

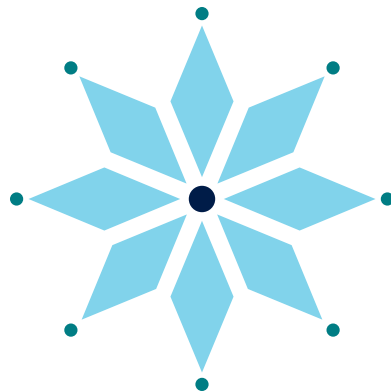
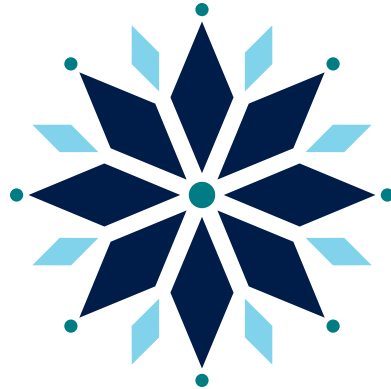
Holiday Cookbook



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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Agriculture, Life &
Veterinary Sciences &
Cooperative Extension



APPETIZERS

a food or drink that stimulates the appetite and is usually served before a meal

Jalapeño Popper Dip

Ingredients

- 4 oz diced jalapeño
- 8 oz softened cream cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- ¾ cup shredded Parmesan
- ¾ cup chopped bacon (cooked)

“ I made this once for a Fourth of July party for my family back in 2017. It’s now a staple dish at all Thanksgiving and Christmas family gatherings. Even if I’m unable to make it, they expect me to send it with someone.

Breanna Watkins
AETI



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F and grease a 9x9-inch baking dish.
2. Beat cream cheese, garlic powder, and sour cream until fluffy.
3. Stir in cheddar, ½ cup Parmesan, and jalapeños.
4. Spread into dish, top with bacon and remaining Parmesan.
5. Bake for 20–25 minutes until golden and bubbly. Serve with chips or crackers.

Devils on Horseback

Ingredients

- 2 dozen dates, pitted
- 12 slices of bacon, cut in half
- ½ cup crumbled blue cheese (Stilton or preferred cheese)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Soak toothpicks in water for 10 minutes.
2. Slice dates lengthwise to open, but not fully.
3. Stuff each with about 1 teaspoon of cheese.
4. Wrap each with bacon and secure with a toothpick.
5. Place on a lined baking sheet. Bake 20–25 minutes until bacon is crisp. Let cool slightly before serving.

“ We often ring in the new year with our favorite meal – snacks. These bite-sized hors d’oeuvres have quite the name and they’re always the first to disappear at the party. We often double or triple the recipe, depending on the size of our holiday gathering.

An irresistible, savory treat—dates are stuffed with rich blue cheese, then wrapped in bacon and baked to crispy perfection. The salty bacon balances the sweetness of the dates and the rich blue cheese rounds out the palette.

Devils on horseback is a dish that originated in 19th century England and is thought to have been served as a savory palate cleanser after dessert. We prefer to have them with a cocktail or wine to kick off the night.

Rosemary Brandt
ALVSCE



Hidden Valley Oyster Crackers

Ingredients

- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- 1 oz Hidden Valley Ranch Salad Dressing & Seasoning Mix
- 1 tsp dried chopped dill
- ¼ tsp lemon pepper
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- 12–16 oz oyster crackers

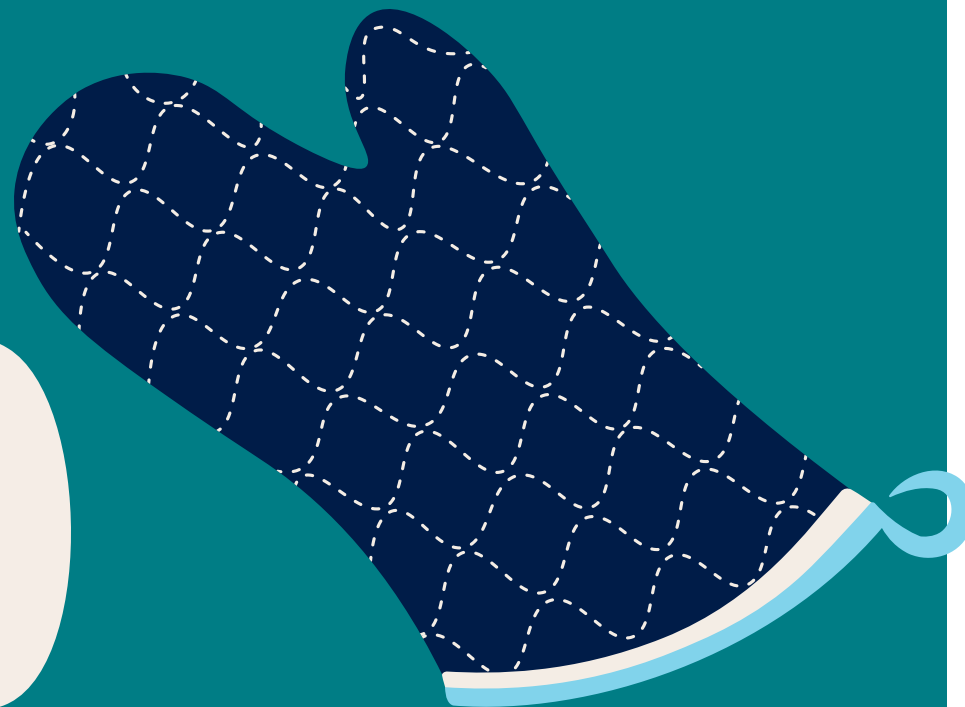
Directions

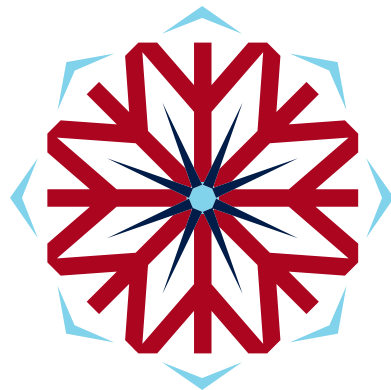
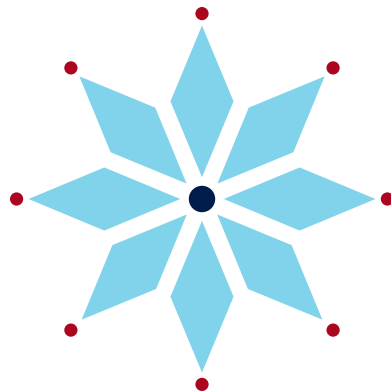
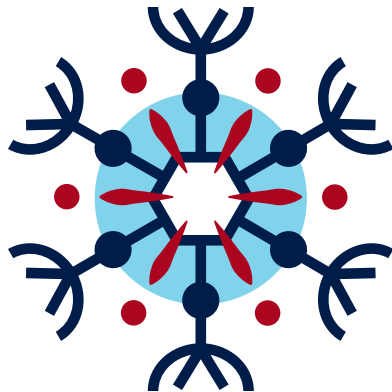
1. Preheat oven to 250°F. In a bowl, mix oil, ranch seasoning, dill, lemon pepper, and garlic powder.
2. Add crackers to a large plastic bag.
3. Pour oil mixture into the bag, seal, and shake to coat.
4. Spread crackers in a single layer on an ungreased baking sheet.
5. Bake for 15–20 minutes until golden. Cool before serving.

“ The smell and taste of these in a festive bowl on the kitchen table, for all to partake, are a holiday tradition in our house. You can't eat just one! The original recipe has changed throughout the years, and this is the one that I have made every year. I hope this becomes someone else's holiday favorites!

Lisa Elliot

Pinal Co. Cooperative Extension





ENTREES

the main course of a meal

Poha

Ingredients

- 2 cups poha (flattened rice)
- 1 tbsp oil (or ghee)
- ½ tsp mustard seeds
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1–2 green chilies, slit or finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup potato, diced
- ½ cup sliced carrot
- ¼ cup chopped beans
- ¼ cup peas (optional)
- Salt to taste
- 1 tbsp lemon juice (optional)
- Curry leaves (optional)
- Chopped coriander leaves (for garnish)
- Roasted peanuts (optional)

Directions

1. Rinse poha under cold water, drain, and let sit for 5–10 minutes.
2. Heat oil in a pan, add mustard and cumin seeds.
3. Sauté chilies, curry leaves, and onions until translucent.
4. Add potatoes, carrots, and beans, cooking for 5–7 minutes until soft.
5. Stir in turmeric, salt, and poha, mixing gently.
6. Cover and cook on low for 3–4 minutes. Add lemon juice and garnish with coriander and peanuts. Serve hot.

“ Okay, listen up — this poha recipe is dangerous. Not dangerous in the “scary” way, but dangerous in the “I’m going to make this for my husband every single day and he’ll never complain” kind of way. Yes, you heard me right — my husband would eat this for 365 days straight without even batting an eyelash. This is his comfort food, his soulmate in a dish. So, if you want to win over anyone with your cooking skills (or just keep your husband happily fed and quiet), this is your golden ticket! hahaha! caption as (The Dish My Husband Would Eat 365 Days a Year)



Soumya Bollam

Maricopa Co. Cooperative Extension

Holiday Morning Egg Puffs

Ingredients

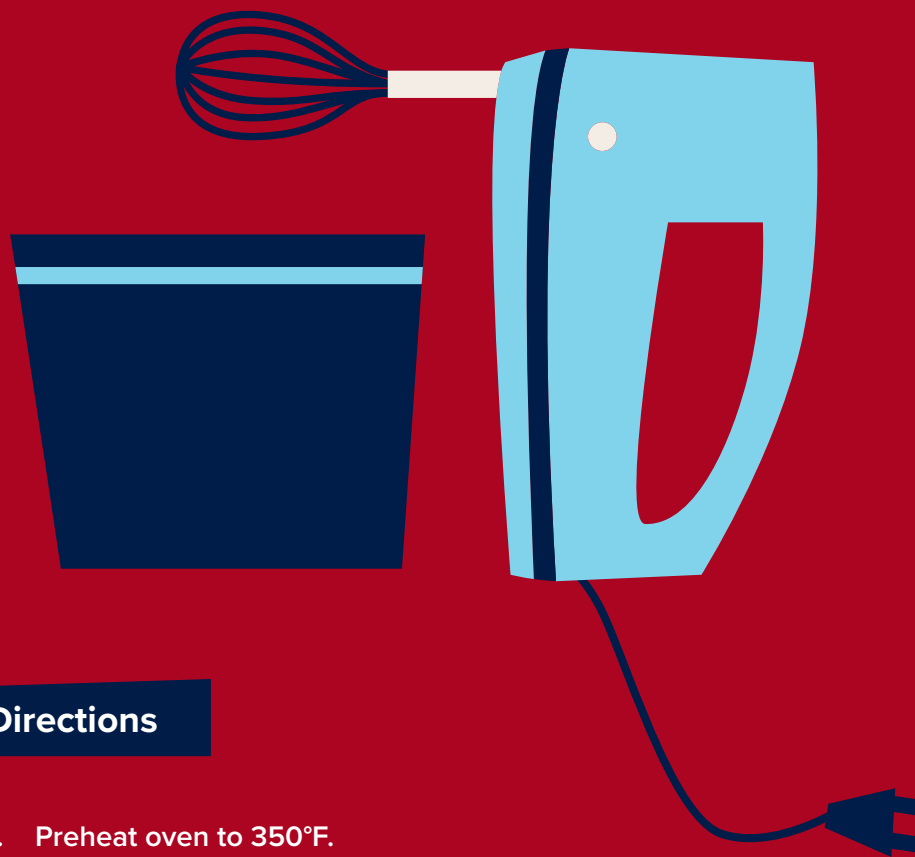
- ¼ cup flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 5 eggs
- 2 cups shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 (4 oz) can diced green chilies

“ Some version of this has been at every Christmas brunch in my family for as long as I can remember. I don't know where my grandmother found the recipe, but she served it, along with mandarin oranges and cinnamon rolls every Christmas morning.

Erin Schauer
ALVSCE

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. Beat eggs for 3 minutes, then add dry ingredients gradually.
4. Stir in cheeses and green chilies.
5. Ladle into greased muffin tin, filling three-quarters full.
6. Bake 35–40 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
7. Let cool in the tin for 5 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Makes 10–12 puffs.



Holiday Morning 3x3 Pancakes

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 3 tbsp oil (olive, avocado, or canola)
- 3 tbsp honey
- 3 cups liquid (milk, water, or non-dairy milk)
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp allspice (optional)

“ I learned to make this recipe with my dad when I was a kid. We used to make it together for Christmas and other special holidays throughout the year. I've carried on the tradition as an adult.

Jessica Gerlach
ALVSCE

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 200°F and prepare a baking sheet to keep pancakes warm.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together flour and baking soda.
3. In a large bowl, whisk milk, eggs, oil, honey, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients.
5. Heat a skillet over medium heat and lightly oil.
6. Pour ⅓ cup batter for each pancake, spreading thinly.
7. Cook until bubbles burst, then flip and cook until browned. Makes about 16 thin pancakes.



Crockpot Chicken Stew

Ingredients

- 1 rotisserie chicken, shredded
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 (14.5 oz) can chicken broth
- ¼ cup red wine
- 1 cup half-and-half (or milk and cream mix)
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried rosemary, crushed
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1–2 tsp salt (to taste)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1–2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large tomato, diced
- 1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 pkg frozen spinach (or fresh)
- 2 (14.5 oz) cans cannellini beans, undrained

“ This is a traditional dish served during the holidays that my family has enjoyed for the last 23 years. We were stationed overseas for 4 years. The first Christmas after we returned Stateside, our family reunited and enjoyed this dish.

April Bagley
SNRE



Directions

1. Heat oil in a skillet, sauté onion, garlic, and fennel seeds until soft.
2. Add tomato and spices, cooking for 2 minutes.
3. Transfer to crockpot.
4. Add chicken, spinach, tomatoes, beans, broth, wine, and cream.
5. Cook on high for 3 hours or low for 5 hours.
6. Adjust seasoning to taste.
7. Serve alone or over buttered Parmesan pasta.

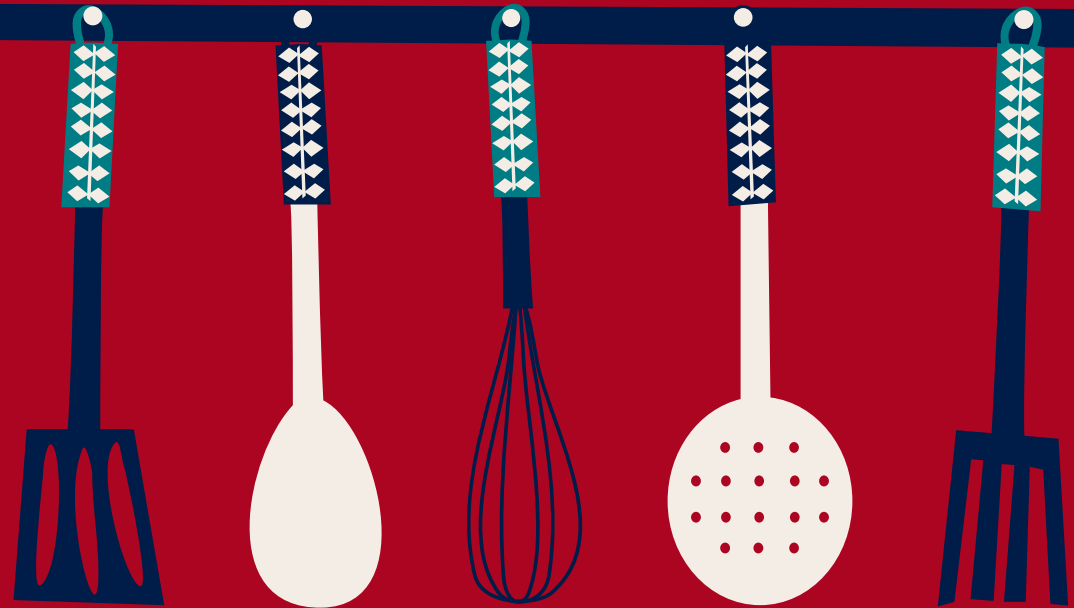
Rosemary, Garlic Crusted Racks of Lamb

Ingredients

- 1 head of garlic, peeled
- ¼ cup rosemary leaves
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 racks of lamb (2 lbs each)
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese (for garnish)

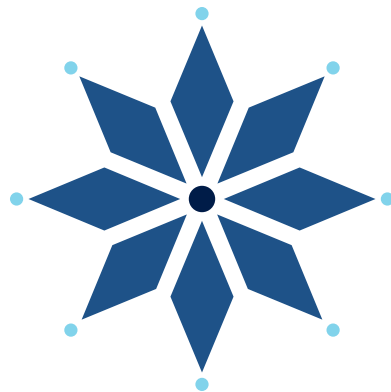
“ If we do a sit-down dinner party for New Years Eve, this is our go-to-stunner. And it really is a simple dish for how beautifully it presents.

Rosemary Brandt
ALVSCE



Directions

1. In a food processor, combine garlic, rosemary, and olive oil into a paste.
2. Rub lamb racks with salt, pepper, and the paste.
3. Let rest for 30–45 minutes at room temperature.
4. Preheat oven to 450°F.
5. Place lamb racks fat-side up on a baking sheet and roast for 15 minutes.
6. Flip and roast another 10 minutes.
7. Let rest 10 minutes before slicing.



SIDES

a side order or dish

Sweet Potato Casserole

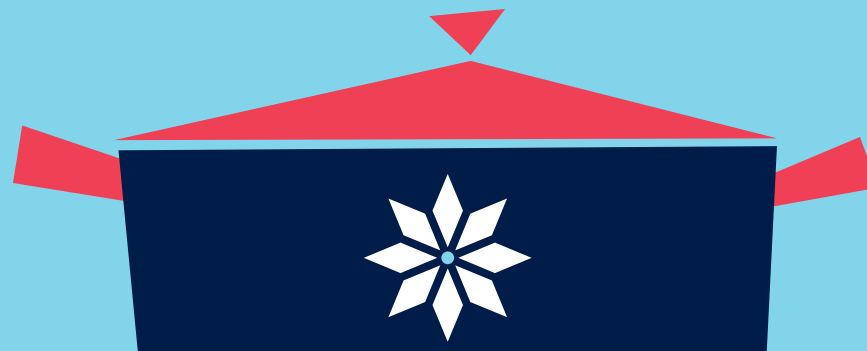
Ingredients

- 3 medium sweet potatoes (about 3 cups mashed)
- ½ cup half-and-half
- ¼–½ cup white sugar
- ¼–½ cup light brown sugar
- 1–2 tsp cinnamon
- Pinches of ground cloves, ginger, and nutmeg (optional)
- 1–2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1–2 tbsp all-purpose flour (if needed)
- ½ cup melted butter
- 2 eggs, beaten

Topping:

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- Dashes of cinnamon
- 5 tbsp melted butter

“ My mother makes this every year for Christmas and Thanksgiving. She used to make this for me to take to holiday potlucks. I have learned to make this, even though it is not as tasty as hers and when I lived in Savannah, I added praline pecans to the recipe. I can't wait to pass this recipe down to my daughter and granddaughter.



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake sweet potatoes for 1 hour until fork-tender.
2. Cool, then mash.
3. Mix sweet potatoes with half-and-half, sugars, spices, vanilla, butter, and eggs.
4. Transfer to a greased 9x9-inch baking dish. For the topping, mix all ingredients until crumbly and spread evenly over the casserole.
5. Bake at 325°F for 30 minutes until golden.

Hope Simpara

Norton

Au Gratin Potatoes (2 ways)

Ingredients

- 2–3 lbs Yukon gold potatoes, thinly sliced
- 1 white or yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 3–4 tbsp butter
- 3–4 tbsp flour
- 1 tsp dried mustard
- 2 cups whole milk
- ¾ cup shredded cheddar
- ¾ cup shredded Gruyère
- ¾ tsp salt, divided
- ½ tsp pepper, divided

“ Au Gratin sounds fancy, but it’s a really simple potato dish that can dress up any holiday dinner. We love them so much, they regularly find their way to our Sunday family dinner table.

As I mentioned, Au Gratin sounds fancy (and it can be, but it doesn’t have to be). Below are the two ways we make it, depending upon how elevated we want to be. Regardless of how you make them, you can never go wrong with cheese and potatoes.

Directions

Version 1 (Fancy Way):

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Layer potatoes and onions in a greased 3-quart casserole dish, seasoning each layer.
2. Melt butter in a saucepan, whisk in flour, mustard, salt, and pepper.
3. Slowly add milk, stirring until thick.
4. Mix in cheese until melted.
5. Pour over potatoes.
6. Cover and bake for 1 hour, then uncover and bake for 15–30 minutes until browned.

Version 2 (Simpler Way):

1. Follow the same steps, but skip the roux.
2. Layer potatoes with cheese, diced green onions, butter, and flour in a 9x13-inch pan.
3. Pour in ½–¾ cup milk or cream. Cover with foil and bake 1 hour, uncover and bake another 15 minutes.

Classic Egg Nog

Ingredients

- 2½ cups milk
- 6 eggs
- 2 oz rum
- 4 oz brandy
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- Pinches of salt
- 1⅓ cups dry milk
- 4 cups milk (for blending)
- 1½ cups cream

Directions

1. Heat 2½ cups of milk on the stove to 170°F.
2. Beat eggs in a bowl.
3. Whisk eggs into the milk once heated, stirring occasionally, until the mixture reaches 170°F again.
4. Cool until safe to blend.
5. Heat rum and brandy gently to remove alcohol vapors.
6. Add sugars, nutmeg, salt, and rum/brandy extract to the milk/egg mixture.
7. Blend until smooth.
8. Separately, mix dry milk, 4 cups of milk, and cream until fully dissolved.
9. Combine both mixtures in a jug, shaking well.
10. Adjust thickness with water or sweetness with extra sugar.
11. Chill and serve with nutmeg garnish.



Maple-Glazed Vegetables with Pecans and Goat Cheese

Ingredients

- 1 lb mixed vegetables (carrots, Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, or butternut squash)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar (optional)
- ¼ cup chopped pecans (toasted, if desired)
- 2 oz crumbled goat cheese
- Fresh thyme or parsley for garnish (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Toss vegetables with olive oil, salt, and pepper.
3. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet.
4. Roast for 20–30 minutes, tossing halfway, until tender and browned.
5. Simmer maple syrup and vinegar (if using) over medium heat for 5–7 minutes.
6. Drizzle over roasted vegetables, then sprinkle with pecans and goat cheese. Garnish with herbs and serve warm.

Grandpa Bernie's Latkes

Ingredients

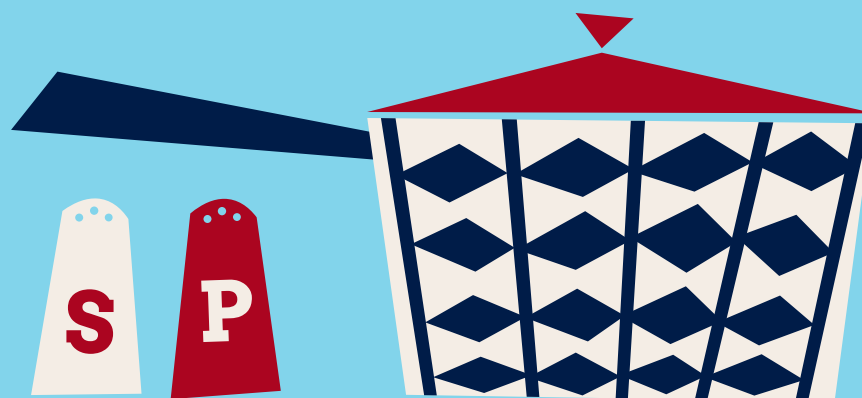
- 5 lbs russet potatoes, peeled
- ¼–½ medium onion, grated
- Salt, to taste
- ¼ cup flour (as needed)
- 1–2 cups olive oil (or refined coconut or canola oil)
- Applesauce or sour cream (for serving)

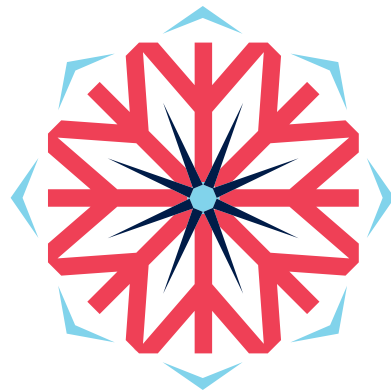
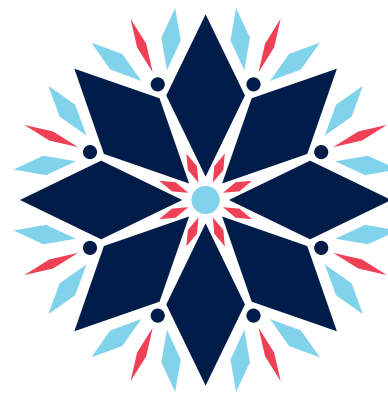
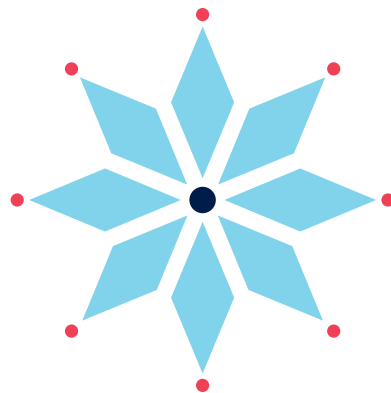
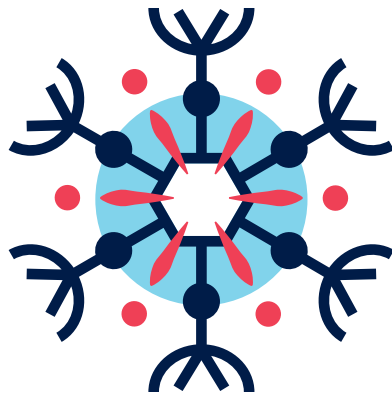
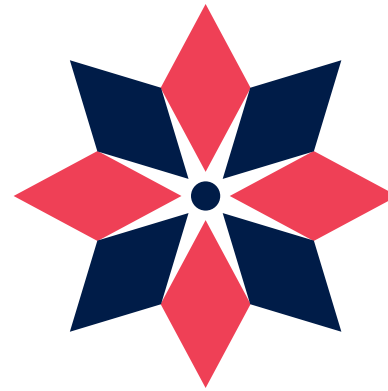
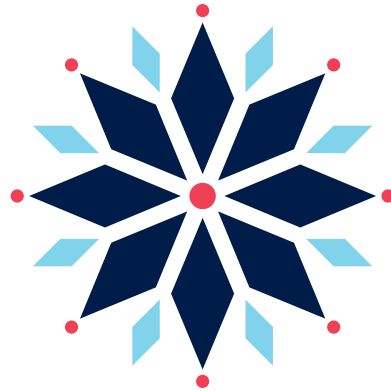
“ This is the recipe of my late grandfather, Bernard Brandt, whose parents immigrated from Europe to Brooklyn NY a bit over 100 years ago. He adapted the recipe from the New York Times and taught me how to make it in high school. I've continued making it from memory for Hanukah ever since.

Rivka Fidel
ENVS

Directions

1. Grate potatoes and place in a colander over a bowl.
2. Add 1–2 tsp salt and mix.
3. Press to squeeze out liquid.
4. Grate onion and mix with potatoes.
5. Heat oil in a pan over medium-high heat.
6. Squeeze out any remaining liquid from potatoes and form patties.
7. Add flour if necessary for binding.
8. Fry patties until golden brown on both sides.
9. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm with applesauce or sour cream.





DESSERTS

a sweet course or dish usually served at the end of a meal

Paleo Chewy Maple Pecan Cookies

Ingredients

Cookie Base:

- 2¼ cups almond flour
- ⅓ cup coconut oil, melted
- ⅓ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- ¼ tsp sea salt

Maple Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- 2 tbsp almond milk

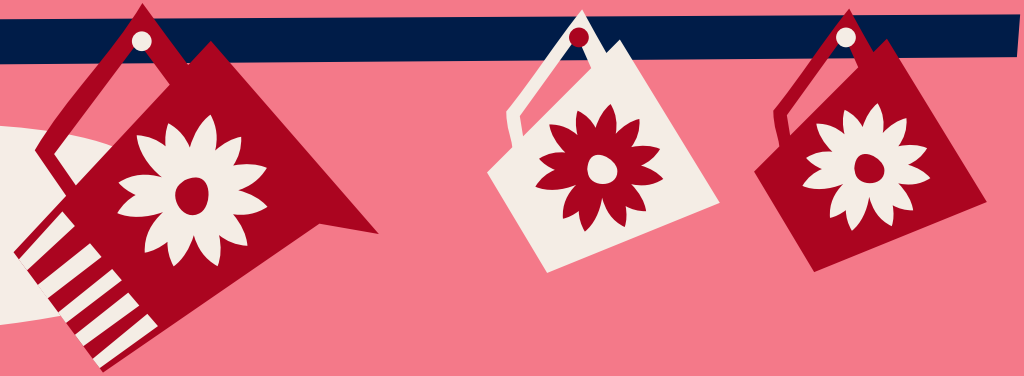
Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. In a bowl, whisk coconut oil, maple syrup, coconut sugar, vanilla, and egg until smooth.
4. Add almond flour, baking powder, and salt. Fold in pecans.
5. Scoop dough onto the baking sheet and bake for 10–11 minutes.
6. Cool completely before glazing.
7. For glaze, mix all ingredients until smooth. Drizzle over cookies and sprinkle extra pecans if desired.

“ This is my favorite gluten-free dessert!”

Tricia Dunham

Cochise Co. Cooperative Extension



Arroz con Leche

Ingredients

- 2 cups rice
- 5 cups water
- 2 cans evaporated milk
- 2 cans condensed milk
- 4 cups whole milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Ground cinnamon to taste

“ This dessert, Arroz con Leche truly has a way of bringing people together, especially when it’s tied to cherished family traditions. The creamy, cinnamon-infused goodness feels like a hug in a bowl, we enjoy it during winter gatherings.

Maria Melendez

Pinal Co. Cooperative Extension



Directions

1. Combine rice and water in a rice cooker.
2. Cook until done.
3. Stir in evaporated milk, condensed milk, whole milk, sugar, and cinnamon stick.
4. Cook again, stirring every 10 minutes until thickened.
5. Remove cinnamon stick. Serve warm, garnished with ground cinnamon.

Holiday Morning Bundt Cake

Ingredients

- 4 cans biscuits (per bundt pan)
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- Pecan halves (optional)

“ Our bundt cake has been a long-standing tradition, since my boys could eat solid foods! They expect it every year—unfortunately, one year I forgot to buy the cans of biscuits and there were NONE in Casa Grande to be found, no bundt cake that morning; I learned my lesson and purchase them as soon as I can (making sure they will last ‘til December 25th, of course). It is the first item prepped and made before the first person wakes in the morning to open presents (which could be as early as 5AM!). Mmmmm the smell of biscuits and cinnamon on Christmas morning, and we top it off w/a glass of Martinelli’s Apple Cider, yum!!!!!! Happy Holidays Everyone!

Lisa Elliott

Pinal Co. Cooperative Extension

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Spray bundt pan with cooking spray and add nuts (if using).
3. Mix sugar and cinnamon in a plastic bag.
4. Cut biscuits into quarters, toss in sugar mix, and layer in pan.
5. Melt margarine and stir in remaining sugar mix.
6. Pour over biscuits. Bake for 30 minutes. Cool slightly before serving.



Mexican Wedding Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup margarine (2 sticks)
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups ground pecans
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Powdered sugar for dusting

“ These I have made for the past three years for our office Holiday Cookie Exchange. I like to use this recipe because it makes 4 dozen in one batch! And for my oldest son’s rehearsal dinner, I put together a care package for every family there, which included a picture/fun facts of the bride and groom, chocolate covered sunflower seeds from the state that she was from and Mexican wedding cookies to represent him. In the process, I made 19 dozen for this rehearsal dinner, PLUS five more dozen trying to get the receipt perfect! Enjoy everyone!

Lisa Elliott

Pinal Co. Cooperative Extension

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cream margarine and sugar.
3. Add flour, pecans, and vanilla to form dough.
4. Divide into four portions, shaping each into 12 balls (48 total).
5. Place on a cookie sheet and bake for 20 minutes.
6. Roll warm cookies in powdered sugar, let cool, then roll again.



Churros

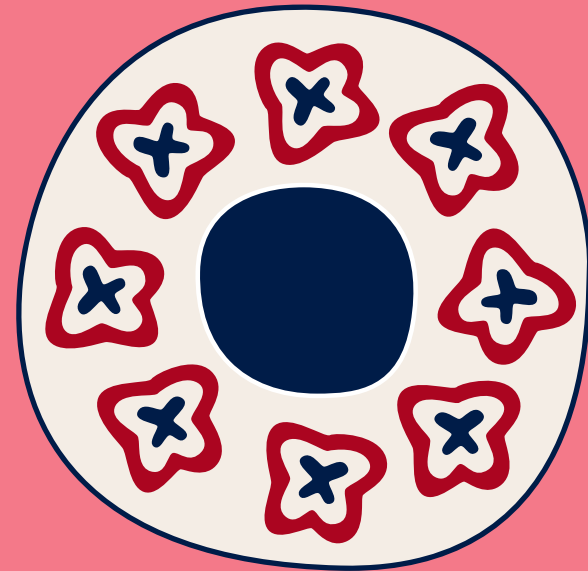
Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup granulated sugar (for coating)
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon (for coating)
- Oil for frying

“ Churros have always been special in our family, symbolizing togetherness and tradition. Sunday mornings were spent in my Abuelita’s kitchen, making churros from scratch. She’d prepare the dough early, her hands moving effortlessly, while we gathered around to help. The warm scent of cinnamon and sugar filled the air, drawing us closer.

Today, making churros connects us to those memories. Each bite brings back her laughter, flour-dusted hands, and the joy of family. Churros are more than a snack—they’re a legacy of love and sweetness.

Sandy Lopez
ALVSCE



Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, combine water, butter, sugar, and salt.
2. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally.
3. Remove from heat, stir in flour until a dough forms, and let cool for 5 minutes.
4. Beat in eggs one at a time, then add vanilla.
5. Heat oil to 350°F. Pipe 4–6 inch strips of dough into hot oil and fry for 2–3 minutes until golden.
6. Drain on paper towels.
7. Mix sugar and cinnamon, then roll churros in the mixture. Serve immediately with hot chocolate or dipping sauce.

Grandpa's Gift-That-Keeps-On-Giving Holiday Cookies

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 cup chopped candied ginger
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup dark chocolate chunks
- ½ cup chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, whisk flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
3. In another bowl, beat butter and sugars until fluffy.
4. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well.
5. Stir in vanilla and molasses.
6. Gradually mix in dry ingredients.
7. Fold in ginger, cranberries, chocolate, and nuts.
8. Scoop tablespoons of dough onto sheets, spacing 2 inches apart.
9. Bake for 10–12 minutes. Cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks.

“ Long ago, my great grandpa Ted set out to create the perfect cookie. His first batch was a disaster, making the entire town sick and earning the cookies a nickname of “The Gift That Keeps on Giving.” Ted spent years experimenting, despite neighbors locking their doors whenever he came around asking for taste testers. Finally, he perfected his recipe—a rich, flavorful cookie. What began as a free trip to the town doc became a beloved treat. Today, the “Gift That Keeps on Giving” cookies remind us that even the biggest failures can lead to the sweetest successes—just don’t underbake them.

