PAULA DEEN'S FALL BAKING

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A
utumn has arrived, and that means it’s time to get in the kitchen and start baking. All year long, I anticipate that sweet first taste of fall, and as the leaves begin to change, I start gathering up bushels of the beloved produce and spices that will bring the flavors of the season to the table.

Fall baking is a treasured tradition in the South, and tried-and-true recipes bring back fond memories of gathering together to enjoy goodies filled with harvest flavor. Whether it’s a muffin or sweet roll served with coffee on a brisk morning, gingersnaps packed for a picnic, or an impressive cake or pie displayed for an irresistible dessert, classic fall bakes fill this time of year with comfort and bring smiles to the faces of my nearest and dearest.

I know traditional fall flavors are plentiful, so I’ve filled this special issue with something for everyone. If you’re all about fall fruits, head to the market or orchard and fill up your baskets because you’ll want to try all of these mouthwatering apple and pear desserts. For those who crave the rich, creamy texture of treats made with pumpkin and sweet potato, you’ll go crazy for the chapters devoted to these decadent goodies. I’ve rounded out this special collection with rich, warming dishes filled with nuts and spices and, of course, chocolate. With all these yummy options, you’re sure to find some new go-to sweets for your recipe box.

From comforting cobblers, cookies, and tarts to delicious breads, bars, and more autumnal bakes, these recipes will fill your home with the enticing aromas of the season. I hope you have a ball whipping up these sweets for your loved ones.

Love and Best Dishes,

My Favorites

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Paula Deen's Fall Baking

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Let’s bake up something special together!

This cookbook is a celebration of Southern baking, and you’ll feel the love that Paula has put into this ultimate collection of her favorite cakes, pies, cookies, cobblers, and so much more. From breakfast pastries to dinner rolls, layer cakes, and everything in between, she is sharing 125 recipes for the tastiest bakes that are fit for any occasion. You and your family will love them all.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!
Apples

A bushel of seasonal bakes to celebrate fall
Apple Tart with Butterscotch Sauce
Makes 1 (10-inch) tart

1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
2 pounds Golden Delicious apples, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon apple pie spice
¾ teaspoon cornstarch
1 large egg
1 tablespoon water
2 teaspoons turbinado sugar
½ cup unsalted butter
2/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
½ cup heavy whipping cream
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 400°.

2. On a lightly floured surface, stack piecrusts, and roll into a 14-inch circle. Transfer to a 10-inch removable-bottom fluted tart pan, pressing into bottom and up sides, letting excess dough extend over sides of pan. Place apple slices in pan, fanning out decoratively.

3. In a small bowl, whisk together granulated sugar, pie spice, and cornstarch. Sprinkle sugar mixture onto apples. Fold excess dough over apples, and pleat edges.

4. In another small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon water. Brush egg wash onto dough, and sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Place tart on a baking sheet.

5. Bake for 30 minutes. Cover with foil, and bake until crust is golden brown and apples are tender, 10 to 14 minutes more. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

6. In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in brown sugar; bring to a simmer, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved. Stir in cream and salt; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Stir in vanilla; cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Serve with tart.
Baked Apple Cranberry Oatmeal

Makes 6 to 8 servings

2 large eggs
1 cup whole milk
½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
½ cup heavy whipping cream
¼ cup applesauce
¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 cups old-fashioned oats
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 medium Granny Smith apple, halved, cored, and diced
½ cup dried cranberries
½ cup chopped pecans
1 orange, zested

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 2½-quart baking dish with butter-flavored cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, brown sugar, cream, applesauce, melted butter, and vanilla. In a medium bowl, stir together oats, baking powder, and salt. Add oats mixture to egg mixture, stirring until well combined. Fold in apple, cranberries, pecans, and zest. Pour into prepared pan.
3. Bake until golden brown, 45 to 50 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Kitchen Tip

This recipe can be prepared through step 2 and refrigerated overnight. Let it stand at room temperature while the oven preheats before baking as directed.
Apple Butter Bundt Cake

Makes 1 (10- to 15-cup) Bundt cake

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10- to 15-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In a large bowl, beat cake mix, apple butter, ½ cup water, oil, eggs, and ¼ teaspoon pie spice with a mixer at low speed until combined, about 30 seconds. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Tap pan on counter twice to release air bubbles.
3. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Run a knife around edges of cake. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk cream cheese until smooth. Add confectioners’ sugar, milk, and remaining ⅛ teaspoon pie spice, whisking until smooth; drizzle onto cooled cake. Garnish with pecans, if desired.

*We used Betty Crocker Super Moist White Cake Mix.

For more seasonal flavor, add up to 1 teaspoon apple pie spice to cake mix.

Kitchen Tip
Apple-Pear Lattice Pie
Makes 1 (9-inch) pie

Crust:
2½ cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 cup cold unsalted butter, cubed
½ cup whole buttermilk, chilled

Filling:
1¼ pounds Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into ¼-inch-thick wedges
1¼ pounds Bartlett pears, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch-thick wedges
½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1½ teaspoons apple pie spice
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 large egg
1 tablespoon heavy whipping cream

Caramel sauce, to serve

1. For crust: In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse together flour, granulated sugar, and salt. Add cold butter, and pulse until mixture is crumbly. With processor running, add buttermilk, 1 tablespoon at a time, just until a dough is formed. Turn out dough, and divide in half. Shape each half into a disk, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough into a 12-inch circle. Transfer to a 9-inch pie plate, pressing into bottom and up sides. Fold edges under, and crimp as desired. Freeze for 30 minutes.

3. For filling: In a large bowl, toss together apples, pears, and brown sugar. Let stand for 30 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 375°.

5. Drain fruit, discarding liquid. In a large bowl, toss together apples, pears, cornstarch, pie spice, and salt. Spoon filling into prepared crust.

6. On a lightly floured surface, roll remaining dough into a 12-inch circle. Using a sharp knife, cut dough into 1-inch-wide strips. Arrange strips in a lattice design on top of filling. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and cream; brush egg wash onto dough.

7. Bake on bottom rack of oven until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly, about 40 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack for at least 1 hour before serving. Serve with caramel.
Cranberry Apple Upside-Down Cake

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

¾ cup unsalted butter, softened and divided
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and sliced
1 Braeburn or Gala apple, peeled and sliced
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 (12-ounce) bag fresh cranberries
¾ cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
½ cup sour cream, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup cake flour
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Place ¼ cup butter in a 9-inch round cake pan. Place pan in oven until butter is melted, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle brown sugar onto butter.
3. In a medium bowl, toss together apples and lemon juice. Arrange apple slices on brown sugar.
4. Bake until bubbly, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from oven. Sprinkle cranberries onto apple slices.
5. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, beat granulated sugar and remaining ½ cup butter with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add sour cream and vanilla, beating just until combined.
6. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and baking soda. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to sugar mixture, beating until combined. Gently spread batter onto fruit.
7. Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool in pan for 8 minutes. Run a knife around edges of pan to loosen cake. Carefully invert cake onto a serving plate. Let cool slightly; serve warm.
Caramel Apple Cobbler
Makes 6 to 8 servings

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 cups sliced peeled Granny Smith apples (about 4 large apples)
⅔ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ cup all-purpose flour
⅛ cup granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup whole buttermilk
⅛ cup chopped pecans
Caramel topping, to serve

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Place butter in a 2-quart baking dish. Place dish in oven until butter is melted.
2. In a large bowl, stir together apples, brown sugar, cinnamon, lemon juice, and nutmeg. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add buttermilk, whisking until smooth. Pour batter onto melted butter. (Do not stir.) Sprinkle apple mixture onto batter. (Do not stir.) Top with pecans.
3. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes; serve with caramel.
Apple Bars with Orange Cream Cheese Frosting

Makes about 16

Bars:
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1¾ cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2½ cups chopped Braeburn or Gala apples (about 2 large apples)

Frosting:
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon orange zest
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 5 cups confectioners’ sugar
- ⅓ cup chopped pecans, toasted

Garnish: orange zest

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour.
2. For bars: In a large bowl, beat eggs and vanilla with a mixer at medium speed until frothy, about 1 minute. Add granulated sugar and melted butter, beating until combined.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to egg mixture, beating just until combined. Fold in apples. Spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until golden brown and set, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.
5. For frosting: In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter, zest, and salt with a mixer at medium speed until creamy. Gradually add confectioners’ sugar, beating until smooth. Spread onto cooled bar. Sprinkle with pecans. Refrigerate for 1 hour; cut into bars. Garnish with zest, if desired.
Overnight Apple Pie French Toast

Makes 6 servings

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
6 cups sliced Gala apples
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 1/4 teaspoons apple pie spice, divided
3/4 pound French bread, cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices
8 large eggs
2 cups whole milk
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon salt
Confectioners’ sugar, for sifting
Maple syrup, to serve

1. In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Add apples; cook until tender, about 8 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in lemon juice and 1 teaspoon pie spice.
2. Spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
3. Arrange half of bread in prepared dish, overlapping slices as necessary. Spoon apples onto bread in dish; top with remaining bread.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, granulated sugar, vanilla, and salt. Pour egg mixture over bread; gently press with a spatula. Cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or overnight.
5. Preheat oven to 350°. Uncover French toast, and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.
6. In a small microwave-safe bowl, combine remaining 4 tablespoons butter and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pie spice. Microwave on high until butter is melted. Drizzle onto bread.
7. Bake until golden brown and center is set, 35 to 40 minutes. Sprinkle with confectioners’ sugar, and serve with maple syrup.

Kitchen Tip
Challah, brioche, and Hawaiian bread all work well in this recipe.
Fried Apple Hand Pies

Makes 8

½ cup granulated sugar, plus more for tossing
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon apple pie spice
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
3 cups diced peeled Fuji apples
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
1 large egg white
1 tablespoon water
Peanut oil, for frying

1. In a large skillet, whisk together sugars, cornstarch, pie spice, and salt. Add apples and lemon juice, tossing to coat. Cook over medium heat until apples are tender and filling is thickened, about 20 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes.

2. Let dough stand at room temperature until slightly softened, about 15 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough to ⅛-inch thickness. Using a 4½-inch round cutter, cut 4 rounds from dough. Repeat with remaining dough.

3. In a small bowl, whisk together egg white and 1 tablespoon water. Brush egg wash onto edges of each round.

4. Place 2 teaspoons apple filling in center of each round. Fold dough over filling, and gently crimp from center to edges with a fork, pressing in any filling as you go. Freeze for 20 minutes.

5. In a 4-quart Dutch oven, pour oil to a depth of 4 inches, and heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 360°.

6. Fry, 2 pies at a time, until golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Let drain, and immediately toss in granulated sugar. Place on a paper towel-lined wire rack. Serve warm.
Apple-Pecan Monkey Bread

Makes 8 to 10 servings

1 1/3 cups sugar
5 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 1/4 cups chopped peeled Braeburn apples
1 cup chopped pecans
1 (25-ounce) package frozen Parker House rolls, thawed and each roll halved
11 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. Spray a 10-cup Bundt pan with cooking spray.
2. In a small bowl, stir together sugar, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg. In another small bowl, stir together apples and pecans.
3. Roll each piece of dough in melted butter; roll each piece in sugar mixture. Place half of dough pieces in prepared pan. Sprinkle apple mixture onto dough pieces. Top with remaining dough pieces. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, about 2 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 350°.
5. Bake for 1 hour, covering with foil after 35 to 40 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning. Immediately invert onto a serving platter, and let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Kitchen Tip

Cinnamon, ginger, and other spices should be fresh. Replace any ground spice that’s more than 2 years old.
Slow Cooker Baked Apples

Makes 6

- ½ cup salted butter, softened
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup chopped toasted pecans
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon apple pie spice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 6 medium firm apples
- 1 large orange, juiced

Vanilla ice cream, to serve

1. Spray a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.
2. In a medium bowl, beat butter and brown sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Stir in pecans, raisins, cranberries, pie spice, zest, and ginger.
3. Cut ½ inch off top of apples. Using a melon baller or spoon, scoop out core and seeds of apples, making sure not to puncture bottom. Brush inside of apples with orange juice.
4. Fill apples with butter mixture, and place in cooker. In a liquid-measuring cup, place remaining orange juice and enough water as necessary to measure ½ cup; pour into cooker around apples. Cover and cook on low until tender, 1 to 1½ hours.
5. Using a slotted spoon, transfer apples to a serving platter; keep warm. Pour liquid in cooker into a small saucepan, and cook over medium heat until liquid is syrupy and reduced by half. Drizzle onto apples; serve with ice cream.

Kitchen Tip

Braeburn, Fuji, Gala, and Honeycrisp apples all will work well in this recipe.
Pears

Delicious treats fresh from the harvest
Pear Ginger Muffins
Makes 12

1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon kosher salt
3/4 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 cup whole buttermilk
1 cup diced peeled pears
6 teaspoons sparkling sugar

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Spray 12 muffin cups with baking spray with flour.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter and brown sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Fold in pears. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling three-fourths full. Sprinkle with sparkling sugar.
4. Bake for 5 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°, and bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 15 to 20 minutes more. Let cool completely.

Kitchen Tip
Baked muffins can be frozen in a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag for up to 2 months. Reheat them in a 200° oven before serving.
Pear-Date Oat Bars
Makes 12

Filling:
2 large Bosc pears, peeled, cored, and diced
3 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 (10-ounce) container chopped pitted dates

Dough:
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups old-fashioned oats
2 teaspoons baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 13x9-inch baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray foil with cooking spray.

2. For filling: In a medium saucepan, bring pears, 3 tablespoons water, granulated sugar, and lemon juice to a boil over medium heat; cook until pears are slightly tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in dates, and cook, stirring frequently, until mixture has thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool for 15 minutes.

3. For dough: In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars with a mixer at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, oats, and baking powder. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined.


5. Bake until golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely in pan. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Kitchen Tip
Bosc pears work best in this recipe because they maintain their shape and texture during baking.
Chocolate-Glazed
Pear Bundt Cake

Makes 1 (12- to 15-cup) Bundt cake

Cake:
1. Preheat oven to 325°. Spray a 12- to 15-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour.
2. For cake: In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Fold in pears. Spoon batter into prepared pan, smoothing top with an offset spatula. Tap pan on counter twice to release air bubbles.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, about 1 hour and 5 minutes. Let cool in pan for 20 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
5. For glaze: In a medium bowl, whisk together confectioners’ sugar, cocoa, and salt. Add milk and vanilla, whisking until smooth. Pour glaze over cooled cake. Serve immediately.

Cake:
1. cup unsalted butter, softened
2. cups granulated sugar
1. cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
5. large eggs
1. tablespoon vanilla extract
3. cups all-purpose flour
1. teaspoon baking powder
½. teaspoon kosher salt
1. cup whole milk
2. cups diced Bosc pears

Glaze:
1 ½. cups confectioners’ sugar
¼. cup dark cocoa powder
½. teaspoon kosher salt
2. tablespoons milk
½. teaspoon vanilla extract
1. Preheat oven to 375°. Spray 6 (8-ounce) ramekins with baking spray with flour.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together brown sugar, 3 tablespoons flour, ½ teaspoon salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, and cardamom; stir in pears and cranberries until well combined. Divide mixture among prepared ramekins.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda, remaining 1 cup flour, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Stir in buttermilk and melted butter just until dry ingredients are moistened. Dollop mixture onto fruit in ramekins.

4. Bake until golden brown and bubbly, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool for 15 to 20 minutes before serving.

Kitchen Tip
This cobbler can also be baked in a 13x9-inch baking dish to serve family style if you prefer.
Pear Thumbprint Cookies

Makes 24

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 (11.5-ounce) jar pear preserves
1/2 cup confectioners’ sugar
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

1. In a large bowl, beat butter and granulated sugar with a mixer at medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in egg and vanilla until combined. Shape dough into a disk, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

2. Preheat oven to 350°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

3. Roll dough into 1-inch balls, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Using your thumb, gently make an indentation in center of each ball.

4. Bake until lightly browned, 15 to 18 minutes. Using the back of a spoon, gently press down centers again; spoon about 2 teaspoons preserves into each indentation. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.

5. In a small bowl, whisk together confectioners’ sugar and cream until smooth; drizzle onto cookies. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Pear preserves can be swapped with any flavor you like.

Kitchen Tip
Pear Walnut Upside-Down Cake

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake

½ cup unsalted butter
4 medium Bosc pears, peeled, cored, and each cut into eight slices
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
½ cup chopped walnuts, divided
1 (15.25-ounce) box chocolate fudge cake mix*
1 tablespoon ground ginger
Garnish: chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10-inch round cake pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In a large skillet, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add pears; cook, stirring frequently, just until tender, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium. Stir in brown sugar; cook just until sauce begins to thicken, about 3 minutes.
3. Arrange pears in concentric circles in prepared pan. Gently pour butter sauce on top, and sprinkle with ¼ cup walnuts.
4. In a large bowl, prepare cake mix according to package directions; stir in ginger and remaining ¼ cup walnuts. Gently spread batter onto pears.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 55 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert cake onto a serving plate. Garnish with walnuts, if desired. Serve immediately.

*We used Betty Crocker Super Moist Chocolate Fudge Cake Mix.

Kitchen Tip

This cake can be made with apples, too. Honeycrisp, Pink Lady, Fuji, and Gala apples are good varieties to use.
Pear, Balsamic, and Fig Flatbread

Makes 1 (13-inch) flatbread

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Unroll dough onto prepared pan, and gently press or roll into a 13x10-inch rectangle.

3. Bake for 5 minutes.

4. In a small bowl, stir together ricotta and gorgonzola cheese; spread cheese mixture onto warm crust. Arrange pear slices on cheese mixture. In another small bowl, stir together preserves, vinegar, and rosemary; spread onto pears.

5. Bake until crust is golden brown, about 12 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 1 teaspoon rosemary. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Kitchen Tip

If the pizza crust springs back on you as you’re rolling it out, let it stand at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes before rolling again.
Brandied Pears with Brown Sugar Cream

Makes 4 servings

1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream  
2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar, divided  
1 tablespoon canola oil  
4 medium Bosc pears, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cored  
2 tablespoons brandy  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
4 crisp amaretti cookies, crumbled  
1/2 teaspoon orange zest

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together sour cream and 1 tablespoon brown sugar until sugar is dissolved. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
3. In a medium skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add half of pears, cut side down; cook until lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Place pears, cut side up, in prepared dish. Repeat with remaining pears. Drizzle with brandy and melted butter, and sprinkle with salt. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon brown sugar.
4. Bake until pears are tender, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with crushed cookies and zest. Serve immediately with brown sugar cream.

Kitchen Tip

Apple cider can be used in place of brandy if you prefer.
Pear and Brown Sugar Tart

Makes 1 (9-inch) tart

½ cup unsalted butter
1 cup pecans, chopped
3 tablespoons firmly packed dark brown sugar
5 cups thinly sliced peeled Anjou pears
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon lemon zest
⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
1 large egg
1 teaspoon water
1 tablespoon turbinado sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until butter turns a medium-brown color and has a nutty aroma, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in pecans and brown sugar. Spread mixture onto one prepared pan.
3. Bake for 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer toasted pecans to a large bowl. Add pears, flour, cornstarch, granulated sugar, zest, and salt, tossing to combine.
4. On a lightly floured surface, unroll 1 piecrust. Brush with water, and place remaining crust on top, pressing to seal layers. Gently roll dough into a 12-inch circle. Transfer to second prepared pan. Spoon pear mixture onto center of dough. Fold edges of dough up and onto filling. (Dough will not completely cover filling.)
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 teaspoon water. Brush edges of dough with egg wash, and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
6. Bake on bottom rack of oven until crust is golden brown and pears are tender, about 45 minutes. Let cool on pan for at least 30 minutes before serving.
Pumpkin
Golden-hued breads, pies, and more
Pumpkin Spice Sweet Rolls
Makes 12

Dough:
1 (16-ounce) box hot roll mix
3 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
1 cup canned pumpkin, warmed (120° to 130°)
1 large egg, room temperature
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Filling:
¾ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground allspice
½ teaspoon ground cloves
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

Icing:
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups confectioners’ sugar
½ teaspoon salt

1. Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with cooking spray.
2. For dough: In a large bowl, combine hot roll mix with enclosed yeast packet and brown sugar. Add warm pumpkin, egg, butter, and vanilla, stirring until combined. On a lightly floured surface, knead dough until smooth, about 5 minutes. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes.
3. For filling: In a small bowl, combine brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, salt, allspice, and cloves.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 16x11-inch rectangle. Spread butter onto dough. Sprinkle sugar mixture onto butter. Starting with one long side, tightly roll up dough into a log, pinching seam to seal. Trim ends, and cut into 12 slices. Place rolls, cut side down, in prepared pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until doubled in size, about 30 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 350°.
6. Bake until lightly browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes.
7. For icing: In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese and vanilla with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Gradually add confectioners’ sugar and salt, beating until smooth. Spread icing onto warm rolls. Serve immediately.
Spiced Pumpkin Cornbread

Makes 1 (8-inch) skillet

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup coarse-ground plain cornmeal
1 tablespoon baking powder
\(\frac{1}{2}\) teaspoon salt
\(\frac{1}{4}\) teaspoon ground red pepper
\(\frac{1}{4}\) teaspoon ground black pepper
1 cup whole milk, room temperature
\(\frac{1}{4}\) cup canned pumpkin
1 large egg, room temperature
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 tablespoons finely chopped pecans

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Place an 8-inch cast-iron skillet in oven to preheat.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, red pepper, and black pepper. In a medium bowl, stir together milk, pumpkin, egg, and honey. Add milk mixture to flour mixture, stirring just until combined.
3. Carefully remove skillet from oven; place butter in skillet, swirling pan until butter is melted. Pour batter into skillet, and sprinkle with pecans.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 18 to 22 minutes. Serve warm.

Kitchen Tip

White and yellow cornmeal both work in this recipe; use whichever you prefer.
Pumpkin Streusel Cheesecake

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

**Crust:**
1½ cups graham cracker crumbs
⅓ cup unsalted butter, melted
¼ cup granulated sugar
⅛ teaspoon salt

**Filling:**
4 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
4 large eggs

**Topping:**
½ cup chopped toasted pecans
⅓ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
⅛ teaspoon salt

Butterscotch ice cream topping, to serve

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 9-inch springform pan with baking spray with flour.
2. For crust: In a medium bowl, stir together all ingredients. Press mixture into bottom and ½ inch up sides of prepared pan. Place pan on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Bake for 7 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Reduce oven temperature to 325°.
4. For filling: In a large bowl, beat cream cheese with a mixer at medium speed until creamy. Reduce mixer speed to low. Add pumpkin, sugars, cinnamon, vanilla, ginger, nutmeg, and allspice, beating until well combined. Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until combined after each addition. Pour batter into prepared crust. Gently tap pan on counter twice to release air bubbles. Place pan on baking sheet.
5. Bake for 1 hour; remove from oven.
6. For topping: In a medium bowl, stir together all ingredients; sprinkle topping onto filling.
7. Bake for 15 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 4 hours. Loosely cover, and refrigerate for at least 8 hours before serving. Serve with butterscotch topping. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.
Pumpkin Cake Doughnuts
Makes 12

2 cups Roasted Pumpkin Purée (recipe follows)
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided
½ cup unsalted butter, melted
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
1¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
2 cups confectioners’ sugar
3 tablespoons whole milk
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly spray 2 (6-well) doughnut pans with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together Roasted Pumpkin Purée, 1 cup granulated sugar, melted butter, eggs, and vinegar. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and pie spice. Add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture, whisking until well combined. Spoon batter into prepared wells.
3. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool in pans for 5 minutes.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together confectioners’ sugar and milk until smooth. In a small bowl, whisk together cinnamon and remaining 2 tablespoons granulated sugar. Lightly brush warm doughnuts with glaze; dredge in cinnamon sugar. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Roasted Pumpkin Purée
Makes about 3 cups

1 (2½- to 3-pound) pie pumpkin

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
2. Pierce pumpkin several times with a knife. Place pumpkin, stem side up, on prepared pan; wrap stem with foil.
3. Bake until a knife can easily be inserted into center of pumpkin, about 2 hours. Remove from oven, and let stand until cool enough to handle.
4. Using a paring knife, start to peel off skin around stem; peel off remaining skin with fingers. Remove stem, and scoop out seeds and membrane. Pass pumpkin flesh in batches through a ricer into a large bowl; let cool completely. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 3 months.

Kitchen Tip
If you prefer only to glaze your doughnuts, let them cool completely before dipping into glaze.
Pumpkin Crumb Cake

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

Topping:
- 1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour

Cake:
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup canned pumpkin
- 3/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup sour cream

1. For topping: In a small saucepan, cook brown sugar, butter, vanilla, and salt over medium heat, stirring constantly, until smooth, about 6 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in flour until smooth. Let cool completely.

2. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray.

3. For cake: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, pie spice, and salt. In a large bowl, whisk together pumpkin, brown sugar, oil, eggs, and sour cream. Add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture, whisking just until smooth. Pour batter into prepared pan. Break topping into chunks, and sprinkle onto batter.

4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 35 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Mashed cooked sweet potato or pureéd cooked butternut squash can be substituted for canned pumpkin.
Pumpkin Spice Sheet Cake
Makes 1 (13x9-inch) cake

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
2 cups sugar
4 large eggs
1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe follows)
Maple Caramel Sauce (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in pumpkin and vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, pie spice, salt, baking powder, and cinnamon. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating just until combined. Spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 45 minutes, covering with foil halfway through baking to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Let cool completely on a wire rack.
5. Spread Cream Cheese Frosting on top of cake. Drizzle Maple Caramel Sauce onto frosting, and swirl as desired.

Cream Cheese Frosting
Makes about 5 cups

3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
2 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon maple extract

1. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and confectioners' sugar with a mixer at medium speed until smooth and creamy. Add extracts, beating to combine. Use immediately.

Maple Caramel Sauce
Makes about 1 1/4 cups

1/2 cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
1 teaspoon maple extract
1/4 teaspoon salt

1. In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add brown sugar; cook, whisking frequently, until sugar is dissolved. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, and boil for 3 minutes. Gradually add cream, whisking constantly. Continue boiling until sauce is thickened and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Remove from heat. Stir in maple extract and salt. Let cool completely. Cover and refrigerate for up to 1 week.
### Cranberry Pumpkin Bread

*Makes 2 (10-inch) loaves*

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray 2 (10-inch) loaf pans with baking spray with flour.

2. In a large bowl, beat pumpkin, oil, ⅔ cup water, and eggs with a mixer at medium speed until combined. In another large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture, beating until smooth. Stir in cranberries. Divide batter between prepared pans.

3. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.

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**Kitchen Tip**

Dried cherries can be used instead of dried cranberries if you prefer.
Pumpkin Cream Cheese Swirl Pie

Makes 1 (9-inch) deep-dish pie

**Crust:**
- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

**Filling:**
- 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
- ¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ⅛ cup evaporated milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt

**Swirl:**
- 2 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 3 tablespoons whole milk

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. For crust: In a medium bowl, stir together all ingredients. Using the bottom of a measuring cup, press mixture into bottom and up sides of a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate.
4. For filling: In a large bowl, whisk together all ingredients until smooth. Pour filling into prepared crust.
5. For swirl: In a small bowl, beat cream cheese and milk with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Drop mixture by heaping tablespoonfuls onto filling, and gently swirl together using a knife. Cover edges of crust with foil.
6. Bake on bottom rack of oven for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°, and bake until a knife inserted in center comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour more. Let cool completely on a wire rack before serving.
## Gooey Pumpkin Butter Cake Bars

Makes about 18

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(15.25-ounce) box yellow cake mix*</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>large eggs, divided</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>cup unsalted butter, melted and divided</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>(15-ounce) can pumpkin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>teaspoon vanilla extract</td>
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<tr>
<td>3⅔ cups</td>
<td>confectioners’ sugar, sifted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>teaspoon ground cinnamon</td>
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<td>¼</td>
<td>teaspoon ground ginger</td>
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<td>⅛</td>
<td>teaspoon ground allspice</td>
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<td>teaspoon ground cloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garnish:</td>
<td>confectioners’ sugar</td>
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1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray parchment.

2. In a large bowl, beat cake mix, 1 egg, and ½ cup melted butter with a mixer at medium speed until combined. Spread batter into prepared pan.

3. In another large bowl, beat cream cheese with a mixer at medium-low speed until smooth. Add pumpkin, and beat until combined, 2 to 3 minutes. Add vanilla, remaining 3 eggs, and remaining ½ cup melted butter, beating until smooth. Gradually add confectioners’ sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, allspice, and cloves, beating until well combined. Spread onto crust.

4. Bake until center is slightly set, 40 to 50 minutes. Let cool completely in pan. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Sift with confectioners’ sugar, if desired.

*We used Pillsbury Moist Supreme Yellow Cake Mix.
Sweet Potato

Rich and creamy sweets to please a crowd
Sweet Potato Gingersnaps

Makes about 60

1. In a large bowl, beat butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, beating until combined. Add molasses and sweet potato, beating until smooth.

2. In another large bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, baking soda, nutmeg, and cloves. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating just until combined. Divide dough into thirds, and shape each portion into a 10-inch-long log. Wrap each log in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 3 days.

3. Preheat oven to 350°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.


5. Bake until edges are lightly browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on pans for 2 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

For recipes that call for mashed cooked sweet potato, prick sweet potatoes all over with a fork, and microwave on high until potatoes can easily be pierced with a knife, 3 to 5 minutes. Cut potato in half to let steam escape; let cool. Mash flesh with a fork and measure the amount called for in the recipe. For the ½ cup needed in this recipe, use one small potato.
Spiced Sweet Potato Bundt Cake

Makes 1 (10- to 15-cup) Bundt cake

¾ cup unsalted butter, softened
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
4 large eggs, room temperature
1½ cups shredded peeled sweet potato
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
3 cups self-rising flour
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1½ cups confectioners’ sugar
2½ tablespoons whole buttermilk
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
Garnish: chopped toasted pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter and cream cheese with a mixer at medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Add granulated sugar and brown sugar, and beat until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add sweet potato and 1 teaspoon vanilla, beating until combined.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, pie spice, and ¾ teaspoon salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating just until combined.
4. Spray a 10- to 15-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Tap pan on counter several times to release air bubbles.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
6. In a medium bowl, whisk together confectioners’ sugar, buttermilk, melted butter, remaining ½ teaspoon vanilla, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt until smooth. Pour onto cooled cake. Garnish with pecans, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
Sweet Potato Angel Biscuits

Makes 9

¼ cup warm water (105° to 110°)
1 (0.25-ounce) package dry active yeast
1⅛ cups all-purpose flour
1⅛ cups cake flour
½ cup sugar
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ cup all-vegetable shortening
¼ cup cold unsalted butter
¾ cup mashed cooked sweet potato (about 1 large sweet potato)
Melted butter

1. In a small bowl, stir together ¼ cup warm water and yeast. Let stand until mixture is foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flours, sugar, salt, and baking powder. Using a pastry blender, cut in shortening and cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Add yeast mixture and sweet potato, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and knead 4 or 5 times. Pat dough to ¾-inch thickness. Using a 3-inch round cutter, cut dough, re-patting scraps as necessary. Place on prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°) until puffed, about 1 hour.
5. Preheat oven to 375°.
6. Brush biscuits with melted butter, and bake until golden brown, about 14 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes; serve warm.

Kitchen Tip

One large sweet potato yields about 1 cup puréed cooked sweet potato.
Sweet Potato Tart with Pecan Crust

Makes 1 (9-inch) tart

Crust:
- ½ cup toasted pecan halves
- 2 tablespoons whole wheat flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 3 tablespoons ice water

Filling:
- 3 medium sweet potatoes, halved lengthwise (about 2 pounds)
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ⅓ teaspoon orange zest
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon salt

Topping:
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon confectioners’ sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup

Garnish: chopped toasted pecans

1. For crust: In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse together pecans and wheat flour until finely ground. Add all-purpose flour, granulated sugar, and salt; pulse until combined. Add cold butter, and pulse until mixture is crumbly. Add ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time, pulsing until mixture begins to form a ball. Shape dough into a disk, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

2. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.

3. For filling: Place sweet potatoes, cut side down, on prepared pan. Bake until a knife can easily be inserted in center, about 35 minutes. Let cool completely. Discard peels. Increase oven temperature to 375°.

4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 10⅛-inch circle. Transfer to a 9-inch removable-bottom tart pan, pressing into bottom and up sides. Trim excess dough. Prick dough all over with a fork. Top with a piece of parchment paper, letting ends extend over edges of pan. Add pie weights.

5. Bake for 15 minutes. Carefully remove paper and weights. Bake until bottom of crust is lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes more. Let cool for 15 minutes on a wire rack. Reduce oven temperature to 350°.

6. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse sweet potatoes until smooth. Add brown sugar, milk, egg, vanilla, zest, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt; pulse until combined. Spread filling into prepared crust.

7. Bake until set, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

8. For topping: In a medium bowl, beat cream, confectioners’ sugar, and vanilla with a mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form. Spread onto cooled tart, and drizzle with maple syrup. Garnish with pecans, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.
Cider-Glazed Sweet Potato Doughnuts
Makes 12

½ cup unsalted butter, softened
½ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons apple pie spice
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ cup mashed cooked sweet potato
6 tablespoons whole milk
Apple Cider Glaze (recipe follows)
¼ cup chopped walnuts, toasted

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Spray 2 (6-cup) doughnut pans with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, pie spice, salt, and baking soda. In a small bowl, whisk together sweet potato and milk. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with sweet potato mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Spoon batter into prepared pans. (Cups will be almost full.)
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, about 10 minutes. Let cool in pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool for 5 minutes on a wire rack.
5. Dip top of warm doughnuts into Apple Cider Glaze. Return to rack, and let stand for 5 minutes. Dip doughnuts in glaze again, and sprinkle with walnuts. Serve immediately.

Apple Cider Glaze
Makes about 1 cup

1 cup pure apple cider
1¼ cups confectioners’ sugar, sifted
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. In a small saucepan, bring cider to a boil over medium-high heat; cook until cider is reduced to ¼ cup, about 15 minutes. Pour into a small bowl, and let cool to room temperature.
2. Whisk confectioners’ sugar and vanilla into reduced cider until smooth. Use immediately.
Sweet Potato Upside-Down Cake

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake

½ cup cane syrup
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2½ cups thinly sliced peeled sweet potatoes
1¾ cups self-rising flour
¾ cup sugar
¾ cup sour cream
10 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
¾ cup whole milk
3 large eggs

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, bring cane syrup and butter to a boil over medium heat; cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Arrange sweet potatoes in concentric circles in skillet, overlapping slightly.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together flour and sugar. In a medium bowl, whisk together sour cream, melted butter, milk, and eggs. Add sour cream mixture to flour mixture, and beat with a mixer at low speed until smooth. Gently spread batter onto sweet potatoes.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Run a knife around sides of pan to loosen cake. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Invert cake onto a serving plate; serve immediately.

Kitchen Tip
A mandoline is the best tool to use for slicing sweet potatoes with a uniform thickness.
Sweet Potato and Apricot Hand Pies

Makes 12

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup cold unsalted butter, cubed
2 (16-ounce) cans yams in syrup, drained and diced
1/2 cup diced dried apricots
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 cup cold unsalted butter, cut into 12 pats
1 large egg
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup turbinado sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse together flour, granulated sugar, and salt. Add 1 cup cubed butter, and pulse until mixture is crumbly. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a 12-inch-long log. Cut log into 1-inch-thick slices, and shape each slice into a disk. Wrap disks in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 3 days.
3. In a large bowl, stir together yams, apricots, and cornstarch. On a lightly floured surface, roll each dough disk into a 5-inch circle. Spoon 1/4 cup yam mixture into center of each dough circle, and top each with 1 pat cold butter. Fold dough over filling, and crimp edges to seal. Place on prepared pan.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1/4 cup water. Brush egg wash onto dough, and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
5. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool for at least 30 minutes before serving.
Bourbon Pecan-Glazed Sweet Potato Cake  
Makes 1 (12- to 15-cup) Bundt cake

Cake:
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups puréed cooked sweet potato
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¾ cup whole buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon bourbon

Glaze:
- ¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- ½ cup chopped toasted pecans
- 2 teaspoons bourbon

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 12- to 15-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour.
2. For cake: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat granulated sugar and eggs at high speed until thick and pale, about 3 minutes. Add oil, melted butter, and vanilla, beating at low speed just until combined. Add sweet potato purée, beating just until combined.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and nutmeg. In a small bowl, whisk together buttermilk and bourbon. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to sugar mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Pour batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
5. For glaze: In a small saucepan, bring brown sugar, butter, and maple syrup to a boil over medium heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Reduce heat, and simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in pecans and bourbon. Let cool for 5 minutes; drizzle glaze onto cooled cake. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.
OLD-FASHIONED STACK CAKE WITH APRICOT GINGER FILLING
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Nuts and Spices

Indulgent goodies filled with warmth and crunch
Buttercup Squash Pie

Makes 1 (9-inch) deep-dish pie

1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts, room temperature
5 large eggs, divided
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon apple pie spice
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon ground ginger
2 cups puréed cooked buttercup squash
2½ cup pure maple syrup

Garnish: confectioners’ sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. On a lightly floured surface, unroll 1 piecrust. Lightly brush with water, and place remaining crust on top, pressing to seal layers. Roll dough into a 13-inch circle. Transfer to a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate, pressing into bottom and up sides. Fold edges under, and crimp as desired. Refrigerate until ready to use.
3. In a large bowl, whisk 4 eggs until frothy. Add vanilla, pie spice, salt, and ginger, whisking to combine. Add squash purée and maple syrup, whisking until smooth. Pour into prepared crust.
4. In a small bowl, whisk remaining egg. Brush egg wash onto dough.
5. Bake on bottom rack of oven until crust is golden brown and center jiggles slightly, about 50 minutes, covering edges with foil halfway through baking to prevent excess browning. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Garnish with confectioners’ sugar, if desired.

Kitchen Tip

Not to be confused with butternut squash, buttercup squash is round, featuring a green skin with whitish stripes. If you can’t find it in your area, substitute with acorn or butternut squash.
Pecan Snickerdoodles

Makes 24

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
6 tablespoons all-vegetable shortening
1 cup sugar, divided
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
24 pecan halves

1. In a large bowl, beat butter, shortening, and ¾ cup sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg and vanilla, beating just until combined.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and cream of tartar. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating just until combined. Shape dough into a disk, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

3. Preheat oven to 350°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

4. In a small bowl, whisk together cinnamon and remaining ¼ cup sugar. Scoop or shape dough into 1-inch balls, and generously roll in cinnamon sugar. Place on prepared pans. Dot center of each cookie with water, and top each with a pecan half, pressing gently to adhere and slightly flatten cookies.

5. Bake until edges are lightly browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on pans for 2 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in airtight containers for up to 3 days.

Kitchen Tip

Cookies can be frozen in a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag for up to 3 months.
Parsnip Bundt Cake with Maple Lemon Glaze

Makes 1 (10-cup) Bundt cake

2½ cups shredded peeled parsnip
2 cups boiling water
½ cup golden raisins
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1¼ cups sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 large eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup whole milk
¼ cup chopped toasted pecans
1 teaspoon lemon zest

Maple Lemon Glaze (recipe follows)
Garnish: chopped toasted pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In a medium bowl, combine parsnip, 2 cups boiling water, and raisins. Let stand for 20 minutes. Drain, and rinse under cold water; drain well.
3. In a large bowl, beat butter, sugar, and vanilla with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, pie spice, baking soda, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Stir in parsnip mixture, pecans, and zest. (Batter will be thick.) Spoon batter into prepared pan. Tap pan on counter twice to release air bubbles.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Drizzle Maple Lemon Glaze onto cooled cake, and garnish with pecans, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Maple Lemon Glaze
Makes about ¼ cup

2 tablespoons cream cheese, softened
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
2 tablespoons whole milk
¼ teaspoon lemon zest
⅛ to ¼ teaspoon maple extract

1. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, heat cream cheese on low until slightly warm, about 10 seconds. Whisk in confectioners’ sugar and all remaining ingredients until smooth. Use immediately.
Caramel-Chocolate-Nut Tart

Makes 1 (11-inch) tart

1 (16.5-ounce) package refrigerated chocolate chip cookie dough
1 (11-ounce) bag caramel candies, unwrapped
¼ cup heavy whipping cream
1 large egg
1 (10.3-ounce) can lightly salted mixed nuts

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Press cookie dough into bottom and up sides of an 11-inch removable-bottom tart pan.

4. In a small bowl, combine caramels and cream. Microwave on high in 30-second intervals, stirring between each, until melted and smooth (about 2 minutes total). Let cool for 10 minutes. Whisk egg into caramel mixture until well combined. Pour mixture into prepared crust. Top with nuts. Place tart pan on a large parchment-lined baking sheet.
5. Bake until set, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Serve warm.

Kitchen Tip

Use any flavor of cookie dough and any single nut you like in this tart.
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Black Walnut Cupcakes
Makes 24

¾ cup unsalted butter, softened
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2½ cups cake flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup whole milk
4 large egg whites
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
1 cup chopped black walnuts

Brown Sugar Cream Cheese Frosting
(recipe follows)

Garnish: chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line 24 muffin cups with paper liners.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition.
4. In a medium bowl, using clean beaters, beat egg whites with a mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Add cream of tartar, and beat until stiff peaks form. Fold egg whites into batter until well combined. Stir in walnuts. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling two-thirds full.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 16 to 18 minutes. Let cool in pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Spread Brown Sugar Cream Cheese Frosting onto cupcakes. Garnish with walnuts, if desired.

Brown Sugar Cream Cheese Frosting
Makes about 3 cups

½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons water
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened and divided
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
4 cups confectioners’ sugar

1. In a small saucepan, combine brown sugar, 2 tablespoons water, and 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool completely.
2. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and remaining ½ cup butter with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Add brown sugar mixture, beating until combined. Gradually add confectioners’ sugar, beating until smooth. Use immediately.
Browned Butter Banana-Walnut Bread

Makes 1 (10x5-inch) loaf

¾ cup unsalted butter
¾ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs
2 cups cake flour, sifted
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1¼ cups mashed ripe banana (about 3 medium bananas)
¼ cup whole buttermilk
2 teaspoons rum extract (optional)
½ cup chopped walnuts

1. In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until butter turns a medium-brown color and has a nutty aroma, about 10 minutes. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a small bowl, discarding solids. Let cool to room temperature. Refrigerate until butter has solidified but is not cold, about 30 minutes.

2. Preheat oven to 325°. Spray a 10x5-inch loaf pan with baking spray with flour.

3. In a large bowl, beat browned butter and brown sugar with a mixer at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

4. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together mashed banana, buttermilk, and rum extract (if using). With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with banana mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Stir in walnuts. Spoon batter into prepared pan.

5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days, or wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and freeze for up to 3 months.

Kitchen Tip

The browned butter in step 1 can be prepared and refrigerated for up to 3 days. If making it in advance, let it soften before proceeding with recipe.
Blackberry Spice Cake Roll

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake roll

¼ cup fresh blackberries
¾ cup blackberry preserves
1 (9-ounce) package yellow cake mix*
2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
1 ¼ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ cup whole milk
2 large eggs, separated
Confectioners’ sugar, for sifting
Garnish: fresh blackberries

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 15x10-inch jelly roll pan with baking spray with flour. Line pan with wax paper; spray paper.
2. In a medium bowl, mash blackberries with a fork into small pieces; stir in preserves. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together cake mix, brown sugar, pie spice, and cloves. In a medium bowl, whisk together milk and egg yolks. Make a well in center of dry ingredients; add milk mixture, and beat with a mixer at low speed just until combined. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
4. In a medium bowl, using clean beaters, beat egg whites with a mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form. Gently fold egg whites into batter. Spread batter into prepared pan.
5. Bake until cake springs back when lightly touched in center, 10 to 12 minutes. (Do not overbake.)
6. Meanwhile, sift confectioners’ sugar into a 15x10-inch rectangle on a clean dish towel. Immediately loosen cake from sides of pan, and turn out onto prepared towel. Gently peel off wax paper. Sift confectioners’ sugar onto cake. Starting at one short side, roll up cake and towel together, and place seam side down on a wire rack. Let cool completely.
7. Gently unroll cake, and spread with blackberry mixture. Reroll cake without towel, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 1 hour. Trim edges with a serrated knife, if desired. Just before serving, transfer cake to a serving platter, seam side down, and sift confectioners’ sugar onto cake. Garnish with blackberries, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

*We used Jiffy Golden Yellow Cake Mix.
Old-Fashioned Stack Cake with Apricot Ginger Filling

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

- ½ cup all-vegetable shortening
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup whole buttermilk
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch ground nutmeg

Apricot Ginger Filling (recipe follows)
Confectioners’ sugar, for dusting
Garnish: soft dried apricots

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray 6 (9-inch) round cake pans with cooking spray. Line bottom of pans with parchment paper; spray parchment.
2. In a medium bowl, beat shortening and granulated sugar with a mixer at medium speed until creamy. Add buttermilk, molasses, egg, and vanilla, beating well.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Make a well in center of flour mixture; add shortening mixture, stirring just until combined.
4. On a lightly floured surface, shape dough into a log; cut into 6 equal portions. Place one portion in each prepared pan, and use fingers to lightly pat dough to edges of pans.
5. Bake until lightly browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. (Cake layers will have the consistency of a gingerbread cookie.)
6. Place one cake layer on a serving plate or cake stand; spread with about ¾ cup warm Apricot Ginger Filling. Repeat procedure four times; top with remaining cake layer. Cover and refrigerate for at least 24 hours. Just before serving, dust with confectioners’ sugar. Garnish with apricots, if desired.

Apricot Ginger Filling
Makes about 4 cups

- 4 cups soft dried apricots
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 cups apricot nectar

1. In a large saucepan, combine apricots, sugar, ginger, and enough nectar to cover. Bring to a low boil over medium heat. Reduce heat, and simmer, stirring frequently, for 45 minutes. Remove from heat, and let stand until slightly cooled, about 10 minutes. Transfer mixture to the work bowl of a food processor or the container of a blender; process until smooth. Use immediately.

Kitchen Tip

If you don’t have 6 cake pans, loosely cover the batter and keep it at room temperature while you bake layers in batches. Let the cake pans cool completely between bakes. For a taller stack cake, simply double the recipe.
Mixed Nut Pie
Makes 1 (9-inch) pie

1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 cup dark corn syrup
4 large eggs, divided
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup pecans, roughly chopped
1 cup walnuts, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon heavy whipping cream

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. On a lightly floured surface, unroll 1 piecrust. Lightly brush with water, and place remaining crust on top, pressing to seal layers. Roll into a 12-inch circle. Transfer to a 9-inch pie plate, pressing into bottom and up sides. Fold edges under, and crimp as desired. Freeze for 20 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together brown sugar, corn syrup, 3 eggs, melted butter, cornstarch, vanilla, ginger, and salt. Sprinkle pecans and walnuts into prepared crust; pour brown sugar mixture over nuts.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together cream and remaining egg. Brush egg wash onto dough.
5. Bake on bottom rack of oven until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°, about 1 hour, covering with foil after 40 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Let cool on a wire rack for at least 1 hour before serving. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
Peanut Butter Shortbread Bars

Makes about 36

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
½ cup creamy peanut butter
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2½ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup chopped honey-roasted peanuts

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 15x10-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
3. Bake until center is set, about 15 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Cut into bars. Store in airtight containers for up to 1 week.

Kitchen Tip

Do not use natural peanut butter for this recipe.
Skillet Ginger Ale Streusel Cake

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake

Cake:
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large eggs
2 cups plus 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour, divided
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon kosher salt
⅔ cup spicy ginger ale,* room temperature
⅓ cup finely chopped candied ginger

Streusel:
½ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon kosher salt
5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Spray a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with baking spray with flour.
2. For cake: In a large bowl, beat butter, brown sugar, and vanilla with a mixer at medium speed until creamy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together 2 cups flour, baking powder, ground ginger, cinnamon, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with ginger ale, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. In a small bowl, toss together candied ginger and remaining 2 teaspoons flour, shaking off excess flour. Fold candied ginger into batter. Spread batter in prepared skillet.
4. For streusel: In a medium bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, ginger, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Drizzle with melted butter, tossing until moistened. Sprinkle onto batter.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 24 hours.

*We used Blenheim.
Chocolate

Crowd-pleasing cookies, cakes, and more
Crust:
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar

Filling:
- 4 large eggs
- ¾ cup dark corn syrup
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups finely chopped pecans
- 1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips

1. For crust: In a large bowl, beat butter and cream cheese with a mixer at medium speed until creamy. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, and granulated sugar. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Wrap dough in heavy-duty plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. Roll dough into 1-inch balls, and press into bottom and up sides of 48 miniature muffin cups.
4. For filling: In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, corn syrup, sugars, melted butter, and salt until smooth; stir in pecans and chocolate chips. Spoon batter into prepared crusts.
5. Bake until golden brown and centers are set, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in airtight containers for up to 5 days.

Kitchen Tip
Light corn syrup can be substituted for dark corn syrup, but the molasses flavor won’t be as strong.
Chocolate Peanut Butter Cake

Makes 1 (10-cup) Bundt cake

1 (15.25-ounce) package devil’s food cake mix
1 (3.9-ounce) package chocolate instant pudding mix
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup water
4 large eggs
1 (8-ounce) container sour cream
1 (10-ounce) package peanut butter chips
Garnish: confectioners’ sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 10-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In a large bowl, combine cake mix, pudding mix, and granulated sugar. Add oil, ½ cup water, and eggs; beat with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Stir in sour cream and peanut butter chips. Spoon batter into prepared pan.
3. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 55 to 60 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Sift with confectioners’ sugar, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Kitchen Tip

Try butterscotch or caramel chips in place of peanut butter chips for a fun flavor twist.
Chocolate Meringue Cookies
Makes about 36

4 large egg whites, room temperature
1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, divided
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 200°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats.

2. In the top of a double boiler, combine egg whites, sugar, and cream of tartar. Cook over simmering water, whisking constantly, until sugar is dissolved and mixture registers 140° on a candy thermometer.

3. Beat mixture with a mixer at medium-low speed for 2 minutes. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 2 minutes. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until stiff peaks form, about 6 minutes. Fold in 2 tablespoons cocoa and vanilla.

4. Spoon meringue into a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Pipe mixture onto prepared pans. Dust with remaining 2 tablespoons cocoa.

5. Bake until firm and dry, about 2 hours. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
Chocolate Mocha Cake

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

1¼ cups firmly packed light brown sugar
½ cup unsalted butter, melted
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup plus 1 teaspoon dark cocoa powder, divided
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon, divided
½ cup hot brewed coffee

Creamy Coffee Frosting (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray an 8-inch round cake pan with baking spray with flour; line bottom of pan with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together brown sugar and melted butter. Whisk in eggs and vanilla until well combined.
3. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, ¼ cup cocoa, salt, baking soda, and ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Add flour mixture to butter mixture, stirring just until moistened; stir in hot coffee just until combined. Spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes.

Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
5. Spread Creamy Coffee Frosting onto cake. Sift remaining 1 teaspoon cocoa and remaining ¼ teaspoon cinnamon onto frosting. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Creamy Coffee Frosting
Makes about 2 cups

½ teaspoon instant coffee granules
½ teaspoon hot water
½ cup mascarpone cheese, softened
¼ cup unsalted butter, softened
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
2½ cups confectioners’ sugar

1. In a small bowl, stir together coffee and ½ teaspoon hot water until dissolved.
2. In a large bowl, beat coffee mixture, mascarpone, butter, vanilla, and salt with a mixer at medium-low speed until combined, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Reduce mixer speed to low. Gradually add confectioners’ sugar, beating until smooth and fluffy. Use immediately.
Cranberry-White Chocolate-Macadamia Nut Cookies
Makes about 36

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
2 cups white chocolate chips
1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup macadamia nuts

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars with a mixer at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Stir in chocolate chips, cranberries, and nuts. Using a 1 1/4-inch spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough, and drop 2 inches apart on prepared pans.
4. Bake until lightly browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in airtight containers for up to 5 days.

Kitchen Tip
Use dried cherries and pistachios instead of cranberries and macadamias for an easy holiday cookie.
Chocolate-Cherry-Pecan Cobbler

Makes 8 to 10 servings

2 (21-ounce) cans cherry pie filling
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
¼ cup sugar
1 (18.25-ounce) box chocolate fudge cake mix
1 cup chopped pecans
¾ cup unsalted butter, cubed

Garnish: sweetened whipped cream, grated chocolate

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 12-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray.
2. Spread pie filling into prepared skillet, and sprinkle with chocolate chips and sugar. Sprinkle cake mix onto chocolate and pie filling, entirely covering surface. Sprinkle with pecans, and dot with butter.
3. Bake until golden brown and bubbly, about 50 minutes. Let cool for at least 30 minutes. Garnish with whipped cream and chocolate, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Kitchen Tip

Apple pie filling, butterscotch chips, and spice cake mix make a tasty variation of this easy dessert.


Chocoloate Cream Pie with Peanut Butter Topping
Makes 1 (9-inch) pie

1/2 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
3/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup cornstarch
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 1/2 cups milk
6 large egg yolks
2 (4-ounce) bars semisweet chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Peanut Butter Topping (recipe follows)

Garnish: chocolate curls

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. On a lightly floured surface, unroll piecrust, and transfer to a 9-inch pie plate, pressing into bottom and up sides. Fold edges under, and crimp as desired. Prick bottom of dough with a fork.
3. Bake until lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Let cool completely.
4. In a medium saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch, cocoa, and salt. In a medium bowl, whisk together milk and egg yolks until smooth. Whisk milk mixture into sugar mixture until smooth. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until mixture is thick and bubbly, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in chocolate and butter until melted and mixture is smooth. Stir in vanilla. Pour chocolate mixture into prepared crust. Cover with a piece of plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pie to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until thick and cold, at least 4 hours or up to 3 days.
5. Spread Peanut Butter Topping onto chocolate mixture. Refrigerate, uncovered, for at least 4 hours before serving. Garnish with chocolate curls, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Peanut Butter Topping
Makes about 4 cups

2 cups heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup sugar
1 (0.25-ounce) envelope unflavored gelatin
2 tablespoons cold water
1/4 cup boiling water
1/2 cup creamy peanut butter

1. In a large bowl, beat cream with a mixer at medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, beating until stiff peaks form.
2. In a small bowl, combine gelatin and 2 tablespoons cold water; let stand until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in 1/4 cup boiling water until gelatin is dissolved.
3. With mixer on medium-low speed, gradually add gelatin mixture to cream mixture. (Mixture will look like it is melting, but it will set up again.)
4. In a small microwave-safe bowl, microwave peanut butter on high for 30 seconds; stir until melted and smooth. Whisk melted peanut butter into cream mixture until combined. Use immediately.
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Griddle

The LifeSmart Griddle is great for camping & tailgating this football season.

For recipes, tips, & retail locations, visit www.deenbrothers.com