

Kate
Carlisle's
Recipe
Book

over 60 recipes!

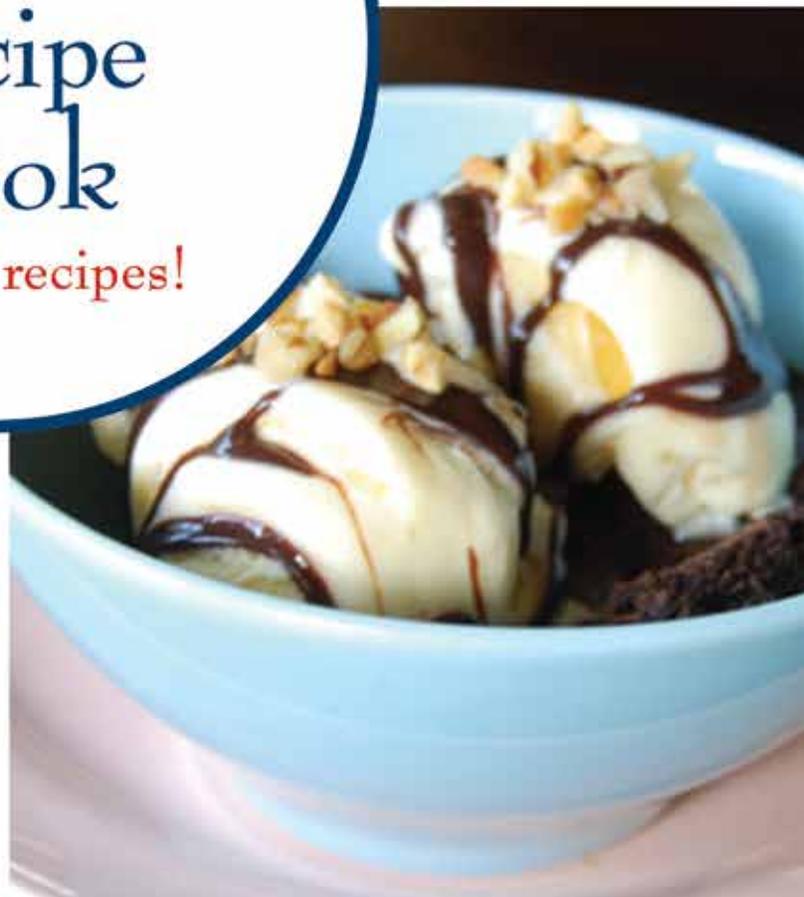
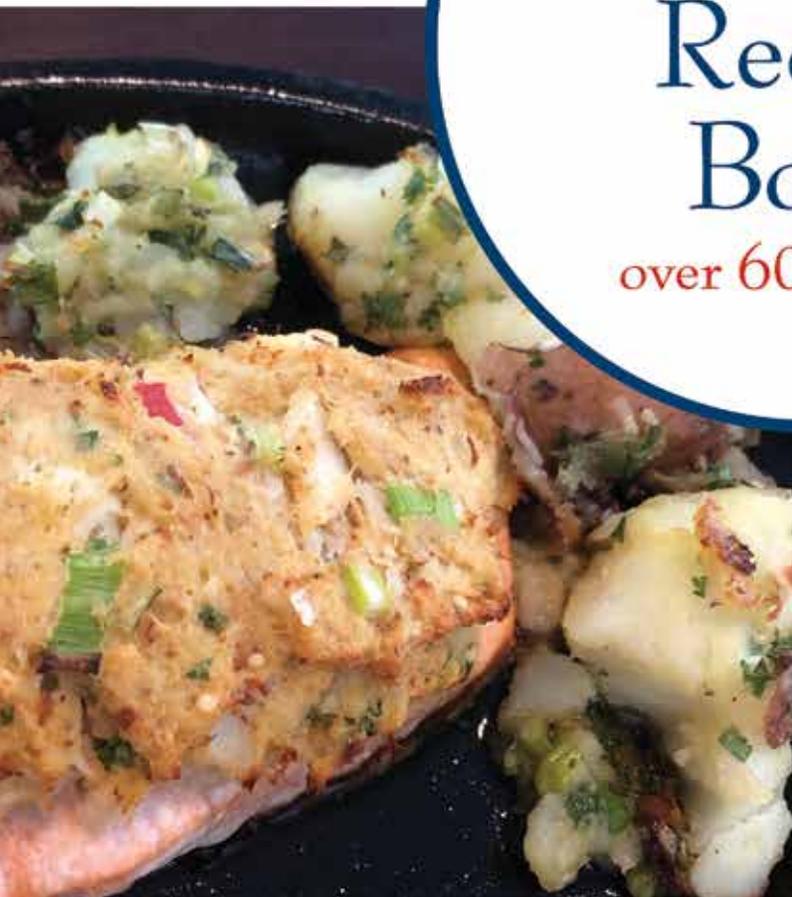
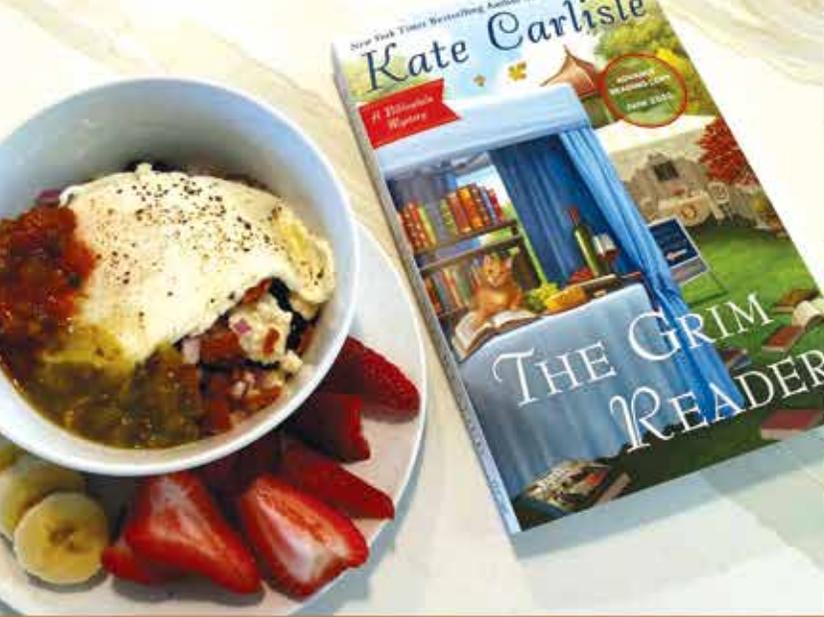


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Breakfasts

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*Shot through the
Hearth*

I gazed at him fondly.

“You’re already plotting
your next book, aren’t
you?”

“You bet I am,” he said,
still snapping pictures as
he explored the second
floor. “This place is wild.
It’s inspiring all kinds of
murderous thoughts in
me.”

“I’m so happy for you.”

Apple-Bacon French Toast Casserole

1 baguette, torn into 1-inch chunks

2 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled

1 apple, cut into quarter-inch chunks

4 oz Monterrey Jack cheese, cut into quarter-inch chunks

6 eggs

1/4 cup maple syrup

1/4 cup apple cider

Place the chunks of bread, apple, cheese, and bacon in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, syrup, and cider. Pour over the bread mixture. Stir to soak bread thoroughly. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan, add the egg mixture, cover, and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Bake the casserole until cooked through and bread on top is golden brown, about 25-30 minutes. Serve with additional syrup.

Avocado Toast with Cheese, Bacon, Fried Egg and Onions

Serves 2.

2 thick pieces of bread

2 small or 1 large avocado

2 slices of bacon

2 Tbsp olive oil

2 slices of a large onion

2 eggs

2 very thin slices of the cheese of your choice

Salt and pepper

Cook the bacon in a skillet. Meanwhile, mash the avocado flesh with a pinch of salt. When the bacon is done, drain on paper towels and set aside, but keep warm. Drain the bacon grease and wipe out the pan. Add the olive oil. Once it's shimmery, caramelize the onions over low heat. While the onions are cooking, toast the bread.

Set onions aside and keep warm. Crack the eggs into the pan, breaking the yolks immediately and spreading the yolk across as much of the egg's surface as possible (to get that flavor in every bite). While eggs are cooking, top each slice of toast with half the avocado and half the bacon.

Flip the eggs over, top with cheese and the fried onions, then turn off the pan and cover. Let sit until the cheese is melted, about a minute. Put one egg atop the toast-avocado-bacon base. Season with salt and pepper

The Grim Reader

Once a month Clyde held a "Meet the Author" event where he would invite a famous author to visit. He served wine and cookies and generally attracted a good crowd. The one unusual aspect of the event was that the authors were always dead. Basically, Clyde held a séance once a month.

The Grim Reader

Derek leaned closer. “You should think twice about threatening people, Banyan. It could get you into trouble.”

“From you?” He scoffed.

“That sounds like a threat to me. I’m just trying to live my life here.”

“Then go do that,” Derek said quietly. “Walk away. Now.”

Breakfast Grain Bowl

- 2 cups cooked quinoa or rice**
- 4 slices of bacon, diced**
- 1/4 cup onion, diced**
- 1 tomato, diced**
- 4 cups of baby spinach, kale, or arugula**
- 1 avocado, sliced**
- 4 eggs**
- Mild vinegar**
- Toasted sesame oil**
- Salt and pepper**

Divide grain into four bowls. Keep warm.

Heat a pan over medium heat. Add bacon and onions and cook until bacon is browned. Toss in tomato and greens. When the greens are wilted, divide into the four bowls. Drizzle with a little vinegar and oil, then stir. Place one-quarter of the avocado in each bowl.

Return pan to heat and spray with nonstick cooking spray or add a little oil to the pan. Crack the four eggs into the pan, one at a time, keeping apart. Cover pan and turn off the heat, but leave the pan on the burner. Leave the eggs there, without flipping, until the whites are set but the yolks are still runny. Top each bowl with one egg and salt and pepper to taste.

Heat a pan over medium heat. Add bacon and onions and cook until bacon is browned. Toss in tomato and greens. When the greens are wilted, divide into the four bowls. Drizzle with a little vinegar and oil, then stir. Place one-quarter of the avocado in each bowl.

Return pan to heat and spray with nonstick cooking spray or add a little oil to the pan. Crack the four eggs into the pan, one at a time, keeping apart. Cover pan and turn off the heat, but leave the pan on the burner. Leave the eggs there, without flipping, until the whites are set but the yolks are still runny. Top each bowl with one egg and salt and pepper to taste

Tip: Use good quality, fresh eggs. Cage-free, vegetarian-fed makes a difference in terms of not having the yolk break on you in the pan.

Breakfast Tacos with Homemade Salsa

1 14-oz can of diced tomatoes with juices
2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 of a jalapeno (with seeds for spicy, without seeds for mild)
1 clove garlic
1/4 cup fresh cilantro
1/2 tsp salt
Mexican tortillas, flour or corn
Scrambled eggs
Sausage or bacon
Shredded cheese
Diced onions
Diced tomatoes
Cooked diced potatoes or hash browns
Sour cream

For the salsa, put canned tomatoes through salt in a food processor. Pulse 4-5 times.

For the tacos: Warm the tortillas one at a time in a dry pan. Top with eggs and desired toppings. Serve warm, with salsa.

No amounts are provided because it depends on how many people are being served and how hungry they may be. Plan on 1-2 eggs per person.

The Grim Reader

Anyone who knew me,
knew without a doubt
that every time I'd ever
been involved in a murder
investigation, it always had
to do with a book.

Eaves of Destruction

“I’ve got guests sitting here,” Jane whispered into the phone, “but the building inspector insists on disrupting them. Can you ask him to wait?”

“I’ll try, but he doesn’t listen to me.” Or anyone else, for that matter, I thought, clenching my teeth.

“What’s his problem?” she asked.

“His problem is, I’m going to kill him.”

Cranberry-Nut Pancakes

In EAVES OF DESTRUCTION, most of the action takes place in two beautiful Victorian homes on Cranberry Circle in Lighthouse Cove. So, in honor of the fact that some real nuts live on Cranberry Circle, I present my recipe for Cranberry-Nut Pancakes.

- 1 cup milk**
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice**
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil**
- 1 large egg**
- 1 cup dried cranberries**
- 1/2 cup pecans or walnuts**
- 1 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 Tbsp sugar**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 1/2 tsp baking soda**
- 1/4 tsp salt**

Combine the milk and lemon juice in a glass measuring cup. Set aside for 15 minutes. Whisk in the egg and vegetable oil.

Put the cranberries and nuts into a food processor and pulse until chopped. Set aside.

Sift together the flour through salt into a bowl. Make a well in the center and add the milk mixture. Stir just until moistened. Fold in the cranberries and nuts.

Heat a griddle to 375 degrees. Grease with butter if necessary. Pour a scant one-quarter cup of batter on the griddle for each pancake. Cook until it’s dry around the edge and bubbles form on top, then flip it over. When both sides are golden brown, place it in the oven on warm until the rest are done.

Honeymoon Stuffed French Toast with Honey-Orange Syrup

This is the French toast that Brooklyn and Derek enjoyed on the last day of their fabulous Paris honeymoon. Perhaps they'll have it for every anniversary.

1 loaf French bread
8 oz cream cheese, room temperature
3 Tbsp sugar, divided
2 Tbsp orange zest, divided
2 tsp vanilla, divided
6 eggs
1/2 cup half and half
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp cinnamon
2-4 Tbsp butter
1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup water
1/2 cup honey

Slice the bread 1-1/2-inch thick. Then slice each piece in half almost but not quite all the way, so the cream cheese stuffing can be added between the halves of each piece. If time permits, allow to sit out for an hour or two to dry out a little.

For the orange cream filling, combine the cream cheese, 2 Tbsp sugar, 1 Tbsp orange zest and 1 tsp vanilla and mix well. Pipe or spread about 2 Tbsp into each bread slice.

Whisk together the eggs, half & half, 1 Tbsp sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, salt and cinnamon. Dip each piece of stuffed bread into the egg mixture, ensuring that both sides are saturated. Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Cook each piece of stuffed French toast until brown on both sides.

Serve with Honey-Orange Syrup.

For the syrup: Combine orange juice, water, honey, and 1 Tbsp orange zest in a small saucepan. Heat on medium until it reaches a gentle boil, then lower heat and continue to simmer until reduced by about half, stirring frequently.

The Book Supremacy

“Apparently Owen’s spy shop even features a café and bookshop as well,”

Derek said.

“I love the idea of a bookshop. They must sell lots of spy thrillers in there.

And the café idea is brilliant, isn’t it?”

“I think so. Because nothing goes better after picking a few locks than a nice cup of tea and a scone.”

The Grim Reader

Gabriel answered on the first ring. “Hey.”

“It’s Brooklyn and Derek.

We’re sorry to wake you.”

“Who’s dead?” he asked first thing.

It took me by surprise and

I blinked at Derek.

“Um, good question,” I said with a sinking realization that we hadn’t even asked Mom who the victim was.

Meg’s Spanish-Style Tortilla

Note: The Spanish-style tortilla has more in common with a quiche or an omelet than it does with a Mexican tortilla. This is not something you use to wrap other ingredients. Rather, it can be a meal on its own.

3 medium-sized red potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch chunks (peels optional)

1 medium onion, diced

1/4 cup of good quality extra virgin olive oil

6 eggs

Salt and pepper

In a 10-inch nonstick skillet, heat the olive oil over medium. When the oil is shimmering, add the chopped potatoes and onions. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are cooked. Whisk the eggs and pour them over the potatoes and onions in the pan. Let them cook without stirring until the eggs are nearly set. To help the process, you can gently lift the edges of the eggs so that uncooked eggs slip under that section.

When the eggs are nearly set, slide the whole pie-shaped mixture onto a plate or the lid of the pan. Then invert the pan on top of the eggs and flip the pan, the eggs, and the plate so that the uncooked side of the tortilla is on the heat. Cook all the way through.

To serve, cut into wedges.

Pancakes with Banana Whipped Cream

1 cup heavy whipping cream

1 tsp sugar

1/2 tsp vanilla

Yellow food coloring (optional)

1 banana, ripe but not discolored

1 cup flour

1 Tbsp baking powder

1 Tbsp sugar

1 tsp salt

3/4 cup milk

1 egg

2 Tbsp melted butter, plus more for the pan

For the banana whipped cream: If possible, refrigerate the empty bowl for an hour or more before making the whipped cream. The cream sets up better in a cold bowl. Put cream, sugar, vanilla and, if using, a few dashes of food coloring into the cold bowl. With the whisk attachment on a mixer, whisk on low speed. Gradually increase speed until you reach the maximum without spilling over. Continue to whisk until whipped cream reaches the desired consistency. Mash the banana in a separate bowl, then add to the whipped cream. Whisk until thoroughly incorporated.

For the pancakes: Sift together the dry ingredients. Whisk together the milk, egg and melted butter. Add to the dry ingredients and stir gently just until combined. The batter should be lumpy.

Heat a griddle over medium heat. Add a thin slice of butter to the pan. When melted, spread it out with the spatula. Pour one-quarter cup of batter at a time to make four-inch pancakes. When you start to see bubbles form around the edges, check carefully to see if it's ready to flip. Keep warm

The Book Supremacy

“It must’ve been a false alarm. Everything is fine.”

“Everything is fine,” I echoed quietly. But I recognized that edgy tone in his voice. And I knew that everything was definitely not fine.

The Grim Reader

“Some detective I am.”

He laughed. “You’re a wonderful detective—for a bookbinder.”

Streusel-Topped Maple-Pumpkin Scones

- 1 cup granulated sugar**
- 2 Tbsp maple syrup**
- 1/4 cup flour**
- 2 Tbsp maple sugar, packed**
- 1 Tbsp butter**
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)**
- 2-1/4 cups flour**
- 1 Tbsp baking powder**
- 1/2 tsp salt**
- 1 tsp cinnamon**
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg**
- 1/2 cup maple sugar, packed**
- 1/2 cup cold butter**
- 1 egg**
- 1/4 cup + 1 Tbsp cream, divided**
- 1 tsp vanilla**

For Maple Sugar, stir together maple and sugar with a fork until well combined. Set aside.

For streusel topping, whisk together 1/4 cup flour with 2 Tbsp maple sugar, then cut in butter with a pastry cutter. Set aside.

Place pumpkin in a sieve over a bowl so the pumpkin will drain. If possible, do this the night before and put the sieve and bowl in the fridge because cold ingredients make for flaky scones.

For the scones: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and put in the fridge.

Sift together the flour through nutmeg. Whisk in the sugar. Cut the butter into one-quarter-inch chunks. Add to the dry ingredients and cut in with a pastry blender or two butter knives until the mixture has a crumb-like texture.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg, pumpkin, one-quarter cup of cream and vanilla. Fold into the dry ingredients just until it pulls together into a ball. If necessary, add cream one teaspoon at a time. Don't overwork.

Place the ball on the parchment-lined baking sheet and pat down into a 10-inch circle. Slice into 8 wedges and pull apart so each scone is separate. Brush with cream. Top with streusel. Bake until scones are brown on bottom and streusel is golden on top, about 20-25 minutes

Traditional British Scones

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp sugar
1 Tbsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
3 Tbsp butter, cold, cut into 1/4-inch chunks
3/4 cup milk
1 egg, separated

Sift together the dry ingredients. Cut in the butter with a pastry blender or two butter knives until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a separate bowl, whisk the milk and egg white. Pour over the dry ingredients and stir very gently, just until moistened.

Turn dough, which will be quite sticky, onto a lightly floured surface. Dust with more flour and add some flour to your hands so you can knead gently 5-10 times. Pat into a 10-inch circle or, for smaller scones, into two five-inch circles. Cut into wedges.

Bake on a pan lined with parchment paper at 350 degrees until golden brown, about 25 minutes. Serve with jam and Devonshire cream.

Mock Devonshire Cream

There really is no substitute for Devonshire cream. But since it's not easy to find in the United States, this may be the best you can do. Serve with jam and traditional British scones.

8 oz mascarpone cheese*
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
1 tsp sugar
1/2 tsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp vanilla

Using a mixer with a whisk attachment on high speed, whip together the cheese and cream in a cold bowl until soft peaks start to form. Add the sugar, lemon juice and vanilla and whip until thoroughly combined.

**If you can't find mascarpone cheese, you can use cream cheese.*

The Grim Reader

Sudden shivers skittered across my shoulders. You would think I'd be used to finding dead bodies by now. But no, it shocked me to my very core, every time.



Appetizers, Snacks & Beverages

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Homicide in Hardcover

My teacher always told me that in order to save a patient you'd have to kill him first.

Not the most child-friendly way of explaining his theory of book restoration to his eight-year-old apprentice, but it worked. I grew up determined to save them all.

Brooklyn's Guacamole Surprise

Savannah gave Brooklyn this recipe over a scratchy cell phone, so it's not poor Brooklyn's fault that she screwed up the ingredients. (But seriously, she thought it was okay to put fruit in guacamole? She really can't cook!) Her parents were surprised how yummy her mistake turned out to be, and this recipe became a Wainwright family favorite.

2 avocados

12 to 15 seedless green grapes, chopped

2 cloves garlic, grated or minced

2 Tbsp finely chopped jalapeno

1/4 cup minced onions

1/4 cup diced tomatoes

2 to 3 Tbsp lime juice

Salt and pepper to taste

Tortilla chips

Mash the avocados with a fork. Stir in remaining ingredients. Serve immediately with tortilla chips.

Crab Cake Books

Makes 20

1 egg

1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp mayonnaise, divided

1/2 tsp seasoned salt

1 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

1 dash Tabasco

2 green onions, white parts minced, green parts sliced into 1-inch "bookmarks"

1/2 cup bread crumbs

1 lb imitation crab meat, diced into one-quarter inch chunks

10 small flour tortillas, cut into 20 "book cover" rectangles

2 Tbsp vegetable oil

2 tsp Dijon mustard

2 tsp honey

Put the egg, plus 1/2 cup mayo through minced scallions in a bowl and whisk together. Stir in bread crumbs, then stir in the imitation crab pieces. Form into 20 rectangles, about 1" wide by 1.5" long by .5" thick. These will be the pages of your books.

Heat a sauté pan over medium-low without adding oil. Warm the tortilla book covers on both sides, then set aside.

Add oil to the pan. When it's warm, fry the crab cakes until brown, about 3 minutes on each side.

Spread a small amount of honey mustard across each tortilla book cover. Place a green onion bookmark on the right-hand side, then a crab cake, then fold the other side over so it looks like a book. If it comes open, stack another on top of it to hold it closed until it's set. You can also pinch the tortilla along the spine of the book to help it retain its shape.

Honey-Mustard Spread: Combine 2 Tbsp mayo, Dijon, and honey, then mix well.

Buried in Books

I had offered to take twenty lucky librarians on a three-hour "Booklover's Tour" of San Francisco.

We were renting a bus and everything. Good grief.

What had I been thinking?

Of course, all those months ago, I had never dreamed that I would be getting married to Derek Stone this weekend.

Buried in Books

“If any of you have an extra hour this week, I would highly recommend a visit to the Bookbinders Museum.”

A hum of excitement spread among the librarians as they imagined the possibilities. Yes, we were a nerdy bunch, but it still gave me a thrill to know that they all loved this stuff as much as I did.

Crispy Tippy Mushroom Books

- 8 oz mushrooms, diced**
- 2 portabella mushroom caps, diced**
- 1/2 cup butter**
- 8 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 cup wine**
- 1 tsp fresh thyme or 1/2 tsp dry thyme**
- 1 roll of phyllo dough**
- 1/4 cup olive oil**

Sauté the mushrooms in butter over medium-low heat until almost dry, about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic and cook for one minute, then add the wine and thyme. Cook until dry, about 10 minutes longer.

Preheat oven to 375. On a cookie sheet covered with parchment paper, place a single sheet of phyllo dough. Brush delicately with olive oil. (I used garlic-flavored olive oil.) Add another sheet on top, trying to line up the edges as best you can. Repeat until you have a stack of 5 sheets, each brushed with olive oil. About an inch from each edge, carefully spoon a row of mushrooms down the length of the phyllo. Fold the edges toward the center to make two sets of books. With kitchen shears, cut the two rows apart, then cut each row into 5 book-shaped pieces. Bake at 375 until golden brown and crispy, about 10-12 minutes.

Deviled Easter Eggs

If you hard boil the eggs in a pressure cooker, they'll be easier to peel.

12 hard-boiled eggs

1/4 cup + 1 Tbsp mayonnaise

1/4 cup whipped cream cheese with chives

2 tsp fresh lemon juice

1/2 tsp lemon zest

1/2 tsp minced fresh dill

4 oz smoked salmon or sliced ham

Peel the eggs, then slice them in half lengthwise. Put the yolks in a blender with the remaining ingredients, except the salmon. Blend. Carefully spoon yolk mixture into the egg whites. Roll a small piece of salmon and press it into the top.

Crowned and Moldering

As I'd noted on my last visit, there were shutters hanging off their frames and several bricks missing from the chimney at the back of the house.

The paint on most of the exterior walls was peeling badly, but there was plenty of other work to be done before we could start scraping, sanding, and painting.

Call me perverse, but seeing all the damage just made me more excited to explore the entire house.

Once Upon a Spine

Usually the fraud was accomplished by adding a fake title page to the book. This bogus page could be inserted and glued in a very subtle way, or sewn in with the other pages, something that was rarely noticed. An experienced collector could sometimes tell the difference, but since most book sales were done over the Internet these days, the fraud wasn't always caught until money had already changed hands.

Dirty Cucumber Sandwiches

- 8 oz cream cheese**
- 2 Tbsp mayonnaise**
- 1 packet Italian dressing mix**
- 1/4 cup fresh dill, minced**
- 1/4 cup green onions, minced**
- 1 loaf cocktail rye**
- 1 cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced**

Mix together the cream cheese, mayonnaise, salad dressing mix, dill, and onions. Spread on two pieces of rye. Put 2 or 3 cucumber slices between the pieces of bread.

Escape Room Snack Mix

However you want to describe escape rooms—bananas, nuts, delicious, an adrenaline rush or just plain fun—this addictive snack mix has you covered!

18 oz box of Life cereal

2 cups peanuts

2 cups oyster crackers

1/4 cup coffee

6 Tbsp butter

1 tsp sugar

1 tsp salt

2 cups banana chips, broken up

12 oz bag of chocolate chips

10 oz bag of peanut butter chips

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Put the cereal, peanuts and crackers in a large bowl, mix well and set aside.

Put the coffee in a small saucepan and heat over medium. Reduce by half, then add the butter, sugar and salt and cook, stirring constantly, until butter is melted. Add to the cereal mixture and stir to coat thoroughly.

Spread in a roasting pan and bake for an hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely. After it reaches room temperature, add the banana, chocolate and peanut butter chips. Store in an airtight container.

The Book Supremacy

“I saw the video,” Inspector Lee said. “I saw someone shoot that kid and I saw them try to steal your book.”

“Exactly,” I whispered.

“Why does it always come back to a book?”

Buried in Books

“How do you feel about spending our wedding week dealing with murder?”

Sad to say, murder had become a part of our lives. As much as I hated to admit it, I was exactly what my mother thought I was. A murder magnet. How could I have expected our wedding week to be any different? But looking up into Derek’s eyes, I knew another truth.

“As long as you’re with me, I can handle anything.”

Ham and Cheese Book Puffs

8 oz thinly sliced ham or turkey, cut into 1" x 1.5" rectangles. (A stack of 4 or 5 of these will be the “pages” of your book-shaped appetizer.)

4 oz cream cheese, softened to room temperature

1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

1/2 cup French fried onions

1/2 tsp dry dill

1/2 tsp garlic salt

1 sheet of puff pastry, thawed

1 egg, lightly beaten

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cut the meat and set aside into 16 stacks. In a food processor, combine the cream cheese, cheddar, onions, dill, and garlic salt until smooth.

Unfold the sheet of puff pastry. Cut it into 16 rectangles. Roll out each rectangle until it’s large enough to fold around a stack of meat as a book cover. Spread about 1 Tbsp of cheese mixture on each book cover. Put the pages into the book, fold it closed and, if desired, make a small slice to mark the spine. Hold it closed with a toothpick or cocktail pick. Brush with egg yolk. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet until they’re puffy and golden brown, about 15-20 minutes. Serve with or without the picks.

Homemade Garden Rolls with Peanut Dipping Sauce

3/4 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup hot tap water
3 Tbsp hoisin sauce
3 Tbsp lime juice
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp Tabasco
2 cloves garlic, minced
10 spring roll wrappers (aka rice paper)
2 small avocados, peeled, pitted, and sliced
1/2 carrot, cut into matchsticks
1/2 cucumber, cut into matchsticks
1/4 red bell pepper, cut into matchsticks
1/2 cup bean sprouts
4 green onions with tops, sliced
1/2 cup cabbage, thinly sliced
1/2 cup fresh basil, sliced
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, sliced
Cooked and diced meat, if desired (pork, chicken, or shrimp)

For the peanut sauce: Whisk together peanut butter through minced garlic. Add more hot tap water, one tablespoon at a time, until you reach the desired consistency.

For the garden rolls: If you don't like any of the vegetables mentioned above, then use whatever you like. This really is an "anything goes" kind of recipe. One very popular herb used in spring rolls is mint, so you might want to try that, too.

Fill a shallow bowl that is wider than the spring roll wrappers with warm water. Lay one wrapper in the water for 15 seconds, then move it to a wet plate. Place approximately 1/2 cup of mixed vegetables and meat, if using, on the side of the wrapper that's closest to you. Roll once, keeping it as tight as possible, tucking in the filling. Fold the edges of the wrapper toward the center, then continue rolling like a burrito. The rice paper feels delicate, but it's stronger than it seems. Just be careful not to let it stick to itself. You'll get the hang of it quickly.

Set aside and cover with a damp towel while you continue to wrap the rest of the garden rolls. No cooking is required. Serve with peanut dipping sauce.

Note: you should be able to find spring roll wrappers or rice paper in the Asian/international section of your grocery store. If not, you can buy them online.

If Books Could Kill

If my life were a book, I would have masking tape holding my hinges together. My pages would be loose, my edges tattered and my boards exposed, the front flyleaf torn and the leather mottled and moth-eaten. I'd have to take myself apart and put myself back together, as any good book restoration expert would do.

Once upon a Spine

Derek scowled as he raked his fingers through his hair in disgust. “Bloody plonker got away from me. I scared him off and he went running. I chased him, but he was more familiar with the streets and alleys around here than I am. I lost him down by Mission Creek.”

Hot Buttered Rump Bites

3 lb rump roast, cut into half-inch chunks
1 cup beef broth
1/4 cup red wine
1/4 cup soy sauce
2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup minced onion
1/4 cup minced parsley
2 cloves garlic, minced
Vegetable oil for frying
1/4 cup butter
2 Tbsp butter, melted
1/2 baguette, cut into half-inch chunks
16 oz Swiss cheese, cut into 1/4-inch chunks

Mix together the beef broth through garlic. Set aside half. Marinate the beef in the other half for at least an hour, or as long as overnight. Heat vegetable oil over medium-high heat in a heavy-bottomed pan. Add rump bites, but avoid overcrowding. You may need to cook them in batches. When all the beef is done, melt the butter in the pan and toss with beef chunks.

To make the croutons, toss the bread chunks with butter and bake at 375 for 8-12 minutes, until golden.

Skewer one crouton, one piece of cheese, and one rump bite onto each toothpick, with the beef on the end that will rest on the plate. Serve with dipping sauce. It's like a bite-sized French dip sandwich.

Naked Lady in a Towel (Shrimp Wraps)

1 lb largeshrimp, peeled and deveined, tails intact
1/2 cup white vinegar
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup water
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp red pepper flakes
1 Tbsp cornstarch dissolved in 1/4 cup water
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp rice wine or white wine
1 Tbsp brown sugar
1 chili pepper, minced (the more seeds you use, the spicier the shrimp will be)
2 gloves garlic, minced
2 Tbsp fresh cilantro, minced
1 egg
1/4 cup water
1 cup flour
1/4 tsp salt
Oil for frying

Work in this order: Peel and devein the shrimp and leave them in the refrigerator. Prep the chili-garlic dip. Mix the dough. While the dough is resting, marinate the shrimp for fifteen minutes. Then assemble and fry the shrimp.

For the chili-garlic sauce, combine all ingredients except the cornstarch mixture in a small saucepan. Heat to a rolling boil, stirring constantly, and continue until reduced by half. Lower to a simmer and add the cornstarch mixture. Continue cooking, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and set aside.

The next step is to make the “towels.” You are essentially making homemade wontons, so if this seems like too much to you, you can use store-bought wontons. I’ll never tell!

Whisk together the egg and water until light and frothy. In a separate bowl, combine the flour and salt until thoroughly mixed. Make a well in the center, then add the egg and water. Stir to combine. If necessary, add more water one teaspoon at a time until a dough forms. Knead until elastic. Cover with a damp cloth and let sit for fifteen minutes.

Break off one-quarter of the dough and leave the rest covered. Roll as thin as you can. Cut into “towels” and wrap around one-quarter of the shrimp. Repeat with the remaining dough, one-quarter at a time.

Heat one-half inch of peanut oil or vegetable oil in a heavy-bottomed pan. Fry the shrimp until the “towels” are brown and crisp and the shrimp is cooked through. Serve warm with chili-garlic dip.

Once upon a Spine

I shouted and knelt down
to find his pulse. It was
weak, but he was still
alive. The pressure of my
fingers against his neck
caused him to moan again.
Thank God. Usually when
I stumble upon people
sprawled across the floor,
they're dead.

Perky Breast Nibbles

2 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

1/2 cup olive oil

3 cloves minced garlic

1 cup mayonnaise

Juice and zest of 1/2 lemon

1 Tbsp maple syrup

Slice the chicken breasts lengthwise into half-inch slices and thread onto bamboo skewers that have been soaked in water. Mix together one-quarter cup lemon juice, olive oil, and garlic, then pour over the chicken breasts. Marinate for one hour.

Mix together mayonnaise, juice and zest of half a lemon, and maple syrup.

Preheat the oven to 425. Discard marinade. Roast the chicken skewers for 5 minutes, then flip and roast for another 5-8 minutes, until cooked through. Serve with dip.

Skinny Dip

16 oz nonfat plain Greek yogurt
2 Tbsp fresh dill, minced
2 Tbsp fresh chives, minced
1/4 cup red bell pepper, minced
1 tsp garlic salt
1/4 tsp Tabasco

Mix together. Best if flavors are allowed to meld for at least an hour.
Serve with fresh vegetables.

Once upon a Spine

His mother stood at the door. "Can't you two discuss all of this murder and assault business over a glass of wine?"

Derek looked poleaxed.

"Mother, how could you hear what we were talking about?"

"So naive, she murmured, shaking her head. "Derek, I'm the mother of five boys. I can hear mischief through solid steel."

Buried in Books

I frowned. “Do you think she’ll be coming to the conference?”

“I sure hope not,” Heather said. Her jaw tightened and her eyes narrowed in unrepressed fury. “Because I swear, if I ever see Sara Martin again, I’ll kill her.”

Stuffed Mushroom Caps

8 oz mushrooms, stems removed

5 oz Boursin garlic and fine herbs cheese

1/4 cup bread crumbs

1 Tbsp butter, melted

Preheat the oven to 400. Discard the mushroom stems. Stuff each mushroom cap with cheese. Mix together bread crumbs and melted butter, then sprinkle over the mushroom caps. Roast until brown, 20-25 minutes.

Tropical Hibiscus Rum Drink

Just after you pour the cranberry juice on top of the pineapple juice, the drink has the same beautiful bi-color look as a hibiscus flower in my neighborhood.

1 part coconut rum

2 parts pineapple juice

1 part cranberry juice

Pour the coconut rum and pineapple juice over ice. Stir, then add the cranberry juice.

Eaves of Destruction

The first time I used a stud finder, it was a revelation . And when one of Dad's brawny carpenters demonstrated the joys of the common socket wrench to me, I was seriously hooked. I soaked up everything the guys taught me, from laying tile to hanging drywall. And I knew what I wanted to do with my life.

Murder Under Cover

“Oh, my God,” I whispered.

It was a book. The most exquisite jeweled book I’d ever seen. And possibly the oldest. The heavily padded leather binding was decorated with intricate gilding and precious gems.

I checked the spine. It read Vatsyayana. I looked at Robin. “The Kama Sutra?”

“Yes.” She grinned.

“From your mother?”

Twisted Honey Cocktail

Makes an excellent marinade for chicken or fish!

1 oz VSOP cognac (Derek uses Camus, but any good cognac or brandy will do)

1/2 oz fresh squeezed lemon juice

1/2 oz honey syrup (equal parts honey and water at room temperature)

1/2 oz Cointreau or other fine orange liqueur

Lemon twist for garnish

Combine all ingredients in a chilled glass. Shake, don’t stir.



Beef & Pork

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Beef Wellington with Swiss Cheese Sauce

This was the meat-lovers' main dish at Brooklyn and Derek's wedding.

3-lb beef tenderloin

Garlic salt and black pepper

2 Tbsp olive oil

8 oz mushrooms, diced

2 medium shallots, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 Tbsp steak sauce, such as A1

8 oz Swiss cheese, divided

1 sheet of puff pastry, thawed but still cold

1 egg, whisked with 1 Tbsp water

2 Tbsp butter

2 Tbsp flour

2 cups milk

Liberally sprinkle the tenderloin with garlic salt and black pepper. Broil 5-7 minutes (until well browned), then turn and broil the other side for 5-7 minutes until browned. Chill in the refrigerator until cool to the touch.

Saute the mushrooms and shallots in olive oil over medium heat for five minutes, stirring frequently. Add garlic and saute until fragrant, about 30 seconds longer. Remove from heat and stir in steak sauce.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Unfold the sheet of puff pastry on a lightly floured surface. Roll just enough so that it will completely wrap around the tenderloin. Put mushroom mixture along the center of the puff pastry in a rectangle the length and width of the tenderloin. Cover the mushroom mixture with 4 very thin slices of Swiss cheese, then put the beef on top. Wrap the puff pastry around everything, pinching to close. If you have extra puff pastry after wrapping the tenderloin, you can cut out leaves or other decorations. Affix the decorations to the puff pastry with egg wash, then brush the egg wash over the whole thing.

Place seam side down in a roasting pan. Roast 45 minutes to an hour. Check halfway through and if the puff pastry is looking too brown, tent loosely with aluminum foil. When the meat in the center reaches 135 degrees, remove from oven and allow to sit while you make the Swiss cheese sauce.

For the cheese sauce: Shred remaining cheese. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Add flour a little at a time and stir thoroughly. Then add the milk just a little at a time, stirring until incorporated each time. Once all of the milk has been added, heat to a simmer, stirring frequently, and simmer until thickened. Stir in the shredded cheese a little at a time.

A Cookbook

Conspiracy

I don't mind admitting I'm a little obsessed with food. A childhood spent competing with five brothers and sisters at the dinner table will do that to you. I grew up loving good food as much as I love old books, which is saying a lot since I'm a bookbinder and old books are my life's blood.

Brooklyn's Triumph: Pasta with Italian Sausage

Makes 4 servings.

Finally, a pasta recipe even Brooklyn can follow! Once her sister helped her figure out how to cook pasta, the rest was easy. (If you don't count Brooklyn's first three disastrous attempts and that one call to the fire department.)

4 hot or mild Italian sausages, removed from casings and crumbled in a frying pan

3 cloves garlic, minced

5 Tbsp olive oil, divided

Penne or fusilli pasta

10 basil leaves, chopped

1 large ripe tomato, chopped

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Fry sausage in pan with garlic and 3 Tbsp olive oil. Boil pasta according to package directions, drain, and toss with 2 Tbsp olive oil.

Add basil and tomato to cooked sausage mixture and cook briefly over low heat 1 to 2 minutes, or long enough to warm but not overcook. Add pasta and toss. Garnish with a generous grating of rich cheese and serve immediately with a good red wine.

Hot Meat on a Stick

Use metal skewers if you have them. If you're using bamboo skewers, soak them in water while the beef is marinating. Even after soaking, though, some of my skewers burned.

1 lb bottom round steak, sliced thin and cut into 2-inch strips

Juice of 4 limes

1/4 cup water

2 jalapenos, sliced

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 t salt

Combine the juice through salt to make marinade. Marinate meat for 2-3 hours.

Preheat grill on medium heat. Thread the meat onto skewers. Discard marinade.

Grill 1-2 minutes on each side.

Homicide in Hardcover

Every light was on full blast. The room was glaringly bright. Papers were scattered everywhere. Tools and brushes lay in disarray on the counters and on the floor. Cabinet drawers were pulled out and upturned. A high stool lay on the ground next to the center work table.

What a mess. I stepped inside to look around.

That's when I saw Abraham, lying on the cold cement floor. A pool of dark liquid seeped from under him.

Schnitzel

I wanted to share a random factoid that I learned at a garage sale: wiener schnitzel is not pork. When you make schnitzel using pork cutlets, it's just schnitzel. Wiener schnitzel is made with veal. Which kind of blew my mind because "wiener" and "pork" seem to go together. But the hostess at the garage sale was from Germany, and I'm not brave enough—or stupid enough—to argue with a German woman about schnitzel. So here is an authentic recipe for German schnitzel, but please, whatever you do, don't call it wiener schnitzel.

2 lb thinly sliced boneless pork chops, about one-quarter inch thick

1/2 cup all purpose flour

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp black pepper

3 eggs

1/2 cup bread crumbs

Clarified butter (ghee) for frying

1 lemon

Pound the pork chops to tenderize them. In a bowl, mix the flour, salt and pepper. In a second bowl, beat the eggs. In a third bowl, place the bread crumbs. Dredge the pork chops in flour, then eggs, then bread crumbs.

Melt the clarified butter (also known as ghee) in a heavy pan over medium-high heat. I found mine at Trader Joe's, but I also saw it in the international foods section of my supermarket. If you can't find any, you can use a combination of regular butter and vegetable oil.

You need enough so that the butter or oil comes halfway up the sides of the chops. Cook until well browned, about 2 minutes per side.

Drain on paper towels and serve with a lemon wedge.

Peril in Paperback

"We call it the Library

Suite," my hostess said, as

she led me into the spa-

cious bedroom.

"I can see why." I hoped

my expression remained

calm despite the volatile

mix of shock, fascination,

and trepidation coursing

through me as I took in

the mad proliferation of

books.

I love books, but this is

crazy, I thought. That

funny old cliché about the

walls closing in on you? It

wasn't so funny anymore.

Premeditated Mortar

My first encounter with Mackintyre Sullivan might've been what you'd call a "meet cute," except for the fact that my face was smeared with mud and weeds and I was pretty sure I had a concussion. Not such a cute moment for me. Later, it was Mac who deduced that someone had deliberately tampered with my brakes. As it turned out, that "someone" was a crazed murderer. So, good times.

Super Simple Spicy Spaghetti

This spaghetti recipe is super simple, but it's delicious, especially if you can make it a few hours ahead of time and leave it on a slow simmer until it's time to eat. The tomato thickens, and the flavor becomes as rich and delicious as an Italian count.

1 lb ground beef
2 cans tomato sauce
2 cans diced tomatoes
1/4 cup red wine (I use Merlot)
1 tsp cayenne

Brown the ground beef. Drain. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Heat to a slow simmer. Cover and simmer for up to four hours, stirring occasionally. If necessary, add a bit of water in half-cup increments. Serve over spaghetti noodles with garlic bread and a salad.

Weeknight Taco Casserole

1 lb hamburger
1 package taco seasoning
3 cups cooked rice
1 can diced tomatoes
1 can diced green chilis
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 tomato diced
4 green onions, sliced
1 avocado, diced

Brown the hamburger, drain, then add the seasoning, rice, tomatoes, and chilis. Mix well and heat until warm. Put in a casserole dish and top with cheddar cheese. Put the casserole dish in the oven at 350 until the cheese is melted. Or better yet, put it in the microwave and melt the cheese in a minute... just be sure you use a microwave safe casserole dish.

Serve with your favorite taco toppings. We like tomatoes, green onions, and avocados.

Pages of Sin

“You should have made a taco casserole for me, too.”

“I did,” Mom said, patting my hand. “I froze it, so we’ll have it for dinner later this week. But even if I didn’t, you’d still come with me. There’s a room full of old books waiting to be rescued. You can’t help yourself.”

Damn it, she was right.

When it came to books, I was a shameless scrounger and a glutton for punishment.



Poultry

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Premeditated Mortar

My first encounter with Mackintyre Sullivan might've been what you'd call a "meet cute," except for the fact that my face was smeared with mud and weeds and I was pretty sure I had a concussion. Not such a cute moment for me. Later, it was Mac who deduced that someone had deliberately tampered with my brakes. As it turned out, that "someone" was a crazed murderer. So, good times.

A Penny Saved Sage Chicken Medallions

This recipe is called "a penny saved" for two reasons—one, in honor of Poor Richard's Almanac, featured in *Books of a Feather*; and two, because it's a very affordable dinner. And of course, I had to include sage because Benjamin Franklin was full of sage advice.

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1/4 cup flour

1/2 tsp each of salt, pepper, and garlic powder

2 Tbsp olive oil

1 cup chicken broth

2 Tbsp fresh sage, minced

1 cup cream

Wide egg noodles

Slice the chicken half-inch thick on the bias, creating medallions. If some of the medallions are very large, cut them in half so they're about 2 inches in diameter. Put flour, salt, pepper, and garlic powder into a zip top bag and mix. Add the chicken medallions, zip the bag, and toss to coat.

Heat 1 T of olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan over medium heat. Add half of the chicken and brown on both sides. Set aside and brown the other half. Add the chicken broth, sage, and first half of the chicken, scraping the bottom of the pan to loosen brown bits. Simmer on low, covered, for 10 minutes. Uncover, stir in cream, and heat to a simmer again. Simmer uncovered until sauce has thickened, about 5 minutes longer. Serve over cooked egg noodles.

Crane's Chinese Chicken Tacos

Derek's friend Crane came up with this Chinese-Mexican-Thai fusion recipe after his first visit to San Francisco. Meet him in *Books of a Feather*.

2 Tbsp vegetable oil
3 garlic cloves, minced, divided
1 can water chestnuts, drained and diced
1 can diced green chilis
1 lb ground chicken
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup ketchup
4 tsp rice vinegar
4 tsp sesame oil
2 Tbsp dark brown sugar
Flour tortillas
Shredded cabbage and carrots
Green onions, sliced
Cilantro, minced
Avocado
1 cup creamy peanut butter
3/4 cup coconut milk
3 Tbsp lime juice
3 Tbsp soy sauce
1Tbsp fresh ginger, grated
1 tsp red pepper flakes

To make the taco filling, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 2 cloves of minced garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add chicken, water chestnuts, and chilis, then cook until chicken is no longer pink. While chicken is cooking, mix together ketchup through brown sugar. Add to the pan and continue to cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid thickens.

To make the peanut sauce, put remaining ingredients in a food processor and pulse until blended.

Warm the flour tortillas. Assemble the tacos with filling, peanut sauce, shredded cabbage and carrots, green onions, avocado and cilantro.

Books of a Feather

The air inside the old bookshop was thick with the heady scents of aged vellum and rich old leathers. Heaven. I breathed in the lovely, pulpy odors as I climbed the precarious rolling ladder up to the crowded top shelf to start cataloging books.

The aisles of the shop were narrow, barely three feet wide, which meant I could reach out and touch the volumes on both sides of the aisle—if I was willing to let go of the wobbly handrail, which I wasn't.

One Book in the Grave

Hello, my name is Brooklyn Wainwright and I am a book addict.

It was Friday morning and I was on my way to the Covington Library to sniff out my personal version of crack cocaine: books. Old, rare, and beautiful.

Easy Caesar Chicken and Rice

When I'm on deadline, I have no time to cook—and no time to go to a restaurant! A writer's dilemma. This recipe takes 5 minutes to pull together. No lie. Then I go back to work while it cooks. Delicious!

4 boneless chicken breasts

1 cup uncooked white rice

1 cup chicken broth

1 cup Caesar salad dressing

Salt, pepper and paprika

Preheat oven to 375. Spray a 13x9 pan with cooking spray.

Combine rice, broth and salad dressing. Spread in pan. Add chicken breasts. Sprinkle with spices. Cover with foil. Bake until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 170, about 45-50 minutes.

I serve with a side of broccoli steamed in the microwave for four minutes. So good!!! It took longer to write up the recipe than it does to get dinner in the oven.

Quick and Easy Chicken ala King

One of Benjamin Franklin's most famous aphorisms is "Waste not, want not," and I took it to heart while coming up with this quick and easy way to use up leftover chicken. If you like, you can add some fresh minced herbs to make it even more delicious.

1 Tbsp vegetable oil

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into half-inch pieces

1 can cream of chicken soup

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 10-oz bag of frozen mixed vegetables

1 cup white wine

2 tsp poultry seasoning

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp black pepper

Preheat oil over medium heat in a pan large enough to hold all the ingredients. Brown chicken. Add remaining ingredients and stir in the pan. Heat to boiling, stirring occasionally. Lower heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Serve over biscuits, rice, noodles, or mashed potatoes. Basically, anything with carbs.

Books of a Feather

I'd seen a museum employ this sort of lighting before, during a wonderful presentation of Leonardo da Vinci's drawings and letters.

I was curious to see what they were setting up, so I stuck my head inside the door to take a look around—and was immediately sorry I'd done so.

All I saw were legs sprawled across the floor, directly inside the doorway. I scrambled backwards and then couldn't help myself. I screamed bloody murder.

Ripped from the Pages

“Won’t this be fun?” My mother squeezed me with painful enthusiasm. “Two whole months living right next door to each other. You and me. We’ll be like best girlfriends.”

“Or double homicide victims,” my friend Robin muttered in my ear.

White Wine Rice with Chicken and Sweet Potatoes

- 1 sweet potato, cut in half-inch chunks**
- 3 Tbsp olive oil, divided**
- Salt and pepper**
- 1 large onion, diced**
- 2 cups long grain white rice**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 cups chicken broth**
- 1 cup chardonnay**
- 1 tsp salt**
- 2 cups cooked chicken**
- 1/2 cup chopped peanuts (optional)**

Preheat the oven to 400°. Toss the sweet potato chunks with oil, salt and pepper. Roast for 15 minutes, flipping once. Set aside.

Heat the oil over medium heat in a pan with deep sides and a lid. Saute the onions until translucent. Add the rice and saute, stirring constantly until rice begins to turn golden. Add garlic through salt and stir. Heat to a boil, cover, lower heat, and simmer for 15 minutes. Take off the lid and toss on the sweet potatoes and the chicken. Re-cover and cook for 5 more minutes. Turn off the heat but leave covered for an additional 5 minutes. If desired, toss chopped peanuts on top before serving. Serve with hot sauce.



Seafood

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Ripped from the Pages

Robin chuckled. “Knowing Brooklyn, she probably found a dead body.” I pointed a shaky finger at what I saw on the floor. Derek aimed the beam where I’d indicated and muttered an expletive. He wrapped his arm around my shoulders. Robin’s smile faltered. “Derek?” “You were right, Robin,” Derek said, giving me a soft squeeze of sympathy. “This wine cave has just turned into a crime scene.”

Baked Cod with Lemon-Wine Dill Cream

1-1/2 lb cod or other firm white fish
1/4 cup flour
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup panko bread crumbs
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp dry mustard
1/2 tsp cayenne
1/4 tsp pepper
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup white wine
Juice of 2 lemons
1/4 cup fresh dill, chopped
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
3/4 cup heavy cream

For the fish: Preheat the oven to 400°. Put the flour in one flat-bottomed dish, the eggs in another, and the remaining ingredients, mixed well, in a third. In that order, dredge the fish. Bake for about 20 minutes, flipping halfway through. Fish should flake easily with a fork.

For the sauce: While the fish is cooking, heat the oil over low heat, then saute the garlic for 30 seconds. Add the wine through the pepper, heat to a boil, then lower and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the cream, heat to a simmer again, stirring frequently. Serve over fish.

Also excellent with roasted asparagus.

One Pot Salmon Rice Pilaf

Enjoy with a nice glass of white wine and while reading one of my books.

4 salmon filets

2 Tbsp olive oil

1 cup white rice

2 cups chicken or vegetable broth

1 Tbsp lemon juice

1/2 cup onion, diced

1/2 cup frozen peas

1 carrot, diced

1/4 cup cashews

1/4 cup raisins

Heat olive oil in large sauté pan over medium heat. Sauté onions until translucent. Add rice and cook two minutes longer. Toss in remaining ingredients except salmon. Stir. Heat to a boil, lower heat and cover. Simmer for five minutes. Place salmon filets atop rice mixture, cover, and continue cooking until liquid is absorbed and salmon flakes easily, about 15 minutes longer.

Confession: Sometimes I toss in other vegetables I need to use up, such as cauliflower.

Premeditated Mortar

“So why have I never even heard of this place before today?” he asked.

I took butter and sour cream out of the fridge.

“Most people around town don’t like to talk about it.”

“Why not?”

To answer this, I first had to fortify myself with a hearty sip of wine. “Because for over a hundred years, the Gables was an insane asylum.”

Quick and Easy Weeknight Salmon

To make this even easier and just as delicious, skip all of the sauce ingredients and just pour in a jar of Alfredo sauce. Because everything is cooked in one pot (other than the pasta), cleanup is a breeze.

- 1 lb farfalle (bowtie) pasta**
- 2 Tbsp olive oil**
- 1 lb salmon, fresh or frozen**
- 8 oz mushrooms, sliced**
- 1 small onion, diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 cup cream or half and half, divided**
- 1/2 cup white wine**
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice**
- 1 tsp cornstarch**
- 2 cups baby spinach**
- Salt and pepper to taste**

Cook pasta according to package directions. While the water is heating, heat the oil in a large saucepan. When the oil is glistening, add mushrooms, onions, and salmon. Sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Stir infrequently to help everything sear a little. After four minutes, flip over the salmon fillets. Cut the fillets into smaller pieces right there in the pan.

When the salmon is almost cooked through, just a little pink, add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add 3/4 cup cream, white wine and lemon juice. Whisk cornstarch into remaining cream, then add to salmon mixture. Stir well, then add spinach and stir to combine. Simmer until pasta is done.

Before draining pasta, add one ladleful of pasta water to the salmon mixture. Drain pasta, then combine with the salmon mixture and stir well.

Premeditated Mortar

That's when the screaming began.

Derek jumped out of bed and yanked on a pair of jeans. "Stay here."

Ignoring his command, I raced after him down the hall, through the living room and out to the workshop. I skidded to a halt behind him as he threw the door open.

It was Robin, wrapped in a trench coat and screaming as tears rolled down her cheeks.

She was covered in blood.

Shot through the Hearth

I gazed at him fondly.

“What’s going on with
you, Dad?”

“I’ve been keeping busy,”
he said. “Helping out at
the winery. Taking my
boat out on the week-
ends.”

“Fishing?”

“You bet. Brought home
some beautiful salmon
last week.”

“Really?” I gave him a
look. “I don’t recall seeing
any salmon in my freezer.”

Salmon with Crab Filling

This is very filling and rich, so we like to have it with a simple, small salad.

2 salmon fillets, about half a pound total

8 oz lump crab

1 egg

2 tsp cream cheese

2 tsp mayonnaise

2 tsp brown mustard

2 tsp Old Bay Seasoning

2 tsp jarred pimentos

1/4 cup bread crumbs

1 Tbsp fresh parsley, minced

1 green onion, sliced, with tops

1 clove garlic, minced

With a hand mixer on medium speed, combine the egg, cream cheese, mayonnaise, mustard, and Old Bay Seasoning, mixing for about one minute.

Add crab meat, bread crumbs, green onion, and garlic to the bowl. Fold everything together gently until thoroughly combined. Press together into a crab ball and refrigerate for 30 minutes or longer.

Preheat the oven to 425. Brush oil on the bottom side of the salmon. From the top side, slice a slit down the center of each salmon fillet, lengthwise, not all the way through, to make a pocket for the filling. Stuff each fillet with half of the crab filling. It will be mounded; just pile it on.

Roast on a rimmed roasting pan until salmon flakes easily, about 18 minutes.



Other Main Dishes

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One Book in the Grave

I hurried to the next display case. It held a stunning antique Russian bible with a thick cover of hammered silver attached by rivets. I moved closer to examine the foreign symbols carved in the silver—and stumbled over something. I grabbed onto the edge of the sturdy display case to steady myself and looked down to see what had caused me to trip. It was a man's shoe. I looked closer. It was still being worn by the man lying on the floor behind the chair.

Cauliflower Steak with Sesame-Ginger Dip

This was the vegetarian main dish at Brooklyn and Derek's wedding.

1 head cauliflower, cut into 1-inch thick slices

3/4 cup olive oil, divided

2 cloves garlic, minced

1-1/2 tsp red pepper flakes, divided

1/2 tsp salt

1 tsp lemon juice

2 Tbsp rice vinegar

1 Tbsp soy sauce

1 Tbsp toasted sesame oil

1 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced

1 Tbsp brown sugar

1 tsp Dijon mustard

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Slice the cauliflower. If florets fall off, it's fine. Just try to keep the chunks 1-inch thick as much as possible. Mix together 1/2 cup olive oil, garlic, 1 tsp red pepper flakes, salt and lemon juice and brush all over both sides of the cauliflower. Roast 15 minutes, flip, and roast another 15 minutes. The outside will get nice and crispy, and the inside soft.

For the dip: Put remaining ingredients in a food processor and combine. Serve in small bowls alongside the cauliflower.

The Lies that Bind

Layla Fontaine, Executive Artistic Director of the Bay Area Book Arts Center, was tall, blond and strikingly beautiful, with a hair trigger temper and a reputation for ruthlessness. Some in the book community called her a malevolent shark. Others disagreed, insisting that calling her a shark only served to tarnish the reputation of decent sharks everywhere.

Crispy Cauliflower Steak with Mushroom-Onion

Gravy

- 1 head of cauliflower**
- 1/2 cup flour**
- 1/4 cup corn starch**
- 1 tsp salt**
- 1/2 tsp black pepper**
- 1/2 cup almond milk**
- 1/4 tsp apple cider vinegar**
- 1 1/2 cups bread crumbs**
- Olive oil for drizzling**
- 1/4 cup mushrooms, chopped into 1/2-inch pieces**
- 1/4 cup onion, diced**
- 2 Tbsp butter (you can substitute vegan butter)**
- 2 Tbsp flour**
- 2 cups vegetable broth**

Preheat the oven to 425. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Wash the cauliflower, cut off the leaves and the thickest part of the stem, leaving most of the stem intact. Cut in four thick slices. (The center two slices should hold together as "steaks," the outer slices will likely come apart into large florets. This is fine.)

Place the bread crumbs into a bowl. Sift together the flour, corn starch, salt and pepper into a flat-bottomed bowl or dish large enough to fit one whole cauliflower steak but not too large. Add the almond milk and vinegar and stir well to make a batter without lumps. Place one cauliflower steak at a time into the bowl. Spoon batter over the steak, trying to make sure it coats every crevice. Hold up to let some of the batter drip off, then coat in bread crumbs. Repeat with the other pieces.

Place on the lined baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Roast until cauliflower is soft and bread crumbs are golden brown, about 15-20 minutes.

For the gravy: Sauté the mushrooms and onions in butter over low-medium heat for five minutes, stirring frequently. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir. Add broth a 1/4-cup at a time, stirring well after each addition. After all the broth has been incorporated, simmer until the steaks come out of the oven, continuing to stir frequently.

Merlot Mac and Cheese

3 cups dried elbow macaroni
8 oz cheddar cheese, shredded
8 oz Parmesan cheese, shredded
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tsp prepared mustard
1/8 tsp cayenne
2/3 cup Merlot
1 tsp sugar
Sausage or hot dogs (optional)

Cook noodles according to package directions. Preheat oven to 350°.

While noodles are cooking, combine sour cream, cheeses, mustard, salt, and cayenne in a food processor. Pulse until smooth, scraping the sides of the bowl frequently. Add wine a bit at a time, pulsing and scraping the sides of the bowl until well combined.

Drain the noodles. Combine noodles, sliced sausages to taste, and cheese sauce. Mix well. Spray a casserole dish with nonstick spray and add the macaroni and cheese. Bake for 30 minutes.

Ripped from the Pages

Guru Bob, otherwise known as Robson Benedict, was the avatar, the spiritual leader of the commune. My parents considered him a highly evolved conscious being, and, having known him for most of my life, I couldn't disagree. He was the reason my parents had gathered up their six small children and moved us all to Sonoma so many years ago when Guru Bob summoned them.

Ripped from the Pages

Journey to the Center of the Earth.

Was it totally geeky to admit that my fingers were tingling just touching the book? It was covered in three-quarter morocco leather with gilding on the spine. The boards were marbled. I opened it to the title page to see the date: 1867.

This was not the time or place to study it more fully. I clutched it for dear life and reluctantly returned my gaze to the body.

Pasta with Bacon and White Wine

6 medium tomatoes
8 sliced of bacon, chopped
6 baby portabello mushrooms, quartered
2 cups white wine
1 cup heavy cream
1 tsp sugar
1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
8 oz dried spaghetti
Parmesan, salt and pepper

Heat water to boiling, but don't put the spaghetti in it yet. Instead, submerge the six tomatoes in the boiling water until their peels split, then put them in a bowl of ice water to cool them down. After they're cool, peel them, seed, and roughly chop.

Cook the spaghetti according to package directions.

Preheat a round pan with deep sides over medium heat. Cook bacon pieces in the pan until sizzling but still pink, stirring often. Add the mushrooms and saute until the bacon is crispy. Set the bacon and mushrooms aside. Drain all but 2 Tbsp of the oil. Add the white wine. Simmer for five minutes, then stir in the cream, sugar, and red pepper flakes. After three minutes, add the bacon, mushrooms, tomatoes, and spaghetti. Toss to coat thoroughly. Season with parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.



Sides

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A High-End Finish

My heart was pounding in double time and I trembled so hard I almost fell.

There was a man lying face down on the cold, broken foundation, his arms flailing out from his body. My flashlight beam was wavering, but I managed to train it directly at the man's head.

Chills crept down my spine as I recognized the face of the man whose blood had pooled on the floor beneath his cheek.

It was Jerry Saxton, my blind date from the other night. He was dead.

Asparagus, Cashew and Cranberry Saute

2 lbs asparagus, sliced one-quarter inch thick
1 Tbsp cornstarch
2 Tbsp cold water
1 cup chicken broth
1 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp dry white wine
1 tsp maple syrup
2 Tbsp sesame oil
1 Tbsp olive oil
1/2 cup cashews
1/2 cup dried cranberries

In a small sauce pan, mix together cornstarch and cold water with a whisk. Add broth, soy sauce, white wine, and maple syrup. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Simmer until slightly thick, about one minute.

In a wok, heat both oils until shimmering. Add the asparagus and cashews. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add the sauce and cranberries. Cook for one more minute. (Note: If you want to make this a complete meal, sauté shrimp along with the asparagus and cashews, then serve over white rice.)

Cauliflower au Gratin

1 head of cauliflower, roughly chunked
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 packet Italian seasoning
8 oz shredded Swiss cheese, divided
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 cup onion, diced
1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced
Sprinkling of nutmeg (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375. In a large bowl, combine soup, Italian seasoning, 3/4 cup cheese, garlic, onion and parsley. Mix well. Stir in cauliflower to coat.

Spray a casserole dish with cooking spray. Add cauliflower mixture. Top with remaining cheese and, if desired, a sprinkling of nutmeg, preferably freshly grated. Bake for 30 minutes. Cauliflower will be al dente, so if you prefer it softer, you might want to cook a little longer.

Premeditated Mortar

“So why have I never even heard of this place before today?” he asked.

I took butter and sour cream out of the fridge.

“Most people around town don’t like to talk about it.”

“Why not?”

To answer this, I first had to fortify myself with a hearty sip of wine. “Because for over a hundred years, the Gables was an insane asylum.”

*A Cookbook
Conspiracy*

As I pushed the door
open, a horrific scream
erupted.

That's when I saw my
sister Savannah kneeling
on the tiled floor, a huge,
triangular, bloodstained
knife clutched in her
raised hand.

She whipped around.

Her eyes were wide and
her cheeks were stained
with tears. She was still
screaming so I took one
more step her way. That's
when I saw someone lying
on the floor beside her.

Savannah's Gourmet Coleslaw

Napa cabbage makesk this coleslaw so pretty, and the recipe is simple enough that even Brooklyn can make it.

1 Tbsp sesame seeds

5 Tbsp slivered almonds

4 cups Napa cabbage, thinly sliced or shredded

1/2 cup cilantro, coarsely chopped

1/2 cup green onions, thinly sliced

3 Tbsp sweet rice wine vinegar

1 Tbsp sesame oil

1/4 cup peanut oil

1/4 cup fresh ginger, peeled and minced

Toast sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until golden, about 3-4 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside. Stir slivered almonds in the same skillet over medium heat until light golden, about 5 minutes. Set aside.

Combine cabbage, cilantry, and green onions in large bowl. Add vinegar, oils, ginger, and almonds. Toss to blend. If desired, season to taste with salt and pepper. Can be prepared 2 hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Just before serving, toss again and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Garlic-Herb Smashed Potatoes

These smashed potatoes are smashing!

6 medium red potatoes

1/4 cup olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 Tbsp fresh herbs, minced (we love thyme and parsley, but you could also use rosemary, basil, oregano)

1 green onion, minced

1/4 tsp salt

1/8 tsp pepper

Wash the potatoes but don't peel or cut. Boil in water until the potatoes can be pierced easily with a fork. Remove from water and cool.

Preheat the oven to 425. With the flat part of a spatula or spoon with no slats, press down on each potato to smash it but keep it whole. (It's not a problem if it breaks apart.) Put in a bowl.

Mix together olive oil, garlic, herbs, onion, salt and pepper. Pour over potatoes and stir gently to coat. Roast for 15 minutes.

One Book in the Grave

I didn't want to disturb the crime scene, and I certainly didn't want to step in any blood. But my curiosity got the best of me. I grabbed hold of the back of the chair to get a better look at the glimmering object.

It was a knife. A bloody knife, oddly shaped. I recognized it as a knife used by bookbinders.

"Oh, crap," I whispered, and there went my stomach again as I contemplated the worst. It couldn't be my knife, could it?



Soups, Salads and Sandwiches

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Asian Chicken Salad

1/2 cup cabbage, sliced thin
1/2 cup bottled teriyaki sauce
1 cup cooked chicken, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 large carrots, shredded
4 green onions, julienned
1 Tbsp sesame seeds

Mix together cabbage through green onions, then sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve cold. Even better if you make it an hour or two ahead.

Books of a Feather

We were getting married,
and how crazy was that?

The two of us had almost
nothing in common. I'd
been raised in a peace-
love-and-happiness artis-
tic commune in the wine
country. Derek had been
a highly trained operative
with England's military
intelligence. Think James
Bond but more danger-
ous, more handsome,
more everything. I was
crazy in love with him. I
figured that the old adage
that opposites attract had
to be true, because he
loved me right back.

The Book Stops Here

My mother always warned me to be careful what I wished for, but did I listen to her? Of course not. I love my mom, really, but this was the same woman who liked to recommend espresso enemas to perk me up. The same woman who performed magic spells and exorcisms on a regular basis and astral traveled around the universe with her trusted spirit guide, Ramlar X. Believe me, I'm very careful about taking advice from my mother.

California Veggie Wrap

In California, we're blessed with an abundance of fresh fruits and veggies, the inspiration for this delicious wrap sandwich.

- 4 6-inch flour tortillas**
- 2 green onions, sliced thin**
- 1/4 cucumber, sliced thin lengthwise**
- 1 large avocado, sliced thin**
- 1 small tomato, sliced thin**
- 1 carrot, sliced thin lengthwise**
- 4 sugar snap peas, sliced thin lengthwise**
- 2 large strawberries, halved and sliced thin**
- 1 cup fresh cilantro**
- 1/4 cup pecans, walnuts, or almonds**
- 1 clove garlic**
- 1/4 tsp salt**
- 2 green onions, cut into chunks**
- 1 tsp fresh jalapeno, without seeds**
- 1 tsp lime juice**
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup olive oil**

Warm the tortillas in a dry pan. Spread 2 Tbsp cilantro pesto on each, then top with vegetables and strawberries.

For the cilantro pesto: Place the cilantro through lime juice in a food processor. Pulse several times, scrap sides, then pulse again. Add the olive oil a little at a time until it reaches a spreadable consistency.

The cilantro pesto tastes great with pasta, tomatoes, and mozzarella cheese, or as the sauce on a pizza with Mexican-inspired ingredients.

Chicken and White Wine Soup with Rosemary

Potato Dumplings

Make the potato dumplings while the chicken is cooking in wine.

1 whole uncooked chicken, in pieces

2 Tbsp olive oil

1 bottle of sauvignon blanc

4 cups of water

1 bay leaf

1 tsp salt

1/4 tsp black pepper

1 onion

2 carrots

2 stalks of celery with tops

1 15-oz can of corn, undrained

6 mushrooms

2 large potatoes

2 Tbsp fresh rosemary, minced

1 cup flour

1 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

1 egg, slightly beaten

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy pan. Brown the chicken skin-side down, turn over, then add the wine, water and bay leaf. Heat to a boil, lower heat, cover and simmer for 1 hour. Remove the chicken from the broth and allow to cool. Remove the meat from the bones and cut into small chunks.

Dice the vegetables except the potatoes. Add the spices, chicken, and diced vegetables to the broth, along with 2 cups of the water used to boil the potatoes. Heat to a simmer. Add the dumplings, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes longer.

For the dumplings: Peel the potatoes and cut into chunks. Boil until tender, about 10 minutes. Mash or put through a potato ricer. Stir in the rosemary. In a separate bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add the potatoes. Stir well, then incorporate the egg, all by hand. Form dumplings using about 1/3 C of dumpling mixture at a time and lay gently on the soup.

Ripped from the Pages

“Trudy is a wonderful, generous person.”

“She still volunteers at the hospital. Amelia drops her off and waits in the car.”

I laughed in surprise. “She just sits in the car? She won’t go inside and volunteer, too?”

“No. I know it might not be obvious, but Amelia has been very good for Trudy.”

“I don’t see how. She just so . . . mean.”

“She’s fiercely protective.”

“You say tomato . . .”

The Book Supremacy

“We usually have more people playing the game so you three will have to work harder. But you all look like you’ve got brains.”

“We do,” Wallace said.

“Good.” Igor flashed an evil grin. “Zombies love brains.”

Parmesan Chicken Salad

This salad is delicious with any vinaigrette, but my favorite is Pimento Vinaigrette (recipe included).

- 1/2 cup butter, melted then cooled**
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard**
- 2 dashes Tabasco**
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into one-inch chunks**
- 1 cup bread crumbs**
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese**
- 1 tsp garlic salt**
- 1/2 tsp black pepper**
- 6 cups salad greens**
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper**
- 6 spring onions, sliced**
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half**
- 1/2 cup pine nuts**
- 1/4 cup olive oil**
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar**
- 2 tsp jarred pimentos**
- 1 garlic clove**
- 1/2 tsp dried basil**
- 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard**
- 1/4 tsp salt**
- 1/8 tsp black pepper**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place an oven-proof metal racks over two baking sheets; spray with cooking spray for easy cleanup.

Combine the melted butter, mustard and Tabasco. Stir in the chicken chunks to coat thoroughly.

Put bread crumbs, cheese, salt and pepper into a zip-top bag. Add the chicken in small batches and coat. Place on the metal racks. If there’s any remaining butter mixture, drizzle it over the chicken. Bake until chicken reaches 170 degrees, about 25 minutes.

Divide the salad greens, other vegetables, and nuts between four salad bowls. Top with chicken.

For the dressing: Put olive oil through 1/8 tsp black pepper in a food processor and pulse until thoroughly combined.

Roasted Beet Salad with Oranges and White Wine

Dressing

1/4 cup white wine

Juice of one lemon

2 Tbsp olive oil

1 tsp dry mustard

1 tsp sugar

1/2 tsp sea salt

1/2 tsp black pepper

6 small beets, about 23 inches across

2 mandarin oranges

2 quarter-inch slices of sweet onion, cut into fourths

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, sliced off the wedge

1/4 cup walnut pieces

For the dressing: Whisk together wine through black pepper.

For the salad: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Wrap each beet individually in aluminum foil. Roast for 1 hour, then allow to cool. Peel the beets. Cut into wedges, and cut those in half. Toss with the remaining ingredients and the white wine dressing. For best results, allow to marinate for about an hour before serving.

Ripped from the Pages

Nothing good ever happened this late at night.

"I'll be right there," Derek said, and tapped the phone, ending the call.

"Who is it? What happened?" I had to shake my head to wake myself up.

"Is somebody hurt?"

"Not yet," he said flatly.

He was already out of bed, grabbing a shirt and pulling on a pair of jeans.

"Someone tried to break into the wine cave."

Ripped from the Pages

I took another look at the back flyleaf where the boys had written and dated their pledge in blood. I felt a twinge, wondering if they had bled for each other on more than one occasion. I was sad to think that their friendship had ended in that cave with Jean Pierre's death. Had Anton mourned him always? Was he the one who walled off the cave? Would we ever find out the truth?

Roasted Poblano Beef Stew with Wine

- 2 large poblanos**
- 3 lb beef stew meat, chunks**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 8 oz mushrooms**
- 6 red potatoes, quartered**
- 3 carrots, cut into one-inch chunks**
- 2 stalks of celery, cut into one-inch chunks**
- 28 oz crushed tomatoes**
- 2 cups Merlot**
- 2 cups water**

Preheat the oven to 400. Rub the outside of both poblanos with olive oil. Roast whole for 15 minutes, until the skin is blistered. Put into a paper bag, close and let cool. Once they're cool, remove the skin and roughly chop. The more seeds you include in the stew, the spicier it will be.

Lower the oven temperature to 300. Heat a heavy-bottomed, oven-safe stew pot over medium heat. Once the pan is preheated, add oil and heat for 30 seconds then add enough meat to cover the bottom of the pan without overcrowding it. Brown the meat on all sides and set aside. Repeat until all the meat is browned. Saute the onion in the meat drippings until translucent. Add the garlic and saute for 30 seconds. Add the remaining ingredients, including the poblanos. Heat to a boil.

Cover and roast in the oven for 1 hour. If you're not ready to eat yet, lower the temperature to 200 and leave the pot in until dinner time.



Desserts

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This Old Homicide

“What have I done?” Emily moaned softly.

To be honest, the place was magnificent—if you overlooked the peeling paint, broken shutters, slumping roof. All of that could be magically transformed by a good contractor. Luckily for Emily, that was me. I’m Shannon Hammer, a building contractor specializing in Victorian home renovation and repair. I couldn’t wait to get started on Emily’s.

Carrot-Coconut Bread with Cream Cheese Frosting

I used a bread pan, so I’m calling this “bread,” but let’s be real—it’s carrot cake. So good!

- 3/4 cup whole milk**
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice**
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature**
- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1-1/4 cup flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 1 tsp salt**
- 1/2 tsp baking soda**
- 3 large carrots, shredded (1-1/2 cups)**
- 1-1/4 cups sweetened coconut, divided**
- 4 oz cream cheese, room temperature**
- 1 cup powdered sugar**
- 2 tsp cream**

Combine milk and lemon juice; set aside. Preheat oven to 350.

With 1 Tbsp of the butter, grease bottom and sides of a nine-inch loaf pan. Cream the rest of the butter with the sugar. Scrape the sides of the bowl and mix for another 30 seconds. Add the eggs, one at a time. Stir in the shredded carrots until they’re fully coated.

In a separate bowl, combine flour through baking soda. Stir well. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients with 3/4 cup of coconut. Stir just until moist; do not overstir. Pour into the prepared bread pan and bake in the center of the oven until the top is brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 50 minutes. Cool in the loaf pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the edges, remove the loaf pan and cool on a wire rack until room temperature before frosting.

For cream cheese frosting: Toast 1/2 cup of coconut in a dry saucepan over medium-low heat until slightly brown. Watch closely and stir often to avoid burning. Remove from pan immediately and set aside.

Cream together the cream cheese and 2 Tbsp butter. Add half a cup of powdered sugar and 1 tsp of cream and mix well. Then add the rest of the sugar and cream and continue mixing well until combined. Frost the carrot “bread” (we know the truth). Top with toasted coconut.

Celebration Lemon-Cherry Pie

Feel free to use a store-bought pie crust. You only need a bottom crust.

1 cup all purpose flour

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 cup vegetable shortening, very cold (refrigerate overnight if you can)

2-3 Tbsp ice cold water

3/4 cup sugar

3 Tbsp cornstarch

1 cup cold water

2 eggs yolks, lightly beaten

Juice of two lemons

1 tsp lemon zest

1/2 tsp lemon extract

2 drops of yellow food coloring (optional)

1 can cherry pie filling

1 cup heavy whipping cream

4 oz cream cheese, room temperature

1/2 cup powdered sugar

1 tsp vanilla

For the crust: Preheat the oven to 450. Whisk together the flour and salt, then cut in the shortening with a pastry blender or two knives until the pieces are about the size of lentils.

Add ice cold water 1 Tbsp at a time, stirring gently, just until the dough holds together. Too much water will make the crust hard. Too little will make it fall apart. Roll it out on a floured surface until it's about four inches larger than your pie plate (two inches on each side). Pinch dough around the crust to form little hills and valleys. Loosely tent aluminum foil around the edges of the pie crust. Line the bottom of the crust with parchment paper, and then weigh down with pie weights or something that's oven-proof and substantial but not too heavy. You're trying to keep the crust from ballooning up, but you don't want to smoosh it completely.

Bake the crust for 7 minutes, then carefully remove the aluminum foil. Bake for another 7-10 minutes, until the crust is golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.

For the filling: In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, whisk together the sugar, corn starch, and salt. Stir in the water until the mixture is smooth, with no lumps. Stir constantly over medium-high heat until it thickens and begins to boil, then turn the heat to low and continue to cook and stir for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

In a separate bowl, lightly beat the egg yolks. Add a small amount of the hot mixture to the egg yolks, stir, and return all to the saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-low heat, stirring constantly for two more minutes. (I took a break from stirring to take this picture, and the world didn't fall apart.) Remove from heat.

Add the lemon juice, butter, lemon zest, lemon extract, and food coloring if using, and stir them in very gently. Cool to room temperature without stirring anymore. Spread into precooked crust and refrigerate for at least an hour. Spread the cherry pie filling over the lemon filling.

Bake the crust for 7 minutes, then carefully remove the aluminum foil. Bake for another 7-10 minutes, until the crust is golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.

For the topping: Whip the cream alone until it thickens and is spreadably solid. Whip in the remaining ingredients. Top pie with whipped topping. Store in the refrigerator.

Deck the Hallways

For the next few weeks, astronauts traveling in space would wonder and worry about a strange, radiant glow emanating from northern California, but we locals knew it was only Mrs. Higgins's holiday lights.

Cheesy Cherry Crumble

This is in the dessert category, but--shh!--sometimes we have it for breakfast!

1 cup plus 2 Tbsp butter, divided
2-1/4 cups flour, divided
1/2 cup chopped pecans
8 oz cream cheese, room temperature
1 cup powdered sugar
6 oz Cool Whip
2 cans cherry pie filling
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 350. Cut 1/2 cup of cold butter into 1-1/4 cups of flour until the butter pieces are about the size of lentils. Stir in 1/2 cup of chopped pecans. Pat mixture into an ungreased 13x9-inch cake pan. Bake for 15 minutes, until lightly golden. Unlike in this picture, which is darkly golden (dare I say brown) at the edges. Cool to room temperature.

Mix together 8 oz cream cheese at room temperature, 1 cup of powdered sugar, and six ounces of Cool Whip. Spread over the crust. Leave the oven on. Spread two cans of cherry pie filling over the cheese mixture. Refrigerate.

Melt 6 tablespoons of butter in a heavy-bottomed pan. Remove from heat. Stir in 1/2 cup of rolled oats (not quick oats), 1 cup of flour, 1/4 cup of brown sugar, and 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Stir until thoroughly combined. Put in an oven-safe cake pan and bake for 15 minutes, stirring every five minutes. Cool completely, then sprinkle over the cherry mixture. Refrigerate until serving.

This dish, like murder, is best served cold.

Crazy Delicious Apple Crisp

This is Brooklyn's mom, Becky's, specialty.

1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
1-1/4 cup light brown sugar, divided
1/2 cup granulated sugar, divided
1/4 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp nutmeg
1/4 cup plus 1 Tbsp cold salted butter, divided
1 oz extra-sharp Cheddar cheese, finely shredded
1/2 cup chopped pecans
6 assorted apples, peeled and cut into half-inch chunks
1/4 cup apple liqueur, apple brandy, or apple cider, divided
1/2 tsp lemon zest
1 Tbsp cornstarch
1 cup heavy cream

For the topping: Prepare the topping at least a couple of hours before you plan to bake the dessert. Mix together flour, one-quarter cup brown sugar, one-quarter cup granulated sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cut in the cold butter until the mixture resembles wet sand. Add the cheese and nuts and mix well. Form a ball of dough, wrap it in plastic wrap, and let it chill in the refrigerator.

For the filling: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix together apples, 2 Tbsp liqueur, lemon zest, and one-quarter cup granulated sugar in a large bowl and pour into an 8-inch cake pan. Break apart the topping evenly over the filling. Bake until the filling is bubbly and the top is nicely browned, about 40 minutes. While the crisp is baking, make the caramel sauce.

For the caramel sauce: Mix together one cup brown sugar, cornstarch, cream, 2 tbsp liqueur, and 1 tbsp butter in a heavy-bottom pan and place over low heat. Stir frequently as it thickens to a rich golden brown. Remove from heat and serve warm.

Homicide in Hardcover

Abraham sagged to the floor. I stared at my hands. They were covered in blood. I screamed again. "That's enough. Stand up and move away from him." I whipped my head around. The frowning man from upstairs stood at the door holding a gun pointed directly at me. And yeah, he was still frowning.

The Book Stops Here

Angie glanced around, then bellowed, “Quiet, please! We’re live in ... Five! Four! Three! Two!” She mimed the word “One!” and waved her finger emphatically at me. I took a deep breath and tried to smile at the friendly camera. “Hello, I’m Brooklyn Wainwright, a bookbinder specializing in rare book restoration. Today Vera has brought us a charming first edition of the beloved children’s classic, *The Secret Garden*.”

Peaches Poached in White Wine with Whipped Sour Cream

2 peaches, peeled, pitted, and halved
1 cup white wine
1 Tbsp honey
1 tsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp vanilla
1/2 cup whipping cream
1/4 cup sour cream
1 Tbsp brown sugar

In a small saucepan, heat the wine, honey, lemon juice and vanilla to a simmer. Add peaches and continue to simmer for 30 minutes. Occasionally, spoon syrup over the peaches and flip the peach halves over.

For the whipped sour cream, combine ingredients in a bowl that has been chilled in the freezer. Whip until it thickens enough to mound up on a spoon.

Serve the peaches warm with a dollop of whipped sour cream on top. If desired, serve in wineglasses.

*A Cookbook
Conspiracy*

Skimming my hand
across the aged leather
cover, I felt a sense of the
author's trepidation. She
didn't know how to cook!
I could relate to that, but
not to the fear and awe
she must have experi-
enced traveling across the
ocean to live in a strange
land in the middle of a
revolution.
On the spot, I decided I
would show the book to
Ian McCullough, my old
friend and the Covington
Library's chief curator. I
so enjoyed making him
drool with envy.

Peach Cobbler with Cream Cheese Biscuits

I don't bother to peel the peaches; I've convinced myself that the extra vitamins mean this is healthy.

4 cups sliced fresh peaches
2 Tbsp cornstarch
1/2 tsp cinnamon
2 tsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp water
1 cup flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 Tbsp + 1 tsp sugar, divided
1/4 cup cream cheese
2 Tbsp butter
1/3 cup milk

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place the peaches in a saucepan and sprinkle with cornstarch and cinnamon. Add lemon juice and water. Stir well. Heat over low, stirring occasionally, until thickened. Pour into ungreased two-quart casserole.

Sift together flour, 1 Tbsp sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in cream cheese and butter with a pastry blender until it looks like crumbs. Add milk and stir just until it forms a ball. Knead lightly 4-5 time. Pack together in your hands until it forms a tight ball. Tear off pieces and place on the peach mixture, torn-side up. Sprinkle with 1 tsp sugar. Bake until golden brown, about 25 minutes.

*Séance Sundaes with Resuscitation Brownies and
Hot-as-Hell Hot Fudge*

If you're an overachiever, feel free to make your favorite brownie recipe from scratch instead of starting with a box.

1 box of Duncan Hines brownie mix

1 tsp cinnamon

1 jalapeno, seeds removed

12 oz bag of dark chocolate Hershey's Kisses, divided

2 Tbsp butter

1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

1 can sweetened condensed milk

1 tsp vanilla

Vanilla ice cream

chopped nuts

For the brownies: Mix the brownie ingredients as normal, then stir in the cinnamon, minced jalapeno, and the Hershey's Kisses, each cut in half. (You could use dark chocolate chips, to save yourself the trouble of unwrapping each Kiss and cutting it in half. However, I have a soft spot for Hershey's Kisses, since they were responsible for saving Brooklyn's life in *ONE BOOK IN THE GRAVE*.) Bake according to package directions.

For the hot fudge: Melt the rest of the Kisses and butter in a double boiler. Or if, like me and the rest of the regular world, you don't have a double boiler, then melt them in the microwave on low power at 30-second increments. Stir in cayenne and sweetened condensed milk. Heat, stirring constantly, until thick. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.

To make the Séance Sundae, put a warm brownie in each bowl. Top with ice cream, hot fudge, and chopped nuts.

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A loud rumble of thunder roared outside. The lights dimmed. A glass shattered on the hardwood floor.

There was another giggle and someone else gasped, then made a choking sound. Probably laughing too hard, I thought.

Was Is this part of the show? I wondered, as we all stood and stared in fear at the open doorway.

Two more women screamed as my dangerous friend Gabriel stalked into the room.