

TOP 10  
RECIPES

ONCE UPON A *chef*

By Jennifer Segal



# SWEET, SPICY, SALTY CANDIED PECANS



*My husband calls these candied pecans “crack nuts” because they’re madly addictive. They’re perfect to serve with cocktails, toss over salads or just keep around the house over the holidays. They also make a delicious homemade gift. The best part? You only need four simple ingredients to make them — and if you start right now, you’ll be done in 15 minutes.*

1/2 cup Confectioners sugar  
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
2 cups pecans

Makes 2 cups

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the Confectioners sugar, kosher salt and cayenne pepper.

Add the pecans to the sugar mixture, along with 4 teaspoons of water. Stir until the sugar is dissolved into a sticky glaze. (If the mixture is still too powdery after stirring for a while, it’s okay to add a few drops of water - just don’t add too much!)

Transfer the pecans to the prepared baking sheet and arrange in a single layer. Do your best to make sure they are evenly spread out and the nuts are not touching each other. Scrape out every last bit of glaze from the bowl and drizzle over the nuts. Bake for 10-12 minutes, until the pecans are crusty on top and caramelized and golden on the bottom. Immediately slide the parchment off of the hot baking sheet and allow the pecans to cool completely on the countertop. Once cool, remove the pecans from the parchment, breaking apart any clusters if necessary, and store in an airtight container.

**Note:** Make sure you’re using parchment paper and not wax paper. Wax paper is not nonstick.



# THAI CHICKEN & RICE NOODLE SOUP



*Made with a rotisserie chicken and pantry staples, this fragrant and warming soup is almost instant gratification. The recipe calls for Thai green curry paste, an excellent substitute for hard-to-find Asian ingredients, like lemongrass and galangal. You can find it, along with the other Asian ingredients, in the Asian section of most large supermarkets. After making this soup, one reader wrote, "My husband gobbled and slurped. Truly. It wasn't pretty, but it is an accurate measure of how outstanding this recipe is."*

1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots,  
from 1-2 large shallots  
1 tablespoon minced fresh  
ginger  
2 tablespoons Thai green curry  
paste  
4 cups low sodium chicken  
broth  
1 can (13.5 fl oz) coconut milk  
2 tablespoons fish sauce  
4 packed teaspoons light or  
dark brown sugar  
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
1/2 teaspoon turmeric

4 oz thin rice noodles  
2 cups shredded cooked  
chicken, from a rotisserie  
chicken  
Handful chopped fresh cilantro  
3 scallions, thinly sliced  
Sriracha sauce  
Lime wedges

Serves 4

Heat the oil in a medium soup pot over medium-low heat. Add the shallots and ginger and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the green curry paste and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute more. Add the chicken broth, coconut milk, fish sauce, brown sugar, lime juice, and turmeric; bring to a gentle simmer. Continue simmering, uncovered, for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the rice noodles according to the package instructions.

When ready to serve, taste the soup and adjust the seasoning. Gently reheat the noodles in the microwave, if necessary. Divide the noodles and chicken into serving bowls. Ladle the broth over top and sprinkle with cilantro and scallions. Serve with Sriracha sauce and lime wedges.

Note: As the soup sits on the stove, some of the fat may rise to the surface. Feel free to skim it, if necessary. Otherwise, you can stir it back in.



# KALE & BRUSSELS SPROUTS SALAD

## WITH WALNUTS, PARMESAN & LEMON-MUSTARD DRESSING

*Made with crisp power greens, toasted walnuts, Parmesan, and a lemony Dijon dressing — this salad tastes like a healthful, crunchy Caesar. Be prepared to love it, even if you're not a kale or Brussels sprouts person. My husband, an ardent Brussels sprouts avoider, devoured it without even realizing there were Brussels sprouts in there (at least until I let my daughter in on it; she giggled every time he took a bite). Make it for weekday lunches or as a side to simply grilled or broiled salmon, [Grilled Flank Steak with Garlic & Rosemary](#) or [Grilled Chicken Breasts with Lemon, Garlic and Herbs](#). Bonus: it keeps well and can be made ahead of time.*

### Salad

1 cup walnuts, chopped  
1 pound brussels sprouts, trimmed, halved and thinly sliced  
1 pound Tuscan or curly kale (about 1 large bunch), thick center rib removed, leaves thinly sliced  
1 cup coarsely grated or chopped Parmigiano Reggiano

### Dressing

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, from about 2 lemons  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots, from one large shallot  
1 small clove garlic, minced  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Serves 6-8

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil for easy clean-up. Bake the walnuts for 5-8 minutes, until toasted and fragrant. Keep a close eye on them; they burn quickly.

Combine the brussels sprouts and kale in a large bowl.

Make the dressing by combining all of the ingredients in a small bowl. Pour over the vegetables. Add most of the walnuts and cheese, reserving some to garnish the platter, and toss well. Let the salad sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes (or up to a few hours in the fridge) to allow the flavors to meld and the vegetables to soften. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Transfer to a serving dish and scatter the remaining walnuts and cheese over top. Serve at room temperature.



# PERUVIAN CHICKEN WITH GREEN SAUCE



*This is my take on Pollo a la Brasa, the delicious spit-roasted chicken made popular by so many Peruvian restaurants. The chicken emerges from the oven tender, juicy and crisp-skinned. But what makes it truly special is the accompanying green sauce (recipe courtesy of my friend Kenji López-Alt, managing culinary director at [Serious Eats](#) and author of [The Food Lab](#)). It's spicy, creamy, and downright addictive—you can put it on virtually everything, and it even makes a fabulous dip or salad dressing.*

## Chicken

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1/4 cup lime juice, from 2 limes  
4 large garlic cloves, roughly chopped  
1 tablespoon kosher salt  
2 teaspoons paprika  
1 teaspoon black pepper  
1 tablespoon cumin  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
2 teaspoons sugar  
4 pound whole chicken

## Green Sauce

3 jalapeño chili peppers, seeded if desired (use half the seeds for a medium-hot sauce), and roughly chopped  
1 cup fresh cilantro leaves  
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped  
1/2 cup mayonnaise, best quality such as Hellmann's  
1/4 cup sour cream  
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Serves 4

Combine all of the ingredients except the chicken in a blender or mini food processor, and blend until smooth. Remove the giblets from the inside of the chicken and pat the outside of the chicken dry with paper towels; place in a bowl, breast side up with the legs facing you. Using the handle of a wooden spoon or your fingers, loosen the skin from the flesh over the breasts and legs, being careful not to tear the skin or push all the way through (you want the marinade to stay inside the bird). Spoon about 2/3 of the marinade evenly underneath the skin, and spread the remaining 1/3 evenly over the skin. Marinate the chicken in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours or overnight.

Adjust the oven rack to the lower-middle position, and preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a roasting pan with aluminum foil for easy clean-up. Spray a rack (preferably a v-shape) with non-stick cooking spray and place the chicken on top. Tie the legs together with kitchen string. Roast for 20 minutes, until the skin is golden. Turn the heat down to 375 degrees, and continue to roast for about an hour and ten minutes more, or until the juices run clear when you cut between the leg and thigh. (Keep an eye on it - if it's browning too quickly, cover it loosely with foil.) Tent the chicken with foil and let rest for about 20 minutes. Tilt the chicken over the roasting pan to release the juices, then transfer to a cutting board. Carve the chicken and serve with green sauce.

## For the Green Sauce

Combine all of the ingredients except the olive oil in a blender or food processor and blend into a smooth sauce. With the motor running, open lid and slowly drizzle in olive oil. It will seem very runny at this point but, don't worry, it will thicken up as it sits. Transfer the sauce to a bowl, cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

# BAJA FISH TACOS



*Many years ago, Michael and I rented a convertible and drove up the California coast. One of our favorite stops was La Jolla, where we strolled around town and stumbled upon a Mexican restaurant with great food and breathtaking views of the Pacific ocean. I don't know if it was the scenery, the margaritas, or the fact that we were on vacation, but the Baja fish tacos were out of this world. To recreate them at home, I came up with this version made of crispy beer-battered cod tucked into corn tortillas with a cabbage slaw and smoky chipotle sauce. I'm happy to say they come pretty darn close!*

## **Cabbage Slaw**

5 cups (or one 10-ounce bag) shredded red cabbage  
3 tablespoons minced red onion  
1/2 cup fresh chopped cilantro  
3 tablespoons cider vinegar  
1-1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt

## **Chipotle Sauce**

3/4 cup mayonnaise, best quality such as Hellmann's  
2 tablespoons lime juice  
2-3 chipotle chiles in adobo sauce (canned), roughly chopped, plus 1-2 teaspoons sauce (spicy, use less for a milder sauce)  
1 large garlic clove, roughly chopped

## **Beer Batter**

1 cup all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 cup beer

## **Fish and Tortillas**

1-1/2 pounds skinless cod, cut into 1-inch wide x 4-inch long strips  
Vegetable oil, for frying  
12 (6-inch) soft corn tortillas, warmed  
Lime wedges, for serving

**Serves 4**

Toss the cabbage, red onion, cilantro, vinegar, oil and salt together in a medium bowl and set aside.

Combine the mayonnaise, lime juice, chipotle chiles with sauce and garlic in a blender or mini food processor and blend until smooth. Set aside.

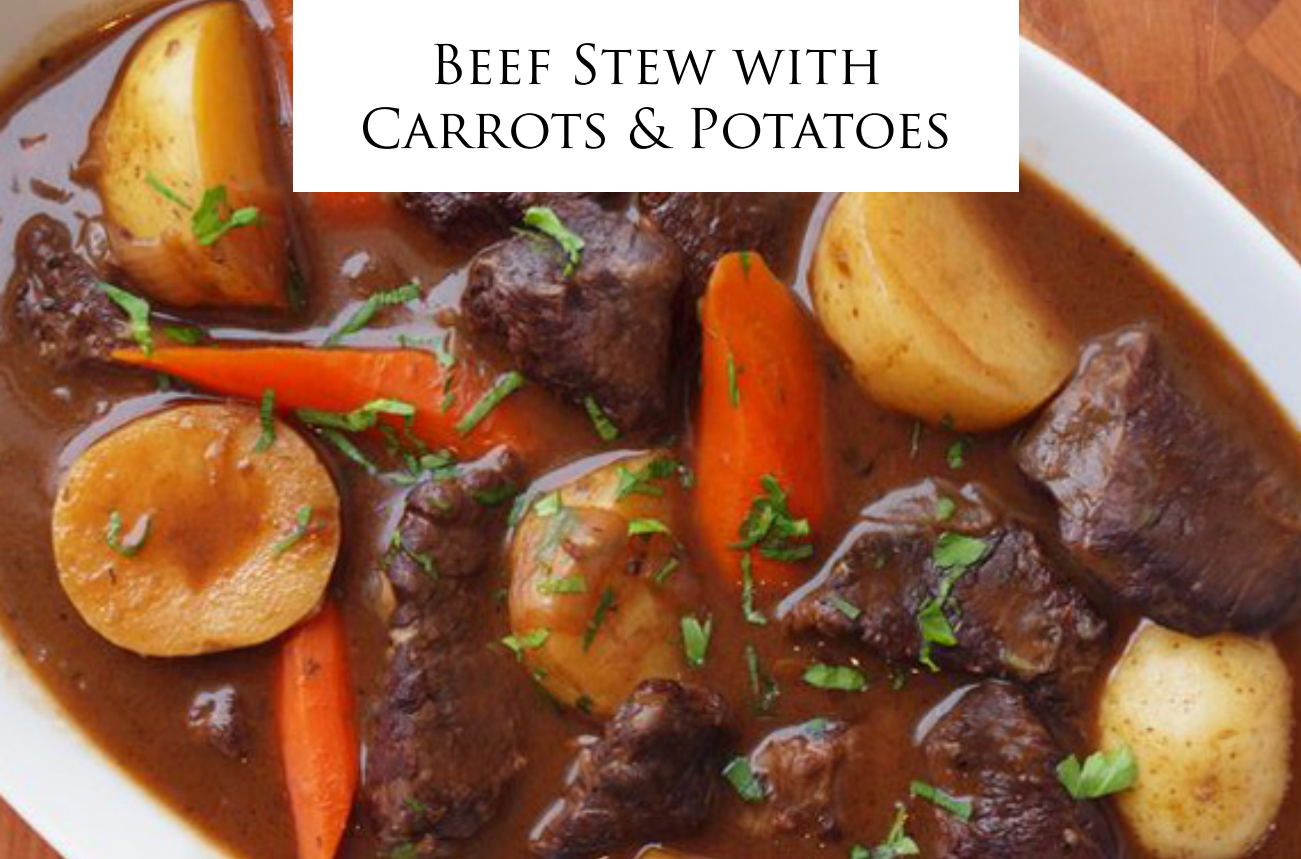
Mix the flour, salt and pepper together in a medium bowl. Gradually add the beer, whisking until the batter is smooth with no lumps. Set aside.

In a medium skillet, over medium heat, add enough oil to reach a depth of 1/2-inch. Heat the oil until a deep-fry thermometer registers 350 degrees F, or when the end of a wooden spoon sizzles when dipped into the oil.

Working in batches so as not to crowd the pan, dip the fish strips in the beer batter and coat on both sides. Let the excess batter drip off, then fry the fish in the hot oil until golden brown and cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain.

Smear each tortilla with a generous amount of the chipotle sauce, then top with the cabbage slaw. Lay one piece of fish inside each tortilla and serve with lime wedges.

# BEEF STEW WITH CARROTS & POTATOES



*With over 1000 reviews, this classic French beef stew, otherwise known as Beef Bourguignon, is the most popular recipe on my website. The meat is browned in olive oil and then slowly braised with garlic and onions in a wine-based broth. After a few hours in the oven, the meat becomes meltingly tender and enveloped in a rich, deeply flavored sauce.*

3 pounds boneless beef chuck cut into 1-1/2-inch pieces  
2 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 medium yellow onions, cut into 1-inch chunks  
7 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed  
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1-1/2 tablespoons tomato paste  
1/4 cup all-purpose flour  
2 cups dry red wine  
2 cups beef broth  
2 cups water  
1 bay leaf

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
1-1/2 teaspoons sugar  
4 large carrots, peeled and cut into one-inch chunks on a diagonal  
1 pound small white boiling potatoes, cut in half  
Fresh chopped parsley, for garnish (optional)

**Serves 6**

Preheat oven to 325°F with rack in middle. Pat beef dry and season salt and pepper. In a large Dutch oven or heavy pot, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium-high heat until hot and shimmering. Brown meat in 3 batches, turning with tongs, about 5-8 minutes per batch, adding one tablespoon more oil for each batch. (Do not crowd the pan and let meat develop brown crust before turning with tongs.) Transfer meat to a large plate and set aside.

Add onions, garlic and balsamic vinegar; cook, stirring with a wooden spoon to scrape brown bits from bottom of pan, about 5 minutes. Add tomato paste and cook a few minutes more. Add beef with juices back to pan and sprinkle with flour; stir with wooden spoon until flour is dissolved, 1-2 minutes. Add wine, beef broth, water, bay leaf, thyme, and sugar; stir with wooden spoon to loosen any brown bits from bottom of pan and bring to a boil. Cover pot with lid, transfer to preheated oven and braise for 2 hours.

Remove pot from oven and add carrots and potatoes. Cover and place back in oven for 50-60 minutes more, or until vegetables are cooked and meat is very tender. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary (freshly ground black pepper and a pinch of sugar go a long way). Let cool, then store in refrigerator overnight or until ready to serve. This stew improves in flavor if made at least 1 day ahead. Reheat, covered, over medium heat or in a 350°F oven. Garnish with fresh parsley if desired.



# BEST BLUEBERRY MUFFINS



*Bursting with fresh blueberries with a tender crumb and sparkling sugar crust, these really are the best blueberry muffins. I've tried fussier recipes that call for mashing some blueberries into the batter or even swirling homemade blueberry jam into the mix, but there's no need for all that — this simple recipe tops them all. The secret is almond extract, which complements the blueberries beautifully. Go ahead and use frozen berries if you'd like; just be sure to stir them into the batter without thawing, otherwise they'll turn your muffins purple!*

2 cups all-purpose flour,  
spooned into measuring cup  
and leveled-off  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted but-  
ter, softened  
1 cup granulated sugar  
2 large eggs  
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon almond extract  
1/2 cup milk  
2-1/4 cups fresh blueberries  
2 tablespoons turbinado  
sugar (also called raw sugar or  
demerara sugar)  
Non-stick cooking spray  
12 paper muffin liners

**Makes 12 muffins**

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a  
12-cup muffin tin with paper liners.  
Spray the pan and the liners with non-  
stick cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the  
flour, baking powder and salt.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat  
the butter and granulated sugar for  
about 2 minutes. Add the eggs one  
at a time, scraping down the sides of  
the bowl and beating well after each  
addition. Beat in the vanilla extract  
and almond extract. (The batter may  
look a little grainy - that's okay).

Gradually add the flour mixture,  
alternating with the milk, beating on  
low speed to combine. Add the berries  
to the batter and fold gently with a  
spatula until evenly distributed. Do  
not overmix.

Scoop the batter into the prepared  
muffin tin; they will be very full.  
Sprinkle the turbinado sugar evenly on  
top of the muffins.

Bake for about 30 minutes, until  
lightly golden and a cake tester comes  
out clean. Let the muffins cool in the  
pan for about 10 minutes. Run a knife  
around the edge of each muffin to  
free it if necessary, then transfer the  
muffins to a rack to cool completely.



# SPICED PUMPKIN BREAD



*My grandmother clipped this recipe from a magazine over 50 years ago, and it's been a family favorite ever since. In fact, one of my clearest childhood memories is baking this pumpkin bread with my mom in the '70s-style kitchen of our old house, and then carting it off to every neighborhood potluck and holiday party. The recipe is easy: just a bit of mixing and stirring, pop it in the oven, and in about an hour, you'll have a house smelling of sweet autumn spices and two scrumptious, pumpkin-y loaves.*

2 cups all-purpose flour,  
spooned into measuring cup  
and leveled-off, plus more for  
greasing the pan  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
2 cups sugar  
1-1/2 sticks (3/4 cup) unsalted  
butter, softened, plus more for  
greasing the pan  
2 large eggs  
1 15-ounce can 100% pure  
pumpkin (I use Libby's)

**Makes 2 loaves**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Generously grease two 8 1/2" x 4 1/2" loaf  
pans with butter and dust with flour  
(or use a baking spray with flour).

Combine flour, salt, baking powder,  
baking soda, and spices in a bowl; use  
a whisk to mix well and set aside.

In large bowl of an electric mixer,  
at medium speed, beat butter and  
sugar until just blended. Add eggs  
one at a time, beating well after each  
addition. Continue beating until very  
light and fluffy, a few minutes. Beat  
in pumpkin. The mixture might look  
grainy and curdled – that's ok.

At low speed, beat in flour mixture  
until well combined.

Turn batter into prepared pans,  
dividing evenly, and bake for 65 – 75  
minutes, or until cake tester inserted  
in center comes out clean. Let  
loaves cool in pan about 10 minutes,  
then turn out on wire rack to cool  
completely. (If the loaves stick, run a  
plastic knife around the edges of the  
pan to loosen them.)

Fresh out of the oven, the loaves have  
a deliciously crisp crust. If they last  
beyond a day, you can toast individual  
slices to get the same fresh-baked effect.



# CHEWY CHOCOLATE CHIP GRANOLA BARS



*Granola bars are a staple in my pantry but between my husband, my kids, and my kids' hungry friends, I can't seem to keep enough of them in the house. So I figured it was time to try and make them from scratch – and maybe even sneak in some health food. After many trials, I cracked the code and came up with a version that puts all those store-bought bars to shame. What's more, they're no-bake and take only ten minutes to make.*

6 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1/3 cup dark brown sugar  
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons honey  
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
Heaping 1/8 teaspoon salt  
2 cups quick-cooking/instant oats, such as Quaker Quick 1-Minute Oats (do not use regular old-fashioned oats)  
1-3/4 cups crispy rice cereal, such as Rice Krispies  
1/2 cup sliced almonds  
1/4 cup flax meal or wheat germ  
1/3 cup mini chocolate chips (or to taste)

Makes 18 bars

Line a 9 x 13-inch baking pan with aluminum foil. Spray the foil lightly with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large pot, combine the butter, brown sugar and honey. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Lower the heat and simmer until the sugar dissolves and the mixture is slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the vanilla and salt.

Add the oats, rice cereal, almonds and flax meal (or wheat germ) to the pan and fold with a rubber spatula until well combined.

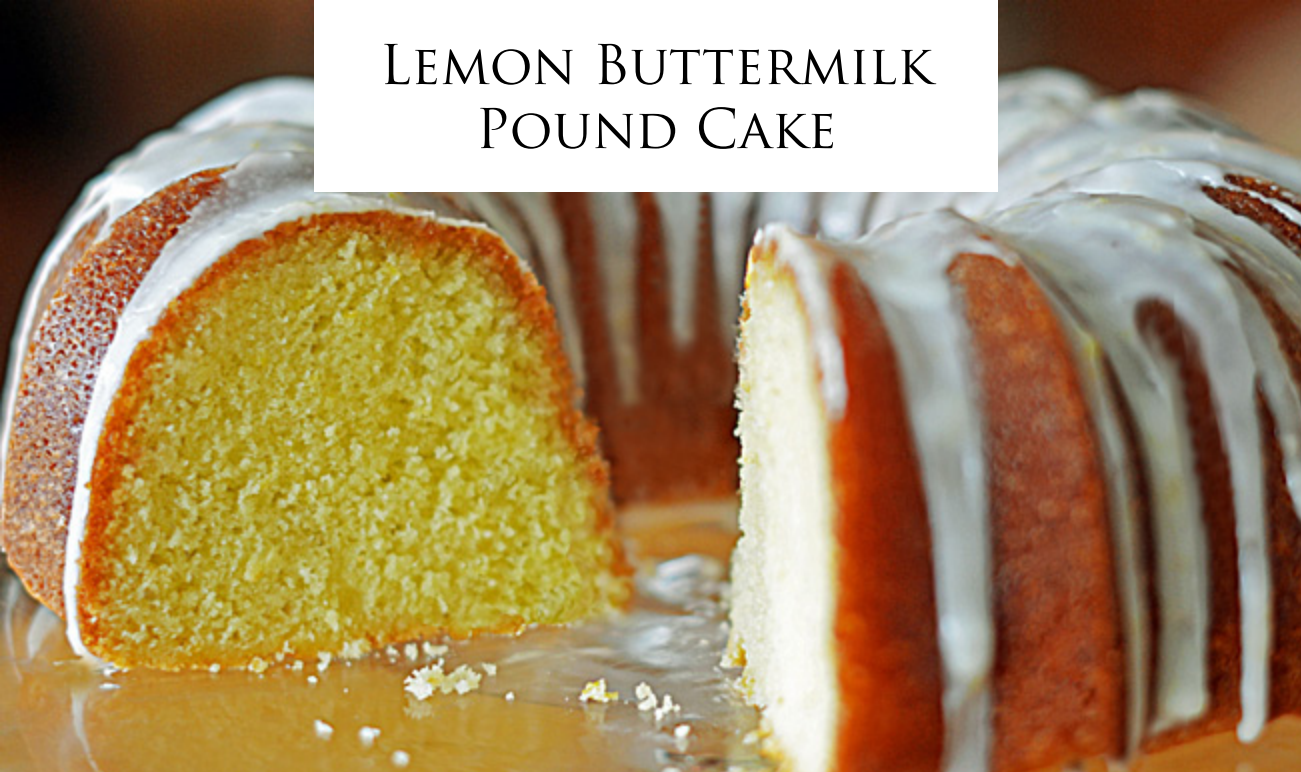
Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan and press down lightly with a rubber spatula to even out. Sprinkle the miniature chocolate chips over top, adding more or less to suit your taste, and press down firmly with the spatula so the chips stick. The mixture should be tightly compacted in the pan. Place the pan in the refrigerator for 1-1/2 - 2 hours to cool.

Use the foil overhang to transfer the uncut bars to a cutting board. Using a sharp knife, cut into rectangles. Store the bars in an airtight container in the refrigerator. If you have to stack them, be sure to use parchment paper or foil in between the layers, otherwise they'll stick together and fall apart.

Note: If you are substituting dried fruit for the chocolate chips, mix it in along with the other ingredients as opposed to sprinkling over top.



# LEMON BUTTERMILK POUND CAKE



*If ever there were a cake for lemon lovers, this is it. Lemon zest and lemon juice are added to the batter, which lightly perfume the cake with lemon. Then, while the cake is still warm from the oven, it's doused with lemon syrup to further enhance the lemon flavor. Finally, the cake is drizzled with a tart lemon glaze, which adds a pop of intense lemon flavor to every bite. The cake keeps well for days, and is actually best made a day ahead of time. Many thanks to my longtime reader Karen Tannenbaum for inspiring this recipe.*

## Cake

3 cups all purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off with a knife, plus more for the pan  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened  
2-1/4 cups granulated sugar  
3 large eggs  
1 cup buttermilk (low fat is fine)  
2 tablespoons grated lemon zest, packed (note: you'll need 4-5 large lemons for the entire recipe)  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

## Syrup

1/3 cup water  
1/3 cup granulated sugar  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

## Glaze

1 cup confectioners' sugar  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest, packed  
1 teaspoon unsalted butter, melted

Makes one 10-inch bundt cake, 16 slices

Preheat the oven to 325°F and set an oven rack in the middle position. Spray a 10-inch bundt pan with non-stick cooking spray and dust with flour.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or beaters), cream the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3-4 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then beat in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Scrape down the sides of the bowl again.

In another bowl, combine the buttermilk, lemon zest and lemon juice.

With the mixer on low speed, beat in one-quarter of the flour mixture, then one-third of the buttermilk mixture. Beat in another quarter of the flour, then another third of the milk mixture. Repeat with another quarter of the flour and the remaining milk mixture. Finally, beat in the remaining flour mixture. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, and give a quick mix to make sure all of the ingredients are well incorporated.

Spoon the thick batter into the prepared bundt pan and smooth with a rubber spatula. Bake for 1 hour and 5 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean.

Cool the cake in the pan for ten minutes on a rack.

Meanwhile, make the syrup. Combine the water and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice.

Invert the warm cake onto a rack. Slip a large piece of parchment paper or aluminum foil under the rack to catch all the drips from the syrup and glaze. Gradually brush the hot syrup over the

cake, letting it soak in (a little syrup will drip off, but try not to rush so that most of it is absorbed). Allow the cake to cool completely, about one hour.

When the cake is cool, make the glaze. Combine the confectioners' sugar, lemon juice, lemon zest and melted butter in a medium bowl, mixing with a fork until smooth. Add more confectioners' sugar or lemon juice as necessary to make a thick but pourable glaze (it should be the consistency of thick honey). Spoon the glaze over the top of the cake, letting it drizzle down the sides.

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