square. Since I usually make my biscuits to eat and not for show, I pictured them just I usually make them. Cutting them into squares saves me the time of re-rolling, and they taste just the same. Feel free to cut yours into traditional circles. Also, the thicker your dough, the taller your biscuit. Of course, rolling the dough thicker will decrease your yield, so plan accordingly. I usually triple this recipe at home to fill a half sheet baking pan.

I always use White Lily Flour (plain) to make my biscuits, because they are a lower gluten flour at 2 grams of protein per serving. If you don't have White Lily, AP flour can be substituted.

Heat oven to 450°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat, or grease your pan. Whisk together in a large bowl:

2 cups White Lily AP flour (it has 2 grams of protein per serving)

1 tbsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

Using a shredder, shred into the flour a little at a time:

¼ cup (or 4 tbsp.) cold, unsalted butter

Pause to toss the butter with the flour to coat it, then shred more until you're done. Use a pastry blender to finish "cutting in" the butter.

Reserving some, pour in:

⅔ to ¾ cup buttermilk

Use a large fork to combine the ingredients, stopping as soon as the dry disappears. You can add a little more buttermilk to bring the dough together. I often say, you can always add more buttermilk, but you can't take it back out. By reserving a little of it, you can add just enough and not too much.

Turn out dough onto floured surface. Turn it over on itself, gently kneading it, for no more than 10 or so turns, less if possible, until the dough comes together. You can sprinkle more flour over the dough if needed to make it less sticky. The less the dough is handled, the more tender it will be.

Once the dough has come together, gently roll it out into a rectangle that is ½ inch thick. To save time, you can use a pizza cutter to quickly cut them into squares. Of course you can cut them into circles, usually 2 inches in diameter. You can use a biscuit cutter or even a glass for this. Then reroll your dough and cut out again until dough is gone.

Place the unbaked biscuits on your sheet, almost touching each other for maximum height when baked. Dab a bit of buttermilk or oil on top of each biscuit. Bake for about 10 to 12 minutes, until nicely browned. Makes 12 small biscuits, depending on how thick and what size you form them.

Sausage Gravy

What goes better with biscuits than good Sausage Gravy? Biscuits and gravy was how I told the days of the week as a young child, for my mountain momma would almost always fix them on Saturday mornings.

I confess I have been shocked at how many people have no idea how to make a decent gravy, without the 'benefit' of a mix packet or warming up something that came out of a can. I'm not sure there is anything simpler to make, or more delicious when made from scratch, than good Sausage Gravy.

In an effort to correct this travesty of Southern culinary justice, I am taking this opportunity to make sure *you* are not one of the uneducated masses, forced to eat tasteless, gelatinous drivel. For those of you who already know how to make a decent gravy, just bear with me as I help your brethren come into the light and learn the simple secrets of this Mountain South delicacy. There, I'll get off my soap box. Now, let's make some gravy!

In a skillet, cook and crumble up until no pink remains:

1 pound of ground sausage (Any brand. I like Payne's Mild or Jimmy Dean's regular.)

If your sausage is very lean, you many need to add:

1 tbsp. of butter or more, as needed.

Mix in:

¼ cup AP flour

This makes a roux, which I talk more about at the end of the recipe. Cook this mixture for a couple of minutes.

Once the roux is cooked well, pour in:

2 cups milk (Whole milk tastes best, but any regular milk will do.)

Stir and keep stirring. (Sometimes the gravy looks weird at first to beginners, but keep stirring. It will come together!) Once the mixture reaches the boiling point, you'll know how thick the gravy will be. If you want it thinner, add a little more milk. If you made it too thin, you will need to cook more butter and flour together in a separate skillet to make more roux. Once you are pleased with the thickness, add:

Salt and pepper, to taste

Serve hot over freshly-baked crumbled biscuits. Gravy made with a roux will get thicker once it cools. You can add a bit of milk to it later if you wish to thin it. That is, if there is any leftover!

What is a roux? Pronounced "roo", this is a French word for a thickener made with equal parts of fat and flour. The fat encapsulates the flour, so you don't get lumps in your gravy. Roux can be used to thicken stews, other gravies, sauces, etc. In general, ¼ cup of flour and ¼ cup of butter together will thicken 2 cups of liquid to a gravy consistency. Be aware you need to cook a roux for a short time so it doesn't have a floury taste. The longer you cook it, the more its color will darken. The darker the roux, the less thickening power it has. Many Cajun dishes use a dark roux. I prefer a 'blond' roux for my sausage gravy, the lightest roux in color and the one with the most thickening power.

Cinnamon Roll Biscuits

Yields 10 rolls in a 10-inch circle pan

This is the recipe my daughter and I baked to win the Hometown Dessert Challenge on Episode 1 of *Next Great Baker 4*. I found the idea in *Martha White's Southern Sampler* when my kids were young and had modified the recipe over the years to fit my baking instincts and the needs of my growing family. I rarely had the time to make yeast based rolls and the aroma of these biscuits filling the kitchen always brought the kids running. One of our *Next Great Baker* judges, Bobbie Lloyd, even asked me for the recipe! I'm sure you'll love them, too…and they're not really that hard to make.

Grease well a 10-inch round pan with shortening and preheat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, whisk together:

3 cups White Lily AP flour

1 ½ tbsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

Using a large grater, shave:

6 tbsp. cold unsalted butter

into the dry ingredients and use a pastry blender to cut the butter into the flour. Add:

1¼ cup buttermilk

reserving some of it and stirring in just enough with a large fork so that the dough forms a ball when mixed. Do NOT overmix the dough. Turn out onto a well-floured surface (silicon mat works great!) and gently knead the dough, just until it comes together. Pat it out into a rectangle shape and roll out into a rectangle about 10 X 15 inches, with the long side facing you. Cover surface with:

3 tbsp. melted butter

and sprinkle with:

½ cup sugar with 1 ½ tsp. cinnamon mixed together

all the way to the edges.



Roll up like a jelly roll and seal the edge where it comes together. I roll out the dough on a silicon mat, and lift up the back edge of the mat to help form the roll. The dough will be a bit fragile. Make sure your dough is floured well underneath. A bench scraper can help you "free" the dough.



Using a very sharp serrated knife, cut 10, 1½ inch slices. I make a mark in the center, then make marks on each half to form 5 rolls. That way if I estimate wrong, I can remark and then cut. You can also use a ruler. Place cut side down into the pan. For the two end pieces, I put their cut sides up, so all rolls look the same.

Bake in the oven for about 25 minutes, or until golden brown on top. Be aware that the bottom will finish before the top, so I place my rolls on the upper rack near the end, to avoid over baking. Cool for five minutes in the pan, then turn out onto a plate, top side up. While rolls are baking, combine ingredients for **Vanilla Glaze** (page 12). Drizzle glaze over warm rolls and serve immediately. Makes 10 rolls.

Options: Raisins or pecans could be sprinkled along with the cinnamon sugar before rolling. You can use brown sugar for the cinnamon sugar and do a cream cheese frosting.

Time saver: These can be frozen and baked later. Once the rolls are cut, place on a baking sheet lined with plastic wrap and freeze solid. Put frozen rolls into a zip lock bag and store in the freezer. No need to thaw before baking, but baking time may need to be increased slightly.

Pie Dough

This is for those who want to make their own crust from scratch. This is from Bobbie Lloyd, Chief Baking Officer of Magnolia Bakery, and one of our judges on *Next Great Baker 4*. This recipe can be made in a food processor, but this is how to make it by hand.

In a bowl, whisk together:

2 ½ cups AP flour

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. sugar

"Shred" into the flour, like we did in our biscuit recipe:

2 sticks, or 8 oz. cold unsalted butter, chilled

¼ shortening, chilled

Use a pastry blender to finish blending in the butter. Touch the mixture as little as possible with your hand, as the butter needs to stay cold. Add most, but not all of:

⅓ cup + 1 tbsp. ice water

and toss with a fork. Continue to mix in water, a little at a time, just until dough comes together and the dry is gone. Form the dough into two discs, wrap well in plastic and place in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. This makes enough for two full sized crusts, or one pie with a top and bottom crust. When ready to roll out, make sure your surface is well floured.

Mini Apple Pies

Yields 10 mini pies or one large pie

With this recipe, you not only have a pie, but a filling you can use with crepes, pancakes, or as a side dish to a meal. The streusel topping can be used to top muffins or quick breads before baking (think pumpkin or zucchini breads), or when baked alone, as a granola-like topping for vanilla ice cream.

<u>Apple Pie Filling</u>

6 apples (about 2 ½ pounds), peeled, cored and thinly sliced

½ cup white sugar

1/3 cup brown sugar

3 tablespoons AP flour

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (more if needed for tartness)

¾ tsp apple pie spice

¼ tsp salt

2 tablespoons butter

Peel, core, and thinly slice your apples. I used Granny Smith and Mutzu, but you can use Golden Delicious, Gala, Fuji, Winesap, Jonathan, etc. Place apples into a large bowl and add all the other ingredients, except for the butter. Place apples, spread out evenly, onto a half sheet, or other baking pan with some sides to hold in the juices. 'Dot' the apples with small pieces of the butter. Bake at 375 degrees for about 20 minutes, or until apples are fork-tender and cooked through. Use right away, or keep refrigerated until ready to be used in pies, as a topping, etc.

Streusel Topping

Mix together:

2/3 cup AP flour

2/3 cup rolled oats (NOT quick cook)

2/3 cup finely chopped pecans (optional)

2/3 cup brown sugar

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ tsp salt

Mix the streusel ingredients together well in a glass bowl and microwave for one minute, or until the butter is melted. Stir mixture so it comes together. It will be very crumbly.

To finish pies…

Fill mini pastry shells with apple filling, heaping up a little, not just even with the top. Cover the top with streusel filling by pressing it on. Place pastry shells on a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees until crust is browned, about 40 minutes. Let cool on a rack before serving. You can eat them in their pan with a fork, or remove the pan and serve on a plate with a side of vanilla ice cream.

Mini Chicken Pot Pie

Yields 3 ¾ cup of filling. Number of pies determined by size of pie pan(s)

This mixture of bite-sized chicken and vegetables, in a gravy-like sauce and baked in a pie crust, has been a one-dish meal for generations. Why buy the frozen version when you can make your own from scratch and customize it with your own favorite flavors? The sauce is made by using a corn-starch slurry, the perfect way to thicken liquids of all sorts.

One recipe of Pie Dough, or use pre-made crusts of your choice. Form dough into your pie pans: muffin cups, mini pie pans, deep dish glass pie pan, etc. Heat oven to 400° F.

On the stove, in a saucepan, combine together:

1 cup chicken meat, cooked and chopped (or one can of chicken, 12.5 oz)

2 cups mixed vegetables of your choice

1 can chicken stock (save juice from canned chicken, add water or broth to make 14 oz)

Heat to a simmer. If the flavor needs a boost, stir in

Powdered instant chicken bouillon to taste, starting with 1 teaspoon.

Stir together completely in a very small container:

4 teaspoons corn starch

2 tablespoon water or reserved chicken stock

Pour half into the simmering saucepan and stir. If your mixture isn't thick enough, add more and stir. Once mixture is thick enough, give it a taste. Add

Salt and pepper to taste.

Pour the mixture into your prepared pie pan(s) and top with another crust, or with pieces of crust. If using a whole top crust, make sure to cut holes into it to allow steam to escape when cooking. Bake at 375° F for 20 minutes, or until crust is nicely browned. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly before eating, to avoid blistering your mouth!

Sweet Treats from Easy to Extravagant

Kitchen Safety

Accidents: *Cuts* - No one likes getting hurt and the kitchen is filled with all sorts of potential dangers. Use stable cutting boards for knives and use the right knife for the job. Keep knuckles bent under and don't get distracted while cutting. Wash and put knives away promptly after use. Be aware that opened tin cans and cut lids are extremely sharp. So are broken glass and ceramic dishes. Avoid using your bare hands to clean up these messes and don't allow others to walk around the area until swept/vacuumed well. Shattered glass travels far, so look around and under things to make sure you found it all.

To avoid burns, use well-constructed hot pads and oven mitts. Be aware that holes can develop in these over time. Make sure they are not wet, as heat goes through wet material very quickly. Never pick up a hot item unless you know where you will put it. Be careful to not touch your bare arm to a rack or side of a hot oven when removing baked goods. Put the handles of pots, pans and skillets away from the edge, especially around younger children that might reach up and pull them down. Be careful to avoid steam burns from boiling and super-hot food.

Never turn the heat on the stove and walk away. Never forget to turn off the heat from the stove or oven when you are finished. Pull hot pans away from the heat when you are done, even if you turned off the burner. Be aware that something doesn't have to look hot to be hot.

Grease/oil and foods containing it can overheat and catch fire. Don't get grease or oil to the smoking point. NEVER put water into hot oil. Should a fire start, use the fire extinguisher every kitchen should have for that purpose, or put a large lid over the flame or throw baking soda on the flames, NEVER water. Water will cause it spread catastrophically. Should a fire start in your oven, turn off the heat and leave the door closed. Don't hesitate to call 911 if a fire can't be put out right away.

Long sleeves can catch on fire when using the stove or grilling. Long hair or loose articles can get into food or caught in machines. A roller brush will remove loose hair from clothing.

Spills can cause slips and falls so clean up floor messes right away.

Food Safety: To keep safe from germs and contamination, wash hands well with soap and water before, during, and after food prep. Fruits and vegetables should be rinsed well before using. Don't let juices from raw meat cross contaminant other foods; use separate cutting boards and storage places for your meats and fresh fruits/veggies. Keep cutting boards and counters clean. Sponges and dirty washrags can harbor and spread bacteria so use clean clothes. Bacteria grow rapidly in warm moist environments so keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Make sure foods, especially meats, fish and eggs, are cooked to their proper temperature. Put up leftovers promptly. Don't use food that is spoiled.

Blueberry Muffins

Yields 12 muffins

A simple but delicious muffin that's quick and easy to put together. While fresh berries are the best, frozen work great and you don't need to thaw them first. You'll find a tasty variation at the end of the recipe.

Preheat your oven to 425°. Grease a 12-cup muffin pan well or fill with paper liners.

In a bowl, whisk together:

¾ cup milk

½ cup vegetable oil

1 egg

In a separate bowl, whisk together:

2 cups all-purpose flour

⅓ cup sugar

1 tbsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ones and mix using a spoon or spatula, not a whisk as it would clog up. This batter will be a bit lumpy. Just before the dry disappears, fold in:

1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

To fold means to gently turn in ingredients in an up-and-down circular motion, not stir them around. Divide batter between the muffin cups using an ice cream scoop and bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until just golden brown on top. Remove from the oven, let cool 5 to 10 minutes, and remove to cooling rack. Cover with the glaze recipe that follows if desired.

Vanilla Glaze

1 ⅓ cup powdered sugar

3 tbsp. melted butter

2 tsp. corn syrup

1 tsp. vanilla

2 tbsp. cream or milk

Melt the butter in a glass measuring cup, then add all the other ingredients. Stir until smooth. You can adjust the powdered sugar to make it thicker, or add a little more cream or milk to make it thinner.

French Puff Variation

Make the muffins exactly the same way, except for the following: Add one teaspoon of freshly ground nutmeg to the dry ingredients. Leave out the blueberries. Bake as directed. When the muffins are baked, dip them in melted butter and roll them in cinnamon sugar (1 cup of sugar plus a teaspoon of cinnamon or more, to taste.)

Hot Cocoa Mug Cake

Yields two servings, or one large serving

In a coffee mug, whisk together:

¼ cup all-purpose flour

5 tbsp. sugar

2 tbsp. cocoa powder

Mix in:

1 egg

3 tbsp. milk

3 tbsp. oil

Dash each of salt and vanilla

Stir together until smooth. Stir in:

A few mini marshmallows

1 tbsp. chocolate chips

Pour half the batter into an empty cup to share, or leave it all in the mug if you're hungry. Bake for about 60 seconds, depending on your microwave. The large serving might take slightly longer, but not more than 2 minutes. Cake will be slightly gooey on top, but more solid underneath. Best eaten right away. A dollop of whipped cream on top makes it even better!

Edible Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough

Yields about 2 cups

½ cup softened butter

¾ cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla

2 tablespoons milk

½ tsp salt

1 ¼ cups flour

1 cup of mini chocolate chips (use full size if eating by the spoon, instead of as a dip)

½ cups chopped toasted nuts, like pecans, if desired

Cream together butter and sugar. Add vanilla and milk, then mix in the flour and salt. Add your chips and nuts. That's all there is to it! Store leftovers in the refrigerator and let the 'dough' come to room temperature to make it dippable. You can mix up your mix ins to create your favorite flavor and use pretzels, vanilla wafers, graham crackers, etc. for dipping. The edible cookie dough can also be eaten by the spoon!

Note: Some recent news reports discuss concerns about eating raw flour, while other experts say it is an extremely low-risk food and there is no need to be alarmed. If this is a concern for you, you can either put your flour in a glass bowl and heat in the microwave until it reaches 165° (about one minute, verify with a thermometer), or spread out the flour on a cookie sheet and heat in a 350° oven for 5 minutes. Such flour would not be good for baking.

Triple Chocolate Chunk Cookies

Yields 4 dozen 2½ inch cookies

1 cup of unsalted butter, softened

⅔ cup packed brown sugar

1 ½ cups sugar

2 large eggs

2 tsp. vanilla

½ cup unsweetened cocoa

2 ½ cups AP flour

1 tsp. baking soda

½ tsp. salt

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

1 cup white chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper or a silicon baking mat. With a mixer, cream together the butter and sugars. Add the vanilla and beat in the eggs, one at a time, until very light and fluffy. In a separate bowl, whisk together the cocoa, flour, soda, and salt. Add to the creamed ingredients, just until the flour disappears. Mix in the chocolate chips.

Using a small ice cream scoop, drop the dough about two inches apart onto your sheet and bake in the oven for about 10 to 12 minutes. Look for the cookies to 'break' on the surface, then pull them from the oven. Let cookies cool on sheet for about 5 minutes to 'set,' then use a spatula to place them on a wire rack to finish cooling.

A time-saving tip: Make frozen cookie dough by placing balled dough close together on a cookie sheet lined with plastic wrap and place in freezer until frozen solid. Place frozen dough balls in a zip lock bag and store in the freezer. Bake as directed, though you may need to extend the baking time slightly. Look for the 'breaking' on the surface, just like freshly made ones.

Easy Chocolate Sauce

Yields about 2 cups

Everything's better with chocolate, especially a warm, chocolate sauce you can quickly make in the microwave, without a candy thermometer. For a mocha version, add a spoonful (or more to taste) of instant coffee to the cream.

In a microwave safe bowl or glass measuring cup, stir together:

½ cup heavy whipping cream or evaporated milk

3 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Bring to a boil on in the microwave, which will take two minutes or so on high, depending on your microwave. Once it's reached a good roiling boil, add all at once:

3/4 cup of semi-sweet chocolate chips (5 oz.)

After one minute, whisk the mixture until nice and smooth. Stir in:

2 teaspoons vanilla (or your favorite liqueur)

Store finished sauce in the refrigerator, and warm up briefly in the microwave to make it pourable again. Perfect on ice cream and of course, on the Easy Chocolate Layer Cake!

Mini Molten Lava Cakes

Yields 9 mini cakes

This recipe is a simple way to create a molten lava cake at home, with no special equipment, and just a few basic ingredients. And if you ever need a gluten free dessert, this one contains zero flour. To make it even easier, you can make put the finished batter in your muffin tin and refrigerate it up to a day in advance. Who says you need to eat out to have a fancy dessert?

Preheat your oven to 400°F and prepare your muffin tin by coating 9 cups with a thin layer of butter, then sugaring them. In a microwave safe bowl, melt in your microwave on high for a minute or so:

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips (6 oz.)

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter

Once melted and stirred smooth, add in and stir until smooth:

¼ cup unsweetened cocoa

In a mixer bowl, beat on medium speed until the mixture has soft peaks:

4 large egg whites (1/2 cup of whites)

1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar

Increase mixer speed to high, and slowly add:

2 tablespoons sugar

Once peaks are stiff, but not dry, use a rubber spatula and fold in a good large spoonful of the whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten in, then fold in the rest, until no white streaks remain. Be gentle!

Fill your muffin cups about ¾ full and bake for about 7 to 8 minutes, or until you see cracks form on the top of your cake.

Let the cakes cool in the pan for about 3 minutes, and you'll notice the sides begin to pull away from the sides of each cup. Gently jiggle the pan upward, to see if the cakes are loose. Any that aren't should be gently loosened with a thin knife around the edges.

Put a rack or plate on top of the cakes and turn over to unmold. You can gently use a wide spatula to plate each cake, using a variety of toppings of your choice. (recipes follow). Eat right away, as cake will lose its gooey center as it sits. Also, if you want a gooey texture, pull it more quickly. If you want it cooked through, pull it later. You notice I said the word 'gently' often. That's because the cake gets its structure from egg whites, which are fragile.

Raspberry Coulis

Coulis (cool-lee) is a just a fancy word for a fruit sauce you don't cook, which is what this is. So you can impress your dinner guests when you tell them what is for dessert! A bonus with this sauce is that it is bright red, so the lava cake looks like a volcano when you pour this sauce on top! The tartness of the sauce is a perfect accompaniment to the richness of the chocolate.

2 cups of fresh or frozen (thawed) berries

Sugar to taste (start with 2 tablespoons)

A splash of lemon juice (like a teaspoon or so, more if needed)

Puree your berries in a blender and add in sugar and lemon juice. Taste. Depending on the sweetness/tartness of your berries, add sugar and/or lemon juice. Don't add too much lemon, or that flavor will be too pronounced. To get a nice, smooth sauce, strain out the seeds by pushing the mixture through a sieve. It takes a little time, but it's worth the effort.

Savory Dishes and Yeast Breads

Behind the scenes on TV

Reality TV

I was thrilled to appear on TLC's *Next Great Baker Season 4*, along with my daughter, Danielle, back in 2014. The show aired in over 130 countries and can still be seen on streaming services. But I'll be honest: being on international television did not change my life, at least not in the ways many expect.

Certainly, some doors opened for me, but I realized a few important facts through the process.

- My value isn't based on how famous I am or how unknown I am. Every person has eternal value.
- Celebrities are people just like the rest of us. The public doesn't see the real 'them' and if we did, we probably wouldn't be so impressed.
- Be real and authentic everywhere you go. Don't pretend to be something or someone you aren't.
- Networking is fine, but don't try to 'steal' the significance of others for your own personal gain.
- Real dreams require real work to achieve. There is no super-fast shortcut to reaching the top.
- Being successful is more about people, relationships, and personal growth than it is about money, possessions and fame.

Should you ever decide to audition for a reality show, remember to be yourself. They want authentic people who are interesting and will make great television. For cooking shows, so many people have the skills and are wanting to get on that the competition is strong. Keep working your basic skills and maybe with a bit of luck, you'll get the call. After trying two previous times to appear on *Next Great Baker* and coming up short, I almost didn't apply the third time. In my case, the third time was the charm.

Mini Breakfast Egg Cups

Yields 7 muffin-tin sized portions

Great to make ahead and perfect for those busy mornings when you need to grab and bite and go. Mix up the add-ins to create your favorite flavor combos. Substitute part or all the whole eggs with egg whites for a lower fat version. Also makes a tasty dinner!

Grease a muffin tin. Preheat oven to 375°F. Beat well:

4 large eggs

¼ cup milk or cream

1/4 teaspoon of salt

Pinch of ground black pepper

Divide evenly between your prepared muffin tins the following:

1/2 cup diced ham

1/2 cup cheddar cheese (or cheese of your choice)

1/2 cup cut up veggies, like green pepper, onion, tomato, mushroom, etc.

1/2 cup frozen potatoes, like tater tots or hash browns

Pour the egg mixture into each muffin tin, putting the same amount into each one. Top each tin with a few

Bread croutons

if desired. Bake at 375° for 25 minutes, or until egg is set. Let cool briefly in the tins before removing. Can be stored in the refrigerator and reheated in the microwave for a quick breakfast.

Pizza Dough Master Recipe

I call this the 'Master' recipe, because you can make several dishes with it. In this chapter, we are learning how to maximize gluten: use a high-gluten flour, knead the dough well, and give it a good rise to develop structure. To be a successful bread baker, you need to use all your senses, including your sense of touch. You can learn much about your dough just by touching it, so my first set of instructions are for making this dough by hand. At the end, I'll explain how to make it using a stand mixer.

In a large bowl, whisk together:

1 cup warm water (If it feels like a nice warm bath to your finger, it's just right.)

1 package of instant active yeast, or 2 tsp.

1 tsp. sugar

If you aren't sure how fresh your yeast is, pause for a few minutes and see if the water gets creamy bubbles, a sign your yeast is alive. This is called proofing the yeast. Pour in:

2 tbsp. olive oil

And add one cup of the:

3 cups of bread flour and

1 ½ tsp. salt

Continue adding flour, a cup or half cup at a time, until the dough is no longer sticky and easily cleans the sides of the bowl. If you add too much flour and dough gets crumbly, you can add a teaspoon of water at a time and knead it again to restore it.

Once the dough has come together and it isn't too sticky, knead it by hand on a floured surface for about 5 minutes. There are several ways to knead dough. The easiest is to form it into a ball, fold one side over, press it down with the heel of your hand, turn the dough slightly around, and repeat. Continue until the dough feels silky to the touch, like baby skin.



Put the dough into a tight ball by turning it under into itself. To keep things simple, I plop it back into the same mixing bowl to rise, spraying the bowl and the dough with nonstick spray, and covering the bowl with plastic wrap.



Set the bowl in a warm place to rise (not a hot place, or you will kill the yeast), for about 15 minutes, until your fingers leave a nice indention when you press them into the dough. Punch down the dough and let it rest for 5 minutes, which will allow the gluten (the protein that gives the dough its structure) time to relax and make the dough easier to roll. At this point, the dough can be used to make **Rustic Bread Sticks**, **Homemade Pizza**, or **Calzones**.

<u>To make in a stand mixer:</u> Mix water, yeast and sugar in mixer bowl. Add oil and start adding flour a cup at a time, using the dough hook. Add enough flour so that dough cleans the sides of the bowl, but isn't crumbly. It should 'grab' on to the hook. Knead at low speed for 5 minutes. Form dough into a tight ball by hand for the rise, and continue with the above recipe at that point.



Rustic Bread Sticks

These are the fastest yeast breadsticks you can make! I'll show you how I form them for my family, but you can certainly form them in a rectangle pan. You can also form each one by hand into any shape you choose.

Start with:

1 recipe of Pizza Dough Master

Heat oven to 415°. Roll out the dough to the shape of your baking sheet. This amount of dough is perfect for a 16-inch pizza pan. Roll until between ¼ and ½ inch thick.

Place dough on greased sheet. (You can use your fingers to do the final shaping to match your pan.) Using a pizza cutter, cut dough into individual sticks, but don't move them. They will bake together, but be very easy to pull apart.

You can bake right away, or if you want softer, fluffier bread sticks, let them rise for about 15 minutes, covered with plastic wrap, in a warm place.

Brush with olive oil and sprinkle with herbs or sea salt if desired. Bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes, then pull apart to serve.

Homemade Pizza

The full-version recipe makes one 16-inch pizza. The dough can also be used in smaller amounts, allowing each person to make their own mini-pizzas.

Start with:

1 recipe of Pizza Dough Master

Heat the oven to 425°. Regardless of your pizza size, on a floured surface, form your dough into a flat circle. With a rolling pin, start in the center and roll up to, but not over, the top edge. Repeat, but roll from the middle down. Give the dough a quarter turn and repeat. (Imagine your dough has a clock face, and turn the top (12) to the 9 o'clock position.)

Keep doing this until the dough is close to the size of your pan. Then start rolling out in all directions around the circle, to get the final shape and size. Through the rolling process, make sure dough isn't sticking to your counter. (My pan is a pizza screen found at restaurant supply stores. It's dirt cheap (less than $5 for a large one), makes a nice bottom crust, and I can use it for other things as well.)

Roll up the edges and seal by a firm pinch. I will 'dock' the dough with my fingers, to help minimize bubbles in the dough later and give the sauce a place to stick better. The dough is sturdy, so don't be afraid to move it onto your pan.

Drizzle a little olive oil onto the crust and spread it out evenly over the entire surface, including the outer crust. This helps the crust brown nicely and keeps the interior from getting soggy from the sauce.

Spread out your favorite sauce (to be honest, I use jarred spaghetti sauce to save time) and top with mozzarella cheese and your favorite toppings.

Put on the middle rack of a 415° oven and bake for 10 minutes. Then start checking the bottom crust, to make sure it doesn't brown too quickly. You can move pizza to the upper rack if the bottom starts to get done before the top. You may need to adjust the temperature and time based on your oven and your pan. After about 15 minutes total, remove the cooked pizza and let it cool for a few minutes before cutting, to give the cheese time to set up a bit.

Calzones

Calzones are basically pizza toppings baked inside a crust. Here's an easy version:

Roll out a circle of dough, at least 6 inches in diameter and fill one half with your favorite fillings, putting the sauce down first. Dampen the dough's outer edge with water on the filling side and fold the dough over. Press down, then fold the edge together. Either pinch the edge together by hand or use a fork to crimp. Brush crust with olive oil (use a wash made with 2 tablespoons of water and an egg yolk for a shiny crust), and cut a few small slits for venting. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes or so on parchment covered baking sheet, until dough is nicely browned.

Monkey Bread

I think this is called Monkey Bread, because people make a monkey out of themselves eating it! This recipe was created from the Pizza Dough Master Recipe, by making some simple substitutions and adding eggs.

Generously grease a Bundt or angel food cake pan and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Set aside. In your mixer bowl, dissolve together:

1 cup warm milk (I heat it in the microwave until it is lukewarm)

1 package of yeast, or 2 tsp.

1 tbsp. sugar or honey

Add:

2 tbsp. softened unsalted butter

2 eggs, slightly beaten

Add:

About 3 cups of bread flour (one cup at a time)

1 ½ tsp. salt

Stir with the dough hook (or by hand) until dough cleans the sides of the bowl, adding more flour if necessary. Knead for five minutes then form into a ball. Place the dough in an oiled bowl, turn over so the oiled bottom of the dough is facing up, cover with plastic and place in a warm place until doubled in size, at least 30 minutes.

Once doubled, punch down and pinch off golf-ball sized balls of dough, rounding each one, dropping in melted butter, and rolling in cinnamon sugar. Place balls of dough in the prepared pan. Once finished, and it might only come up half way, cover pan and let rise again until doubled in size. Bake at 375° for about 30 minutes, or until nicely brown. Be aware that bottom of pan will brown before top, due to all the sugar, so don't overbake. Let cool, turn out on a plate, a cover with **Vanilla Glaze** (pg. 30)

You can also make this recipe by greasing and sugaring a muffin tin and putting a few balls of prepared dough into each tin and allowing to rise. Baking time is reduced, so check on them at 15 minutes and pull them once they are baked through.

Romania

Location: Romania is in **Eastern Europe**, near the

Black Sea.

Capital city: Bucharest

Neighboring countries: Hungary, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, and Serbia

Population: About 19 million people

Language: The official language is **Romanian**, a Romance language (similar to Spanish, French, and Italian)

Currency: Romanian leu

Major landforms:

- The Carpathian Mountains run through the country
- The Danube River forms part of its southern border

Famous region: Transylvania (often linked to Dracula legends)

Government: Romania is a **democratic republic**

Prăjitură cu Mere

Romanian Apple Cake

From Allrecipes.com

For our class, we'll make a half recipe and bake as cupcakes. But in your own kitchen, double the recipe, bake in a greased and floured 9 X 13 cake pan for 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the middle comes out clean.

Preheat oven to 350F. Line cupcake pan (or flour 9 X 13 if doubling recipe). Prepare:

2 cups of peeled, chopped apples

And set aside. In a bowl, whisk together:

1 egg and 1 white (3 eggs if you're doubling it)

⅓ cup vegetable oil (3/4 if double)

¾ cup white sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

In a separate bowl, whisk together:

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

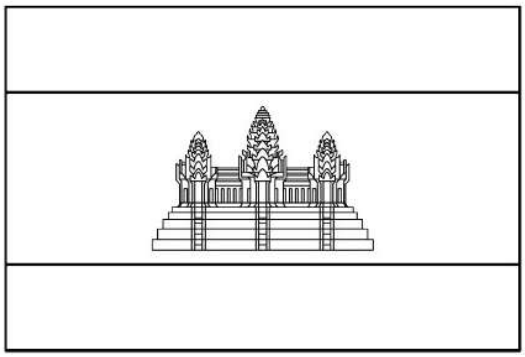
1 cup all-purpose flour

Stir flour mixture into the wet mixture just until the "dry" disappears. Fold in

⅓ cup chopped walnuts

Using a smaller ice cream scoop or spoon, fill each cupcake liner halfway with batter. If you overfill, they will rise over the sides. Bake at 350F for about 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let them cool until they are slightly warm before eating.

Cambodia



Location: Cambodia is in **Southeast Asia**, near the **Gulf of Thailand**

Capital city: Phnom Penh

Neighboring countries: Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos

Population: About 17 million people

Language: The official language is **Khmer**

Currency: Cambodian riel (U.S. dollars are also widely used)

Major landforms:

- The Mekong River runs through the country
- Tonlé Sap is an important lake that changes size during the year

Famous landmark: Angkor Wat, one of the largest religious monuments in the world

Government: Cambodia is a **constitutional monarchy** (it has a king, but also an elected government)

Historical note: The country was deeply affected by the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s

បង្អែមត្រសក់ស្រូវ

Bongime trusok srov

Melon Dessert

Cambodians don't traditionally have ovens in their kitchens. So baked goods are not in their cuisine. But they still enjoy unique desserts, like this refreshing treat.

Cut up small chunks of ripe melon.

Our honeydew melon is the closest to what they use.

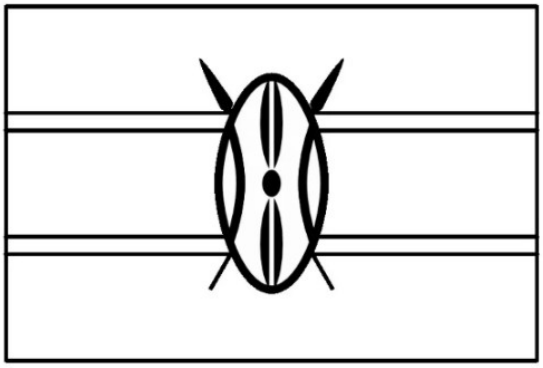
Add shaved ice and drizzle with condensed milk. Enjoy!

A word about rice…

If the Lord's Prayer had been written in Cambodia, it would have said "Give us this day our daily rice." Rice is the foundation of the Cambodian cuisine, and you won't easily find a meal without it, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And they have many kinds of rice they use, including sticky rice, short-grained rice, Jasmine rice, and more. Each village grows rice and of course, they think their rice is the best.

If you go into a modern Cambodian kitchen, you're sure to find at least one rice cooker on the counter, while glutenous rice is cooked by steaming. Here in America, we like our rice light and fluffy, but in Cambodia, and in much of Asia, rice that sticks together is preferred. It's easier to eat that way. And while much of Asia uses chopsticks at every meal, Cambodians prefer large spoons and save chopsticks for eating noodles.

Kenya



Location: Kenya is in **East Africa**, along the **Indian Ocean**

Capital city: Nairobi

Neighboring countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania

Population: About 55 million people

Languages: The official languages are **Swahili** and **English**

Currency: Kenyan shilling

Major landforms:

- The Great Rift Valley runs through Kenya
- Mount Kenya is the country's highest mountain

Famous wildlife areas:

- Maasai Mara National Reserve is known for safaris and the Great Migration

Government: Kenya is a **democratic republic**

Independence: Gained independence from United Kingdom in 1963

Chapati

Yields 5 or 6 breads

In a mixer bowl, mix together:

3 cups all-purpose flour

1 ½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon sugar

Once combined, pour in:

1 cup of warm water or warm milk

2 tablespoons oil or ghee (clarified butter, melted)

Using a mixer and dough hook, mix until dough comes together and knead for 5 minutes. You can add a little more flour as needed, but the dough will be soft and fairly sticky. To do this step by hand, knead on the counter for 8 to 12 minutes, until the dough is smooth to the touch and still stretchy, adding flour as needed

Put the dough in a lightly-oiled bowl, cover, and let set for 40 minutes, so the gluten has time to relax. This makes the rolling out much easier.

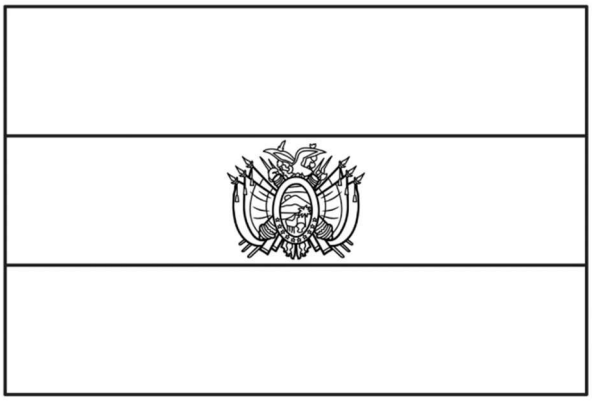
Divide the dough into 5 or 6 equal pieces and form each piece into a small ball, using your hand as a 'cage' on the counter. Take one ball and roll it out with a rolling pin until about 8 inches in diameter. Don't be too fussy about it, unless you want to stop right here and cook your chapati. If you want the wonderful layered and flaky version, read on:

Take the rolled out circle of dough and lightly oil one side using a pastry brush. Put it oiled-side down onto a plate covered with flour. Brush the side facing up with oil, then flip it over so both sides are coated with flour. Shake off the excess.

Lay the floured circle on the counter, and fold it up just like you would a paper fan. Press and stretch slightly, then set on the side and roll it up, tucking the end under the roll. Press flat with your hand so it all comes together.

Now roll out the dough into a circle for the last time, until a little thinner than a pancake. Oil each side and place on a hot skillet or griddle. (My griddle was set to 325 degrees.) Let it cook a few minutes on each side, until golden spots appear. Some spots will puff up. Once cooked, keep stacking your finished chapatis together and keep covered to stay warm until ready to serve.

Bolivia



Location: Bolivia is in **South America** and is **landlocked** (it has no coastline)

Capital cities: Sucre (official) and La Paz (seat of government)

Neighboring countries: Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Paraguay

Population: About 12 million people

Languages: Spanish is widely spoken and Indigenous languages like **Quechua** and **Aymara**

Currency: Boliviano

Major landforms:

- The Andes Mountains run through western Bolivia
- Lake Titicaca lies on the border with Peru

Famous place:

- Salar de Uyuni, a white salt flat

Government: Bolivia is a **democratic republic**

Fun fact: La Paz is one of the **highest capital cities in the world**

Cuñapés

Yields 10 to 15 smaller portions, depending on size you make

Preheat your oven to 425F.

In a bowl, mix together well

1 cup tapioca flour

2 cups shredded cotija cheese (or parmesan)

Add

1 beaten egg

¼ cup milk and mix. You'll want to get your hands into it to mix it thoroughly.

It should make a dough that forms a ball.

Eggs are not always the same size and hydration matters here. If the dough is too crumbly, add **a teaspoon of milk** at a time until it comes together.

Dough should be on the dry side, but hold its shape. If the dough is wet and loose and a small ball made from it slumps on the cookie sheet, you need to add a little more tapioca flour to firm it.

Form the dough into portions the size and shape of golf balls and place on a lined cookie sheet about 2 inches apart.

Bake for 15 minutes at 425F, until golden brown and dry. You might need to put on broil very briefly to get color on the top. They are fine to eat if the top is pale as you don't want to overbake the bottom.

Best enjoyed while still warm. In Bolivia, they are enjoyed as a quick breakfast, hot from the oven or as an afternoon snack. They will dip them into a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. Sometimes they are sliced open spread with butter, jam, or dulce de leche.