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# “HOUSTON, WE’VE GOT A PROBLEM.”



**FUN FACT: THAT QUOTE FROM THE 1974 MOVIE, *APOLLO 13*, IS ACTUALLY A MISQUOTE.** Commander Jim Lovell actually said, “Houston, we’ve *had* a problem.”

But nevertheless, it’s a really relevant statement today, as I write this note. Just like the crew of Apollo 13 that eventually returned safely, we here in Houston have ultimately weathered the 800-year storm known as Hurricane Harvey with strength and dignity!

Don’t get me wrong: There has been horrific damage, lives lost and millions of dollars in damages that will take years to repair. Yet as a city, a state and a nation often overwrought with turmoil and countless problems, we all came together when it mattered.

This magazine is published here in Houston, actually in Pearland, Texas, a nearby suburb. All of us were affected; if this issue is a bit late in arriving at your doorstep, please understand! Thankfully, we are all safe, with houses that were mostly unharmed, yet there are untold numbers who weren’t as fortunate.

I just turned 69, and have been happily married for 48 years, living a pretty charmed life. Our memories are numerous, and we are blessed with a fantastic family. However, as Harvey’s wrath stormed upon us, I have never felt more helpless. You realize without pause that protecting your family and loved ones is paramount. And the fear of potentially losing everything is massive and daunting, one that tore at my consciousness for hours on end. Throughout the storm, it never quit raining, and the winds were relentless. Water was steadily rising, while the river, a little more than a mile from our doorstep, was edging closer to its banks. We chose not to evacuate, and so I tied a canoe with survival supplies and essentials to

our back door. We were ready. Thankfully, we remained in constant communication with our children (thank you, cell phones), and they were dry and safe; our youngest daughter, Tiffany, monitored social media and the news from Southern California and kept us all as informed as possible.

But then a miracle occurred: The torrential rain turned to sprinkles, and then it stopped. The sun beamed brightly, becoming a beacon of hope, while soft winds began to zap the ever-present moisture from the air. Houstonians rejoiced as untold thousands came from

everywhere, selflessly giving their time and resources to those in need. Houston had a problem—but we are now beginning to heal.

For so many, losses can never be fixed nor replaced. It will take days, weeks and years to get back to where they wish to be.

This column, this issue, is dedicated to all of those who lost their lives and to the thousands who brought

helping hands and compassion to millions in need. Finally, let’s not overlook the value of prayer. I’m confident that our hope was strengthened by your collective faith.

**As a city, a state and a nation often overwrought with turmoil and countless problems, we all came together when it mattered.**

**KEEP SPICIN’ & DICIN’!**

*Rick McMillen, Editor and Chef*

**EDITOR'S RECIPE:**  
**SPICY DEEP-FRIED CHEESECAKE**

"Oh, my. Oh, my." These words were all my wife could mumble between each bite. This decadent dessert is so creamy and delicious that you will forget about the diet—that's a guarantee!

**YIELD** 6 SERVINGS  
**PREP TIME** 1-2 HOURS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**COOK TIME** 10 MINUTES



- 1** (7-INCH) FROZEN CHEESECAKE, THAWED
- 6** (10-INCH) FLOUR TORTILLAS
- 1/2** TABLESPOON BUTTER
- 2** HABANEROS, MINCED
- 1** CUP CHOCOLATE SYRUP
- VEGETABLE OIL FOR FRYING
- 1** CUP STRAWBERRY SYRUP
- 1/2** CUP CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR

- 1.** Slice and divide the cake into 6 equal portions.
- 2.** Wrap the tortillas around the cheesecake slices, covering them completely. Trim off any excess, then dampen the edges and pinch together to seal. Return to the freezer until frozen solid.
- 3.** Melt the butter in a small pan over medium-high. Add the habaneros and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Remove and place on paper towels to dry.
- 4.** Add the chocolate syrup and peppers to a blender and puree. Set aside.
- 5.** Preheat the oil in a fryer to 360°F.
- 6.** Remove the frozen cheesecake tortillas from the freezer and immediately drop in the oil in batches. Fry for 3 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve drizzled with the chocolate-habanero and strawberry syrups and dusted with the confectioners' sugar.



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We'd love to hear what you think—drop us a line at [editor@chilepepper.com](mailto:editor@chilepepper.com) or get in touch on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/chilepeppermagazine](http://www.facebook.com/chilepeppermagazine).

## f WE ASKED YOU...

### WHAT'S THE HOTTEST DISH YOU'VE EVER TASTED?

"Spicy Indian masala!" —*Csaba Vatai*

"Asked for Thai hot in Thailand." —*Richard Johnson*

"The 'challenge' wings at SmokeEaters in San Jose, CA. I can handle hot, but those are another level of insanity." —*Mike Woods*

"Many things, but the Angry Joe Chili at Johnnie and Hons in Robeson, PA, did me in one day; not the hottest but up there. My own mango Scorpion Reaper ketchup is my hottest." —*Jeffrey Alan*

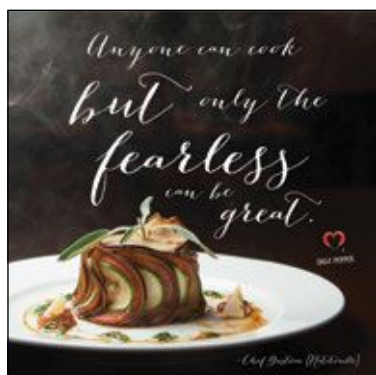
"Carolina Reaper poppers, and hell no, I won't eat them again!" —*Tina Tillman*

"Pozole made with Trinidad Scorpion extract. Hottest thing by far I have ever eaten. I'll try it again." —*Matt Duarte*

"Homegrown ghost peppers." —*Frank Piccirillo*



### WHAT MADE US LOL:



### FAJITA FICTION

This really isn't [a criticism] about the magazine, except for one of the recipes in the issue. There's a wide misconception about fajitas. Let me start by saying that the fajita is not about a process, seasoning or tortilla. It is a specific cut of meat—skirt steak—located near the flank steak. Back in the day, Texas ranchers cut up their cattle, then gave the skirt steak to the Vaqueros as pay for their work. Mexicans in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas cook their skirt steak with lime, garlic and cilantro. There is no such thing as a chicken fajita, shrimp fajita and certainly not a vegetable fajita. One day, while living in Memphis, my wife was at work, and her staff asked if she wanted anything from Quizno's, like a fajita. My wife was bewildered, and asked what [they meant by that]. They said, "it's what they wrap around the stuff"—a wrap, LOL. We had dinner at a major Mexican chain the other night; I asked the waiter what type of meat they were using in their fajitas, and he didn't know. I was served unseasoned sirloin. I lived in the Rio Grande Valley for 10 years, so I'm pretty confident about the info. It just cracks me up what we have done to fajitas. Thanks for listening. —*Robert Speier, via email*

**EDITOR RESPONDS:** Thanks for sharing, Robert! We also have a soft spot for the original fajita, and have no doubt that's part of the reason the recipe has been adapted so much over the years. But you're right—we need to remember its roots!

### MORE LABEL LOVE

Love the mag! I cook many items from each issue. I agree with Kathleen Caffrey's comments [from the BBQ Issue's "Readers' Letters"] on the address label. The mag used to have the peel-off labels. Also her suggestion of putting it on the back would work, too. You did not address either of these suggestions. I'm sure every reader would love to see a change to this. Thanks! —*Mike Targett, via email*

**EDITOR RESPONDS:** Mike, the reason we can't change the labeling is mostly due to cost. The last thing we'd want to do is to raise prices for our readers!

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# 'CUE & A

Husband-and-wife team Bill and Barbara Milroy, chefs and owners of Texas Rib Rangers Products, are spilling their secrets—just for you. Read on for their unique ideas, tried-and-true tips and, of course, insightful information when it comes to grilling.



**Q.** **MILES FROM SOUTH DAKOTA ASKS: I'M GIVING UP MY GAS GRILL IN FAVOR OF CHARCOAL. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LUMP CHARCOAL AND BRIQUETTES?**

**A.** If you ask 10 different people about the difference between the two, you'll most likely get 10 different responses. We'd say that briquettes are made using some sort of glue, and many are treated with chemicals like lighter fluid. Lump coal is comprised of chunks of wood that are burned down to coal. It doesn't usually have any added chemicals, and also burns faster and hotter than briquettes.

**Q.** **GENE FROM CALIFORNIA ASKS: I LOVE USING WINE WHEN MAKING SAUCES. WHEN SHOULD I USE RED, AND WHEN IS WHITE BEST?**

**A.** We go by the same rule that applies to meats: red for dark and white for light foods like chicken or pasta. Or you could use red or white in the sauce to match the type of wine you plan to drink with your meal. That way, your flavor will carry through the entire meal.



**Q.** **SALLY FROM FLORIDA ASKS: I'VE HEARD YOU ENJOY COOKING WITH BOOZE. WHAT KINDS OF ALCOHOL WORK WELL IN BAKING VERSUS COOKING?**

**A.** We do like to cook and bake with booze, and have found that some brands work really well with cooking and baking. We like to use Jack Daniel's the most, but have used tequila in some recipes as well. One of my favorite recipes when cooking with Jack is my pineapple-glazed pork chops. I've also used Jack in an apple pie recipe; you just add a little to the filling before cooking. You will be amazed at the flavor it adds.

PHOTOS BY BIGSTOCK

**Q. PAULINE FROM OKLAHOMA ASKS: SHOULD I CLEAN MY GRILL GRATES WITH SOAP FROM TIME TO TIME? OR WOULD SOAP DAMAGE THEM, THE WAY IT CAN HARM A CAST-IRON PAN?**

**A.** Soap shouldn't hurt your grill grates, unless the grates are made of cast iron. Most are made of the same material as your oven racks. We usually use a food-safe cleaner and a scouring pad or wire brush to clean ours.



**Q. MARCUS FROM UTAH ASKS: HAVE YOU EVER USED PUMICE STONE TO CLEAN A GRILL?**

**A.** We have never used a pumice stone for cleaning, but think we might like to give it a try. From what we've seen and heard about this stone, we feel it would do a great job. Keep us posted on your results!

**Q. DONALD FROM ALABAMA ASKS: DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR BARBECUING IN A PIT? WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND LINING A PIT WITH? WHAT WOULD YOU USE FOR A HEAT SOURCE?**

**A.** Pit barbecue is a lost art. We have never cooked in a pit before, but we have friends that have done so for years. We can tell you that if you decide to do it, you'll probably really enjoy the results, but be ready to work hard, since it isn't the easiest type of cooking. First, you need to dig a pit large enough to bury the food, then you line it with hot coals; next, place a layer of leaves (like banana leaves) over the hot coals. Place the meat on the leaves, cover with more leaves and more coal, then cover the pit until done.

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# ESCAPE TO THE TROPICS

Even on the dreariest of days, these bright cocktails will transport you far, far away. Both island-inspired recipes make one drink.



## THE TIGER LILY

Courtesy of mixologist Ryan Puckett.

- 2 OUNCES BOMBAY SAPPHIRE GIN
- 1 OUNCE PINEAPPLE JUICE
- 1 OUNCE LIME JUICE
- 1 OUNCE CREAM OF COCONUT
- PINCH GROUND CAYENNE
- 2 BASIL LEAVES (OPTIONAL)

Shake all the ingredients in a shaker. Strain into a soda siphon and add bubbles (or add club soda to taste). Pour over ice, then garnish with the basil, if desired.



## BANGKOK DANGEROUS

Courtesy of mixologist Dan Sabo.

- 2 OUNCES PEANUT-WASHED BOMBAY SAPPHIRE GIN
- 1 OUNCE GALANGAL/SNAP PEA SYRUP
- 3/4 OUNCE LIME JUICE
- 1/2 OUNCE SALTED COCONUT CREAM
- RED CHILE OIL, BASIL/MUSTARD/ CORIANDER SEEDS AND CILANTRO LEAVES FOR GARNISH

Combine all the ingredients except the garnishes in a shaker. Serve garnished with the chile oil, seeds and cilantro.

# 38%

...of Americans' drink of choice? **Beer.** Wine isn't far behind at 31 percent, followed by **hard liquor** at 28.



Source: The Harris Poll

## KICK UP YOUR COCKTAILS

**WITH THE FALL SEASON IN OUR MIDST, YOU'VE PROBABLY PUT YOUR SPICY FROZEN MARGARITA OBSESSION ON HOLD.** If you're

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# YOUR FALL SHOW CALENDAR

Although Ned Stark of *Game of Thrones* famously proclaimed that “winter is coming,” there are still a few chilehead events ahead that no blizzard could put a damper on!

## 2017 DATIL PEPPER FESTIVAL

**WHEN:** October 7

**WHY:** The Saturday event held in St. Augustine is going to rock Florida! This humble city is the undisputed world capital of datil pepper production, and this unique chile will be celebrated in all of its glory with vendors, a cook-off and hot activities. Admission is free, although you have to pay for tasting tickets.

**FOR MORE INFO:**

[visitstaugustine.com](http://visitstaugustine.com)

## HOPS N' HOT SAUCE FESTIVAL

**WHEN:** January 13

**WHY:** If beer and hot sauce are your things, then journey down to the Lone Star State for this second-annual event, which plans to melt away those post-New Year's blues. Fresh craft beer will be available, as will spicy foods and other samples. Add in a Hot Pepper Eating Contest, a cool kids play area and food trucks galore, and you've got a great time for the entire family in Houston.

**FOR MORE INFO:**

[hopsnhotsaucefestival.com](http://hopsnhotsaucefestival.com)

## ZESTFEST

**WHEN:** January 26–28

**WHY:** Irving, TX, about four hours north of H-Town, will host another installment of this massive hot sauce show known as one of the industry's biggest events. ZestFest features cooking demos by celebrity chefs, live music, interactive contests and thousands of spicy and smoky food samples.

**FOR MORE INFO:** [zestfest.net](http://zestfest.net)

—Scott Roberts



## YOU CAN DO

# CANTONESE

**MAKING DIM SUM, ONE OF THE MOST UBIQUITOUS DISHES IN CANTONESE CUISINE, MIGHT SEEM LIKE IT SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR THE RESTAURANT CHEFS.** Not so, say the chefs at London's prestigious Royal China Club, who insist that all you need are the right ingredients and the proper technique. Here, they reveal their exclusive recipe for one of their most popular dumpling dishes.

## ROYAL CHINA'S CHICKEN AND CHIVE DUMPLINGS

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS

**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD

**COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

*For the filling:*

- 10** OUNCES GROUND CHICKEN
- 7** OUNCES PEELED SHRIMP
- 1/2** BUNCH CHINESE GARLIC CHIVES, FINELY CHOPPED
- 1** GARLIC CLOVE, CRUSHED
- 1** TABLESPOON CHINESE SHAO SHING WINE (AVAILABLE AT ASIAN MARKETS OR ON AMAZON)
- 1** TABLESPOON LIGHT SOY SAUCE
- 1/2** TEASPOON GRATED GINGER
- 1/2** TEASPOON GROUND DRIED SHRIMP (AVAILABLE AT ASIAN MARKETS OR ON AMAZON)

PINCH SUGAR

- 1 1/2** TEASPOONS SESAME OIL
- 1** TABLESPOON CORNSTARCH
- 1** TEASPOON SALT
- 1/2** TEASPOON WHITE PEPPER

*For the dumplings:*

- 6** OUNCES WONTON WRAPPERS
- OIL AS NEEDED
- SWEET CHILE SAUCE FOR SERVING

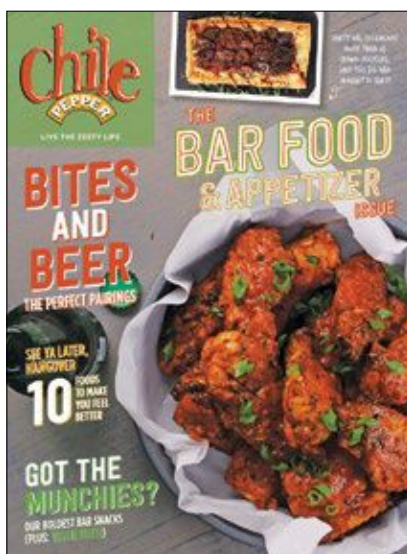
- 1.** Make the filling: Combine all the ingredients in a bowl, whipping by hand until fully combined.
- 2.** Make the dumplings: Place a dollop of the filling in the center of each wrapper. Fold over the wrappers and crimp the edges.
- 3.** Steam the dumplings in an oiled bamboo steamer in a steaming wok, about 15 minutes. Serve hot with the sweet chile sauce.

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# Schmooze with **Booze**

Get the guests mingling—and give them something to talk about—with a batch of spicy margaritas and some pretty small-plate bites from Kathy Kordalis' new cookbook, *Party Food to Share*.

## SCORCHED PADRÓN PEPPERS

A perfect accompaniment to the margarita! Very simple, yet light and full of flavor.

**YIELD** 6 APPETIZERS  
**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 5 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** 5-10 MINUTES

**1–2** TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL  
**4½** OUNCES PADRÓN PEPPERS  
BLACK SALT OR PINK HIMALAYAN SALT

Warm the oil in a skillet over high. When the oil is hot and shimmering, add the peppers. Sauté the peppers, until the skins are brown and blistered. Remove from the pan and sprinkle with salt to taste. Serve immediately.

## MARGARITAS WITH JALAPEÑOS

This classic drink is definitely great for a crowd! It's refreshing with a touch of heat from the jalapeño.

**YIELD** 6 SERVINGS  
**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** NONE

**1¼** CUPS TEQUILA  
**6** LIMES, JUICED, PLUS WEDGES FOR GARNISH  
**3** TABLESPOONS AGAVE SYRUP  
**5** CUPS ICE CUBES  
**3** TABLESPOONS FINE SEA SALT  
**1** JALAPEÑO, SLICED

Combine the tequila, lime juice, agave syrup and ice in a blender until smooth. Pour the salt on a plate and moisten the rims of 6 glasses with a lime wedge. Dip the rims into the salt and pour in the margaritas. Serve with lime wedges and 1 slice jalapeño per glass.



## PAN-FRIED CALAMARI WITH SMOKY CHILE AND LEMON SALT

The flavored salt is the perfect finishing touch. Any leftovers will keep stored in an airtight container.

**YIELD** 6 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 30 MINUTES

*For the salt:*

- 1** DRIED AND SMOKED ANCHO
- 6½** TABLESPOONS SEA SALT
- 1** LEMON, JUICED AND ZESTED

*For the calamari:*

- 2–3** WHOLE SQUID, CLEANED, SCORED AND TENTACLES RESERVED
- 1** TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL, DIVIDED
- ½** TEASPOON CRACKED PEPPER

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 325°F.
- 2.** Make the salt: Blitz the ancho in a food processor into a fine dust. Add the sea salt and pulse a few times. Add the lemon zest and juice, pulse, then spread the mixture onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 20–25 minutes, making sure to keep breaking the mixture up with a fork. Remove from the oven and set aside.
- 3.** Make the calamari: Warm a skillet over high. Cut the squid into large pieces and combine with half the olive oil, the pepper and the reserved tentacles in a bowl. Fry in the skillet with the remaining olive oil, scored side down, for 1–2 minutes, until golden brown. Turn and cook the other side for 1–2 minutes, until opaque and just cooked through. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.
- 4.** Serve warm topped with a pinch of the flavored salt.

## SPICY SWEET POTATO WEDGES AND CORN WITH HARISSA CRÈME FRAÎCHE

These spicy potato wedges and corn have a great kick to them. A perfect side and vegetarian alternative.

**YIELD** 6 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 55 MINUTES

*For the sweet potatoes:*

- 1** TABLESPOON GROUND CORIANDER
  - 1** TABLESPOON GROUND CUMIN
  - 1** TABLESPOON SMOKED PAPRIKA
  - ½** TEASPOON CHILE POWDER
  - 2** GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
  - 3** TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
  - 3** SWEET POTATOES, SCRUBBED AND CUT INTO WEDGES
  - 1** CUP BABY CORN
- SEA SALT AND PEPPER

*For the crème fraîche:*

- 1–2** TABLESPOONS HARISSA PASTE
- ½** CUP CRÈME FRAÎCHE

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 400°F.
- 2.** Make the sweet potatoes: Combine the spices and garlic in a large bowl. Add the oil and potato wedges and mix well. Arrange the wedges in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking dish. Sprinkle generously with sea salt and pepper. Bake for 45 minutes, until tender and crispy.
- 3.** Add the corn and cook for 10 minutes. Transfer to a serving bowl.
- 4.** Make the crème fraîche: Swirl the harissa through the crème fraîche in a bowl. Serve alongside the wedges and corn.



*These recipes are taken from Party Food to Share by Kathy Kordalis; photography by Mowief Kay. Images copyright of Ryland Peters & Small. Available wherever books are sold for \$21.95.*



# GO FOR A DIP



Perfect for your next get-together, be it tailgating or bunko night with the ladies, these dips will ensure your chips don't get too lonely. Because we wouldn't want that, now would we?

by the Chile Pepper staff

## JALAPEÑO AND AVOCADO BLT DIP

It's hard to resist a BLT sandwich, and now we're making it more irresistible with the addition of jalapeño and chunks of avocado. Want to get fancy? Just toast the bread slices with a little butter and garlic.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS  
**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** NONE

- 1/2 CUP MAYONNAISE
- 4 SLICES PEPPERED BACON, CHOPPED
- 2 TOMATOES, SEEDED AND DICED
- 1 JALAPEÑO, SEEDED AND MINCED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 1 CUP SHREDDED ROMAINE
- 1 AVOCADO, CHOPPED
- TOASTED FRENCH BREAD SLICES FOR SERVING

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the mayo, bacon, tomatoes and jalapeños, seasoning with salt and pepper. Cover and chill in the fridge.
2. When ready to serve, add the lettuce and avocado. Mix to combine, adding more salt and pepper if needed. Serve with the toasted bread.

## MEXICAN STREET CORN DIP

Traditional Mexican-style street corn recipes have graced the pages of *CP* a couple times and for good reason—they're delicious. To keep it simple, party-friendly and a lot less messy, we're combining all the tasty flavors in one bowl to be scooped up with salty tortilla chips.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 5 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 10 MINUTES

- 2 TABLESPOONS BUTTER
- 1 (24-OUNCE) BAG FROZEN CORN
- 2 JALAPEÑOS, SEEDED AND MINCED
- 1 GARLIC CLOVE, MINCED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- ¼ CUP MAYONNAISE
- 2 TABLESPOONS CRUMBLED COTIJA
- 2 TABLESPOONS CHOPPED CILANTRO
- 2 TEASPOONS CHIPOTLE POWDER
- 1 AVOCADO, DICED
- 1 LIME, JUICED
- TORTILLA CHIPS FOR SERVING

1. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium-high. Add the corn, jalapeños, garlic, salt and pepper. Cook for about 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly charred.
2. Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining ingredients. Serve with tortilla chips.

## CHICKEN ENCHILADA DIP

Prepping chicken enchiladas can be a time-consuming process, but we're cutting it down by using leftover or rotisserie chicken and skipping the wrapping and stuffing part. Going low-carb? Serve this with hot and spicy pork rinds instead of tortilla chips.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 10-15 MINUTES

- 1 (8-OUNCE) PACKAGE CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 1 CUP SOUR CREAM
- 1 (10-OUNCE) CAN RED ENCHILADA SAUCE
- 2 CUPS SHREDDED COOKED CHICKEN
- 2 SERRANOS, SEEDED AND MINCED
- 2 CUPS SHREDDED PEPPER JACK CHEESE, DIVIDED
- CILANTRO FOR GARNISH (OPTIONAL)
- TORTILLA CHIPS FOR SERVING

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat a baking dish with nonstick spray and set aside.
2. In a bowl, cream together the cream cheese, sour cream and enchilada sauce. Mix in the chicken, peppers and the cheese, reserving some for the topping.
3. Transfer the mixture to the baking dish and spread into an even layer. Top with the reserved cheese and bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the cheese is golden brown.
4. Serve hot topped with cilantro and a side of tortilla chips.





**CHILE BITE:**  
**SPICY SCALLION PANCAKES WITH GINGER DIPPING SAUCE**

This popular Chinese street dish features dough that's pan-fried until golden brown, with every slice full of flaky, crispy goodness. Our addition of sliced Thai chiles adds a nice hot surprise to each bite, too.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 40 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 8-10 MINUTES

*For the pancakes:*

- 1** CUP WATER
  - 2** CUPS FLOUR PLUS 1 TABLESPOON, DIVIDED
  - 1** TABLESPOON SESAME OIL
  - 1** TABLESPOON VEGETABLE OIL PLUS MORE FOR FRYING
  - 4** GREEN ONIONS, SLICED AND DIVIDED
  - 3** THAI CHILES, SLICED AND DIVIDED
- SALT TO TASTE

*For the dipping sauce:*

- 1/4** CUP SOY SAUCE
- 1/4** CUP RICE VINEGAR

- 1** GREEN ONION, SLICED
  - 1** TEASPOON MINCED GINGER
  - 1** TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES
  - 1** TEASPOON HONEY
- 1.** Make the pancakes: Bring the water to a boil. Pour the water over 2 cups flour in a mixing bowl and stir to combine. After a few minutes, when the dough is cool enough to handle, knead and form for 5 minutes, until you get a smooth ball. Cover loosely and set aside for 30 minutes.

- 2.** In a small bowl, combine the sesame oil and vegetable oil with the remaining tablespoon flour and set aside.
- 3.** Meanwhile, make the sauce: Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.
- 4.** Cut the dough into 4 equal pieces. Roll out 1 piece into an 8-inch circle with a rolling pin. Brush the dough with the oil-flour mixture. Sprinkle with a quarter of the scallions and the Thai chiles. Season with salt.
- 5.** Roll the dough into a log,

- then into a tight coil. Roll it out into an 8-inch circle again. Repeat the process with the remaining dough pieces.
- 6.** In a nonstick pan, warm a few tablespoons oil. Fry the pancakes, about 2 minutes per side, until golden brown. Add more oil as needed in between each pancake. Slice into quarters and serve hot with the dipping sauce.



## THAI-STYLE SWEET-AND-SOUR CHEESE BALL



Looking for great texture and great flavor? This app is sure to please a crowd, especially since it's served with light and crispy wonton chips. You can prep this ahead of time or serve it right away.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 35 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** NONE

- 1** (8-OUNCE) BLOCK CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
  - 2** TABLESPOONS SOY SAUCE
  - 1/2** CUP SWEET CHILE SAUCE
  - 6** THAI CHILES, MINCED
  - 2/3** CUP MATCHSTICK CARROTS, CHOPPED, PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
  - 1/2** CUP CHOPPED WATER CHESTNUTS
  - 1** GARLIC CLOVE, MINCED
  - 2** TABLESPOONS CHOPPED CILANTRO
- OIL FOR FRYING
- 25** WONTON WRAPPERS, HALVED
  - 2** GREEN ONIONS, SLICED
  - 1/4** CUP CHOPPED PEANUTS

1. Cream together the cream cheese, soy sauce and chile sauce in a bowl.
2. Add the chiles, carrots, water chestnuts, garlic and cilantro. Mix to combine. Chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
3. Preheat the oil to 375°F. Fry the wonton wrappers in batches for about 2 minutes, or until crispy.
4. Scoop the cream cheese mixture into a mound on a platter and top with the green onions, peanuts and carrots. Serve with the wonton chips.



## BUFFALO CHEDDAR PUB CHEESE



Although sold with the gourmet cheeses today, pub cheese has anything-but-fancy origins. It was reportedly created in England, where local pubs would serve it at the bar with pretzels and chips. Our no-frills version pays homage to the classic—with a few spicy touches.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 45 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** NONE

- 1** (7-OUNCE) PACKAGE HOT BUFFALO CHEDDAR
  - 1** GARLIC CLOVE
  - 2** OUNCES CREAM CHEESE
  - 1 1/2** TEASPOONS SPICY MUSTARD
  - 1/2** CUP OF YOUR FAVORITE BEER
- BUFFALO WING SAUCE FOR GARNISH

1. Break the cheddar into chunks and add to a food processor with the garlic. Pulse to shred the cheese.
2. Add the cream cheese and mustard. Pulse to combine.
3. While the machine is running, slowly pour in the beer until smooth (or you achieve your desired consistency.) Feel free to add a little more beer if needed. Cover and refrigerate for 30-40 minutes.
4. Serve cold with pretzels, crackers or veggies, garnished with wing sauce.

# VEGAN BEGINNINGS

Burgers and tacos without meat or even eggs? Yes, it's possible, with these tasty, nutrient-dense apps from Chitra Goel, the founder of the healthy food blog, MyDaintySoulCurry. Don't love meat substitutes? Feel free to use your favorite protein.



## VEGAN FISH CAKES

These Thai-spiced vegan fish cakes are like a bomb on your palate as they explode with the flavors of fresh galangal, ginger, chile peppers, cilantro, Thai basil and a subtle hint of lemongrass. The hot curry powder and bird's eye chile give them a good amount of heat. Feel free to use your favorite seafood instead of the tofu.

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS  
**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

- 1 TEASPOON TAMARIND PASTE (OPTIONAL)
- 1 LEMONGRASS STALK (SOFT PART ONLY)
- 1 TABLESPOON THAI BASIL
- 1/2 CUP CILANTRO
- 1 TEASPOON EXTRA-HOT CURRY POWDER
- 1 (1-INCH) PIECE GINGER
- 1 (1/2-INCH) PIECE GALANGAL
- 4 GARLIC CLOVES
- 1-4 BIRD'S EYE CHILES
- 1 THAI GREEN CHILE
- 1 SMALL SHALLOT, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 1 (16-OUNCE) PACKAGE EXTRA-FIRM TOFU, DRAINED
- 1/2 CUP BOILED SWEET POTATO
- 10 SMALL SHEETS ROASTED SEAWEED SNACKS
- 1 TABLESPOON SOY SAUCE
- 1 TABLESPOON CHILE GARLIC PASTE
- 1/2 TEASPOON CHILE POWDER
- 1 TEASPOON LIME JUICE
- SALT TO TASTE
- 1 CUP PANKO

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

- 2 TABLESPOONS CANOLA OIL, DIVIDED
  - VEGAN TARTAR SAUCE FOR SERVING
1. Add the first 11 ingredients to a food processor. Pulse for a few minutes, until the herbs are minced.
  2. Add the tofu, sweet potato and seaweed snacks. Puree until smooth.
  3. Add the soy sauce, chile garlic paste, chile powder and lime juice. Pulse for a few minutes until well combined. Season with salt if needed.
  4. Add the panko and pulse until the mixture takes on a firm, dough-like appearance.
  5. Grease your palms and gently make a flat patty out of a quarter of the mixture. Set aside. Repeat with the remaining mixture.
  6. Warm 1/2 tablespoon oil in a nonstick skillet over medium. Cook the cakes for 20 minutes, flipping halfway through, until both sides are lightly browned and crispy. Serve warm with tartar sauce.

## JICAMA KUNG PAO TACOS

These crunchy tacos are quite similar to lettuce wraps, but with a spicy twist. If you don't love seitan, sub in your favorite protein, such as chicken or white fish.

**YIELD** 12 SMALL TACOS  
**ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

*For the marinade:*

- 2 TABLESPOONS SOY SAUCE
- 1 TABLESPOON RICE VINEGAR
- 1 TABLESPOON SRIRACHA
- 1 TEASPOON BROWN SUGAR
- 1/2 TEASPOON CHINESE FIVE-SPICE POWDER
- 1/2 TABLESPOON CORNSTARCH DISSOLVED IN 1 TABLESPOON WATER
- 2 CUPS SEITAN

*For the sauce:*

- 1/4 CUP CHINESE BLACK VINEGAR
- 1 TABLESPOON ALMOND OR PEANUT BUTTER
- 1 TEASPOON MOLASSES
- 1/2 TEASPOON RICE VINEGAR
- 2 TABLESPOONS SOY SAUCE
- 1 TABLESPOON SESAME OIL
- 1 TEASPOON BROWN SUGAR
- 2 TABLESPOONS SWEET CHILE SAUCE
- 2 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

*For the tacos:*

- 1 TABLESPOON VEGETABLE OIL, DIVIDED
- 3 DRIED RED CHILES
- 2 TABLESPOONS MINCED GARLIC
- 1 TEASPOON MINCED GINGER



*These vegan recipes and photos are courtesy of MyDaintySoulCurry (mydaintysoulcurry.com), a personal food blog by Chitra Sophie P. Goel.*

- 1 CELERY STALK, DICED
- 1 RED BELL PEPPER, DICED
- 1/2 ZUCCHINI, DICED
- 1/4 CUP WATER
- 2 TABLESPOONS TOASTED PISTACHIOS OR PEANUTS
- 2 TABLESPOONS CHOPPED SCALLIONS (GREEN PART ONLY) PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 2-3 JICAMAS, PEELED AND SLICED INTO THIN DISKS
- SRIRACHA, SOY AND PEANUT SAUCE FOR SERVING

1. Make the marinade: Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl, adding the seitan last and making sure to coat well. Set aside.
2. Make the sauce: Prepare a slurry by combining all the ingredients in a bowl. Set aside.
3. Make the tacos: Warm half the oil in a wok and add the marinated seitan. Cook for 5-10 minutes, tossing frequently. Set aside in a bowl.
4. Warm the remaining oil in the wok. Add the chiles and cook, about 1-2 minutes, until fragrant and dark brown.
5. Add ginger and garlic and sauté for a few seconds. Add the celery, bell peppers and zucchini. Toss well. Stir-fry for few minutes, until just tender.
6. Add the sauce mixture and 1/4 cup water and bring to a boil over medium. Add the seitan and mix well. Finish by adding the pistachios and scallions.
7. Assemble the tacos: Divide the seitan between the jicama tacos and top with the scallions. Serve with sriracha, soy and peanut sauce.



## SPICY LENTIL VEGGIE BURGERS WITH PICKLED CABBAGE



Easy, healthy and power-packed, these lentil veggie burgers are spicy, delicious and full of nutrition. And they taste even better with the quick pickled cabbage!

**YIELD** 4 BURGERS  
**PREP TIME** 3 HOURS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD-MEDIUM  
**COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

*For the pickled cabbage:*

- 2 CUPS SHREDDED CABBAGE
- 1/2 TEASPOON SALT, DIVIDED
- 2 CUPS WATER
- 1 TABLESPOON APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- 1 TABLESPOON WHITE VINEGAR
- 2 TABLESPOONS PICKLED JALAPEÑOS
- 1 BAY LEAF
- 1 TEASPOON BLACK PEPPERCORNS
- 1 PACKET STEVIA OR OTHER SWEETENER

*For the burgers:*

- 1 CUP PRESOAKED MIXED LENTILS
- 3 GARLIC CLOVES
- 1/2 CUP CILANTRO
- 1/4 CUP CHOPPED RED ONIONS
- 1 CUP COOKED OR SAUTÉED VEGGIES (SUCH AS BROCCOLI AND CARROTS)
- 1 TEASPOON CANOLA OR OLIVE OIL
- 2 SERRANOS
- 1 TEASPOON GROUND CORIANDER
- 1 TEASPOON GROUND CUMIN
- 1 TEASPOON HOT CHILE POWDER
- SALT TO TASTE
- 4 HAMBURGER BUNS
- YOUR FAVORITE GARNISHES AND CONDIMENTS FOR SERVING

1. Make the cabbage: Add the cabbage and half the salt to a bowl. Let stand for 5-10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, combine the remaining ingredients in a saucepan over medium and bring to a boil. Simmer and cook until reduced to half, about 5 minutes.
3. Strain and discard the whole spices. Add the pickling liquid to a jar.
4. Rinse the cabbage and squeeze the water out. Add to the pickling liquid. Cover and chill for a few hours.
5. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
6. Make the burgers: Add all the ingredients to a food processor and pulse until grainy and well combined.
7. Grease your palms and make patties out of the lentil-veggie mixture. Place on a greased parchment-lined baking sheet.
8. Bake for 10-15 minutes, flipping after 5 minutes of cooking. Set aside on a cooling rack.
9. To serve, place the burgers on the buns and top with the pickled cabbage and your favorite garnishes and condiments.



Got a large pack of chilehead wolves to feed, but not much on hand?

These apps call for six ingredients or less, and are ready to be devoured in no time. (And trust us, they will be!)

by the Chile Pepper staff

### HULI-HULI CHICKEN SKEWERS

*Huli* means “turn” in Hawaiian, and that’s pretty much all you have to do to these skewers when you throw them on the grill. Our marinade is based on the one cooked up by Ernest Morgado, who popularized these flavors while grilling chicken over mesquite wood in Hawaii in the ‘50s. While the chicken is marinating, don’t forget to soak your skewers so they don’t get charred.

**YIELD** 8-10 SERVINGS

**PREP TIME** 1 HOUR

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**COOK TIME** 15-20 MINUTES

- 1 CUP TERIYAKI SAUCE
- 1 CUP PINEAPPLE JUICE
- 1/2 CUP SPICY KETCHUP
- 1/3 CUP SRIRACHA SAUCE
- 1 1/2 POUNDS CHICKEN TENDERLOIN STRIPS
- CHOPPED CILANTRO FOR GARNISH

1. Combine the teriyaki sauce, pineapple juice, ketchup and sriracha in a bowl. Reserve half the marinade in

another bowl. Combine the remaining marinade with the chicken, cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

2. Preheat one side of the grill to medium-high.

3. Skewer the chicken and grill over direct heat for 2-3 minutes per side. Finish cooking them over indirect heat for 4-5 minutes per side, basting them with the reserved marinade.

4. Garnish with cilantro and serve hot.

## BUFFALO CHICKEN-STUFFED MUSHROOMS

These little apps are perfect for large gatherings and couldn't be easier to prep, thanks to the use of store-bought rotisserie chicken. The mushrooms add an earthy depth to the traditional wing flavors here.

**YIELD** 8-10 SERVINGS     **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES     **COOK TIME** 5-7 MINUTES

- 1 (16-OUNCE) PACKAGE BABY BELLA MUSHROOMS
  - 8 OUNCES CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
  - 2 CUPS SHREDDED ROTISSERIE CHICKEN
  - ½ CUP HOT BUFFALO WING SAUCE
  - ¼ CUP CRUMBLED BLUE CHEESE
- CHOPPED CHIVES FOR GARNISH

1. Preheat the grill to medium-high.
2. Remove the stems from the mushrooms. Mince the stems and set the mushroom caps aside.
3. Combine the cream cheese, chicken, wing sauce, blue cheese and minced mushrooms in a bowl. Stuff the mushroom caps with the chicken mixture.
4. Grill for 5-7 minutes, until the mushrooms are tender and the stuffing is warm.



## GRILLED WATERMELON AND FETA

This is a little palate refresher, thanks to the combination of watermelon and mint. The fruit picks up an extra hint of sweetness when grilled that pops against the tangy balsamic glaze and feta cheese.

**YIELD** 8-10 SERVINGS     **ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 30 MINUTES     **COOK TIME** 10 MINUTES

- 1 TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL
- ½ TABLESPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES
- 2 (8-OUNCE) BLOCKS FETA, CUT INTO ¼-INCH SLICES
- ¼ WATERMELON, SLICED INTO ½-INCH WEDGES
- 4 TABLESPOONS BALSAMIC GLAZE
- 2 TABLESPOONS CHOPPED MINT

1. Preheat the grill to medium-high.
2. Combine the oil and pepper flakes in a small bowl. Baste the feta with the oil and set aside.
3. Baste the watermelon with the balsamic glaze. Grill for 3-5 minutes per side, until grill-marked.
4. Arrange the watermelon and feta on a platter. Garnish with the mint and serve warm.



# LET'S BEGIN WITH A BURN

Start the meal with a  
serious dose of taste  
bud shock.

*by Vic Clinco*

**AS YOU KNOW, THIS COLUMN BRINGS YOU THE HOTTEST-OF-THE-HOT RECIPES EVERY ISSUE.** It's a chance for me to share some of my personal favorites and some cool recipes from my dearest chilehead friends. It's also an opportunity for us, the extremists, to push the envelope in heat while still keeping the flavor balanced.

I can't tell you how many times I've been at a restaurant and keyed directly in on the spiciest option on the menu, only to find it a total letdown. (Sound familiar?) Now, I completely understand the fine line a restaurateur needs to walk in these endeavors: If they make it too hot, the "normal" people are set ablaze and complain; if they make it too mild,

the chileheads scoff at it. Geez, it can be a lose-lose situation. But when we cook at home, the good news is that the sky's the limit, or in many of these cases, the depths of a fiery inferno.

So with the appetizer recipes that follow, I hope I meet your spicy expectations. I aim to bring the heat and push your envelope. Happy burning! **CP**

## NAUGHTY TATER LOLLIPOPS

My mouth is watering just thinking about these scrumptious bites. Dense, and packed with flavor and intense heat, these are lovingly deep-fried to a golden-brown deliciousness. Diet tomorrow, enjoy today!

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 2½ HOURS      **COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

- 4** BAKING POTATOES, PEELED
- ½** CUP GRATED GRUYERE
- 2** GHOST PEPPERS, MINCED
- 1** SMALL YELLOW ONION, MINCED
- 6** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 2** TABLESPOONS MINCED CHIVES PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 2** TABLESPOONS MINCED PARSLEY PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 2** TABLESPOONS MINCED ROSEMARY
- 1** TEASPOON CORIANDER
- 1** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- 1** TEASPOON SMOKED GHOST PEPPER POWDER
- VEGETABLE OIL FOR FRYING
- 1** CUP FLOUR, DIVIDED
- ½** CUP HEAVY CREAM
- 1** EGG
- 1** CUP ITALIAN BREADCRUMBS
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

- 1.** Add the potatoes to a pot of heavily salted water on high and parcook for 15 minutes. Drain, pat dry, then chill for 2 hours.
- 2.** Grate the potatoes and place in a mixing bowl. Add the cheese, peppers, onions, garlic, herbs and spices and mix to combine. Form the potato mixture into 12 palm-size balls; you can use a little water to smooth out the edges and any cracks that may form. Set aside.
- 3.** Warm the oil over high in a deep-sided pan or skillet.
- 4.** Set up a breading station: Place ½ cup flour in a shallow bowl. Whisk the remaining flour, heavy cream and egg in a second bowl to form a slurry. Place the breadcrumbs in a third bowl.
- 5.** Roll each potato ball in the flour, dip into the slurry, then roll in the breadcrumbs. Set aside.
- 6.** Cook the potato balls in batches for 5-6 minutes, until golden brown.
- 7.** Gently insert 1 stick into each tater tot. Serve hot garnished with fresh parsley and chives.



## CHICK-ARRÓNES

Much like their pork counterparts, the *chicarrón*, these insanely delicious chicken skin bites are not only full of flavor but pack a serious punch. Crunchy, savory and intensely hot, they're sure to please a crowd.

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 24 HOURS      **COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

- 10** PIECES CHICKEN THIGH SKINS, HALVED
- 2** TEASPOONS TRINIDAD SCORPION POWDER, DIVIDED
- 2** TEASPOONS GARLIC POWDER, DIVIDED
- 2** TEASPOONS SHICHIMI TOGARASHI, DIVIDED (A JAPANESE SEASONING FOUND AT ASIAN MARKETS OR ON AMAZON)
- 2** TEASPOONS SALT, DIVIDED
- 2** TABLESPOONS VEGETABLE OIL
- 1** LIME, ZESTED

- 1.** Add the chicken skins to a pot of boiling water over high and cook for 6-8 minutes, until just cooked.
- 2.** Meanwhile, combine the spices and salt in bowl. Set aside.
- 3.** Remove the chicken skins from the water, drain on paper towels and place on a plate. Generously sprinkle on half the spice mixture on both sides, reserving the rest for later. Chill uncovered for 24 hours.
- 4.** Preheat the oil in a deep-sided skillet to 350°F.
- 5.** Cook the skins in the oil for about 2 minutes, flipping once. The skins will puff slightly and crisp up. Remove from the oil and drain on paper towels.
- 6.** Season with the remaining spice mixture and garnish with lime zest. Serve immediately.

## BLISTERING FRIED BACON

A fun variation for the bacon lover and the spicy enthusiast alike! These decadent bites of bacon are amazingly delish and to-die-for spicy. Bacon is life, after all!

**YIELD** 6 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT

**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 25 MINUTES

- 2 POUNDS THICK-CUT BACON, CUT INTO THIRDS
- 2 TABLESPOONS CAROLINA REAPER POWDER, DIVIDED
- 1 TABLESPOON DARK BROWN SUGAR
- 3 CUPS FLOUR, DIVIDED
- 2 EGGS
- ½ CUP BUTTERMILK
- 1 (12-OUNCE) BOTTLE BEER
- 1 TABLESPOON GRANULATED GARLIC
- 1 TABLESPOON ONION POWDER
- 1 TEASPOON SMOKED PAPRIKA
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 1 CUP VEGETABLE OIL
- 1 TEASPOON CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Arrange the bacon on a baking sheet and coat with 1 tablespoon Reaper powder and the brown sugar. Parcook in the oven for 7 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. Set up a breading station: Place 1½ cups flour in a shallow bowl, then whisk together the eggs and buttermilk in a second shallow bowl. Whisk together the remaining flour, beer, spices, salt and pepper in a mixing bowl.
4. Warm the oil in a deep-sided pan or skillet over high.
5. Using a pair of tongs, dredge the bacon in the flour, then in the egg wash, back in the flour and finally in the batter. Hold the battered bacon over the bowl for 1-2 seconds to ensure all the excess batter drips off.
6. Working in batches, fry for 2 minutes, then flip and cook for 2-3 minutes, until golden brown. Drain on paper towels.
7. Serve immediately sprinkled with confectioners' sugar and Reaper powder. Alternatively, you can pop in the oven for a few minutes to rewarm prior to serving.



## MEATBALLS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Crazy little bundles of joy, these superhot meatballs are wrapped in a golden brown pillow of dough. Saucy, cheesy and oh, so spicy, look out for a full-on zesty bomb unleashed on your taste buds.

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT

**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 30 MINUTES

- 2 POUNDS GROUND CHUCK
- 1 SMALL YELLOW ONION, MINCED
- 4 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 2 EGGS
- 2 TABLESPOONS OF YOUR FAVORITE CAROLINA REAPER HOT SAUCE
- 1 CUP ITALIAN-STYLE BREADCRUMBS
- 1 TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES, DIVIDED
- ½ CUP CHOPPED PARSLEY
- 1 TEASPOON DRIED OREGANO
- ½ TEASPOON DRIED BASIL
- ¼ TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- ½ CUP SHREDDED PARMESAN
- ½ CUP SHREDDED CHEDDAR, DIVIDED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 1 CUP OLIVE OIL
- 1 (8-OUNCE) PACKAGE CRESCENT DOUGH
- 4 TABLESPOONS MELTED BUTTER
- ½ TEASPOON KOSHER SALT

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine the meat, onions, garlic, eggs, hot sauce, breadcrumbs, ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes, dry spices, Parmesan, ¼ cup cheddar, salt and pepper by hand. Form the mixture into 16 palm-sized meatballs. Set aside.
3. Warm the oil in a skillet over medium and cook the meatballs, about 2-3 minutes per side, or until browned. Remove from the pan and drain on paper towels.
4. Roll out the crescent sheets and cut along the perforated triangles, then cut each triangle in half to form 16 smaller triangles. Divide the remaining cheddar evenly between the triangles, placing a small pile in the center of each. Top with 1 meatball and carefully wrap the dough around it, pinching the seams tightly to seal.
5. Evenly space out the meatballs on a baking sheet lightly coated with nonstick spray. Brush the tops with the melted butter and season with salt and the remaining pepper flakes. Bake for 10 minutes. Rotate the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes more, until golden brown. Serve hot.





## MANIACAL MINI MEATLOAFS

This ain't grandma's meatloaf, that's for sure! Spiced up to the max, these little bite-size goodies offer the extreme heat-seeker a delicious and spicy start to any meal.

**YIELD** 12 SERVINGS  
**ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** 45 MINUTES

*For the meatloaf:*

- 1** POUND LEAN GROUND BEEF
- 1/2** POUND LEAN GROUND PORK
- 1** SMALL YELLOW ONION, MINCED
- 6** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 3** ROMA TOMATOES, SEEDED AND MINCED
- 4** GHOST PEPPERS, MINCED
- 1/2** CUP GRATED PARMESAN
- 1/2** CUP PANKO BREADCRUMBS
- 2** EGGS
- 1** TABLESPOON OF YOUR FAVORITE GHOST PEPPER HOT SAUCE
- 2** TABLESPOONS KETCHUP
- 1/2** CUP MINCED PARSLEY PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 1/2** TEASPOON SPANISH PAPRIKA
- 1/2** TEASPOON BROWN SUGAR
- 1/4** TEASPOON DRIED BASIL
- 1/4** TEASPOON DRIED OREGANO
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

*For the glaze:*

- 1** TABLESPOON OF YOUR FAVORITE GHOST PEPPER HOT SAUCE
- 1** TABLESPOON KETCHUP
- 1/2** TABLESPOON MOLASSES
- 1** TEASPOON BROWN SUGAR
- 1** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- CHOPPED PARSLEY FOR GARNISH

- 1.** Preheat the oven 375°F. Liberally coat a muffin pan with nonstick spray.
- 2.** Make the meatloaf: In a bowl, combine all the ingredients by hand. If the mixture is too dense or dry, add a touch of water. Form the mixture into 12 uniform balls and press into the muffin wells. Bake for 25 minutes.
- 3.** Meanwhile, make the glaze: Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl.
- 4.** When the meatloaf is done, remove from the oven and generously brush each loaf with the glaze. Return to the oven for 15 minutes.
- 5.** Serve immediately garnished with the parsley.

# START WITH THE RIGHT SAUCE

These versatile creations will bring even the blandest app up to chilehead standards.

by Vic Clinco

**A GOOD APPETIZER BEFORE THE MAIN COURSE IS THE EQUIVALENT TO A GOOD WARM-UP BEFORE A WORKOUT.** Well, at least that's what I've been told—I'm not much of a workout guy, but that's beside the point. The point is that, as restaurants are stepping up their game to "keep up with the Joneses," the bar on sauces is being raised, too. So to follow that trend, we, too, should bring our sauce A game.

In culinary school, I learned that the key to cooking and making topnotch food is to use good ingredients. So when you approach making some of the recipes you'll find in this issue, and begin to piece together the pairings of sauces and accompaniments, you will get what you put into it. Remember to always add a dash of heart and love in everything you cook.

So break out your mad culinary skills, gather your mise en place, put a good edge on your knife and make some amazing memories. Get cooking! **CP**

## STRAWLAPÉÑO SALSA

Think fruity, zingy love, baby! Solid enough as a standalone salsa for chips, this can also be easily slapped onto any pork, shrimp or chicken appetizer.

**YIELD** 3 CUPS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 40 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** NONE

- 2 PINTS STRAWBERRIES, CHILLED, HULLED AND DICED
  - 3 JALAPEÑOS, SEEDED AND MINCED
  - 3 SERRANOS, SEEDED AND MINCED
  - 1 SMALL RED ONION, DICED
  - 1 CUP MINCED CILANTRO PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
  - 2 LIMES, ZESTED AND JUICED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

In a mixing bowl, gently toss together all the ingredients. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serve chilled, garnished with minced cilantro.



## CHIPOTLE MOLASSES DIPPING SAUCE

A sweet, rich hybrid that resembles a barbecue or even a mole sauce, but so much more versatile. Not only does it make a wonderful dipping sauce, it can also be used as a drizzle or finishing sauce.

**YIELD** 2 CUPS      **ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 40 MINUTES

- 1 (7-OUNCE) CAN CHIPOTLES IN ADOBO
  - 2 TABLESPOONS WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
  - 1 STICK BUTTER
  - 1 YELLOW ONION, MINCED
  - 4 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
  - 1 CUP MOLASSES
  - 1/2 CUP BOURBON
  - 2 TABLESPOONS DARK BROWN SUGAR
  - 1 TEASPOON GHOST PEPPER POWDER
  - 1 TEASPOON COCOA POWDER
  - 1 TEASPOON MUSTARD POWDER
  - 1 TEASPOON GROUND CUMIN
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
1. Puree the chipotles and adobo sauce with the Worcestershire in a blender. Set aside.
  2. In a large pan over medium, melt the butter. Add the onions and garlic and sweat, about 2-3 minutes. Stir in the chipotle mixture and cook for 5 minutes.
  3. Add the remaining ingredients. Bring the mixture to a quick boil, then reduce to a simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool. Serve warm or chilled.



## Y'ALL COME BACK SAUCE

Oh, you will come back for this classically Southern sauce. Once you try it, your mind will be aflutter with ideas for what to eat it with! From sliders and sandwiches to French fries and onions rings to crudité, the options are truly endless.

**YIELD** 2 CUPS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** OVERNIGHT      **COOK TIME** NONE

- 1 CUP MAYONNAISE
- 1/2 CUP CHILI GARLIC SAUCE
- 1 TEASPOON PREPARED HORSERADISH
- 1 TEASPOON WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
- 1 TEASPOON SPICY BROWN MUSTARD
- 1 TEASPOON EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- 1/2 SWEET ONION, MINCED
- 2 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1 LEMON, ZESTED AND JUICED
- 1 TABLESPOON CAJUN SEASONING
- 1/2 TEASPOON SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1/4 TEASPOON DRY MUSTARD POWDER
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 1 TABLESPOON MINCED PARSLEY FOR GARNISH

In a large bowl, whisk together all the ingredients. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate overnight. Serve chilled, garnished with the parsley.

## GHOSTLY PEPPERY MUSTARD

OMG, this mustard is delicious! Forget dipping, you'll want to coat a corn dog in it. It's also crazy good on hot and cold sandwiches and simply to-die-for on pretzels or pretzel nuggets.

**YIELD** 2 CUPS      **ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 3 DAYS      **COOK TIME** NONE

- 4 TABLESPOONS YELLOW MUSTARD SEEDS
- 4 TABLESPOONS BROWN MUSTARD SEEDS
- 1 TABLESPOON MUSTARD POWDER
- 1 TEASPOON GHOST PEPPER POWDER
- 1/2 TEASPOON CELERY SEEDS
- 1/2 TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 1/4 TEASPOON FENNEL SEEDS
- 1/4 TEASPOON PEPPER
- 1/4 CUP LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
- 1/4 CUP COGNAC
- 1/2 CUP WHITE WINE VINEGAR
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

Combine all the ingredients in a canning jar. Seal tightly and let sit at room temperature for 2 full days. Transfer the mixture to a blender and puree. Place in an airtight container and refrigerate overnight. Serve chilled, garnished with red pepper flakes.



## RILED-UP RANCH HAND SAUCE

This zesty and tangy ranch-style sauce has cool layers of amazing flavor.

**YIELD** 2 CUPS      **ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** OVERNIGHT      **COOK TIME** NONE

- 1/2 (7-OUNCE) CAN CHIPOTLES IN ADOBO
- 1 TEASPOON APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- 1/2 TEASPOON SOYBEAN OIL
- 1 CUP MAYONNAISE
- 1/2 CUP BUTTERMILK
- 4 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1/4 TEASPOON MINCED DILL
- 1/4 TEASPOON MINCED PARSLEY PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 1 (1-OUNCE) PACKET RANCH DRESSING MIX
- 1/4 TEASPOON GARLIC POWDER
- 1/4 TEASPOON ONION POWDER
- 1/4 TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES
- 1/3 TEASPOON CHILE POWDER
- 1/2 TEASPOON SUGAR
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

In a blender, puree the chipotles, vinegar and oil. Add the remaining ingredients and pulse to combine. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate overnight. Serve chilled, garnished with minced parsley.



## SPICY CURRY YOGURT

Man, I'm a sucker for curry. I just love the deep earthy flavor. If you're anything like me, you'll love this simple dipping sauce. Savory and spicy with a great creamy balance, try it with chicken tenders, fingers or wings. Serve it in the middle of a crudité platter, or with fish sticks, fried crawfish or calamari.

**YIELD** 2 CUPS

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT

**PREP TIME** 2 HOURS

**COOK TIME** NONE

- 2** CUPS PLAIN GREEK YOGURT
- 2** TABLESPOONS HONEY
- 2** TABLESPOONS CURRY POWDER
- 1** TABLESPOON SMOKED GHOST PEPPER POWDER
- 1/2** TEASPOON GROUND CUMIN
- 1/2** TEASPOON GRANULATED GARLIC
- 1/2** TEASPOON MINCED DILL PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 1/2** LEMON, ZESTED AND JUICED
- SALT AND WHITE PEPPER TO TASTE

In a mixing bowl, whisk together all the ingredients. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate for 2 hours. Served chilled garnished with dill.

## FRIGGEN' FIGS OF FURY SAUCE

This boozy, sweet sauce is addictive, like seriously addictive. Pork, chicken and white fish are perfect fits, but it's also amazing paired with stuffed jalapeños, especially those wrapped in bacon. Also, try it with tempura veggies and mozzarella sticks.

**YIELD** 3 CUPS

**PREP TIME** OVERNIGHT

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT

**COOK TIME** 40 MINUTES

- 2** CUPS BRANDY
- 2** POUNDS FRESH FIGS, STEMMED AND HALVED LENGTHWISE
- 1** CUP LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
- 2** TABLESPOONS HONEY
- 1/2** LEMON, ZESTED AND JUICED
- 1** TEASPOON VANILLA
- 2** TABLESPOONS CAROLINA REAPER POWDER
- 2** TEASPOONS GROUND CINNAMON
- 1/2** TEASPOON GROUND NUTMEG
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

- 1.** In a large bowl, pour the brandy over the figs and cover tightly. Let macerate overnight at room temperature. Remove the figs from the bowl, reserving the brandy liquid.
- 2.** Preheat the grill to high.
- 3.** Place the figs cut side down on the grill and cook, about 4-5 minutes.
- 4.** In a large saucepan over medium-high, add the figs, reserved brandy liquid and remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer.
- 5.** Cook for 30 minutes, until the sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon and is reduced by about three-quarters. Serve warm as a drizzle or cool as a dip or sauce.

# THE INTERNATIONAL CHILE SUBSTITUTION CHART

The ever-increasing number of international cookbooks presents a challenge for the chilehead cook. The recipe calls for a variety of chile pepper that is unavailable, so what do you do? Check out this chart.

by Dave DeWitt and Harald Zoschke

CUISINE	CHILES USED	SUBSTITUTE
<b>AFRICA</b>	Bird's Eye Fatalii (Central African Rep.) Berbere (Ethiopia) Bird's Eye (Many countries)	Piquin Habanero Red New Mexico Piquin, Chiletepin
<b>BRAZIL</b>	Malagueta	Fresh or dried Tabasco, Piquin
<b>CARIBBEAN</b>	Scotch Bonnet (Jamaica) Bonney Pepper (Barbados) Bonda man Jaques (Martinique) Goat Pepper (Bahamas) Congo Pepper (Trinidad) Derrière de Madame Jacques (Guadeloupe) All Superhots (Trinidad) Bird Pepper (All Islands)	Habanero  Piquin, Chiltepin
<b>FRANCE</b>	Piment de Espelette	Red New Mexico
<b>INDIA</b>	Lal mirch Hari mirch	Ground Cayenne Green Cayenne, Serrano





To download this chart, visit our website at [chilepepper.com](http://chilepepper.com).

### INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

Cabe hijau (Green Chile)  
Cabe merah (Red Chile)

Serrano, Jalapeño  
Ground Cayenne

### ITALY

Tondo Calabrese  
Bacio di Satana  
Diavolicchio  
Peperoncino a Mazzetto  
Friggitello  
Amando  
Lingua di Fuoco  
Corno di Bue

Hot Cherry, Cherry Bomb  
Piquin, Chiltepin  
NuMex Mirasol, Cayenne, Santaka  
Padron, Shishito, mild Green New Mexico  
Cayenne  
Thai, Santaka  
Corno di Toro, Carmen, Cubanella, Gypsy,  
Bell Pepper



### JAPAN

Shishito  
Santaka

De Padrón, Friggitello  
Dried Piquin, Thai, Peperoncino a Mazzetto,  
Lingua di Fuoco



### LAOS

Mak phet dip  
Mak phet haeng

Green New Mexico  
Dried Red New Mexico



### MEXICO

Mulato  
Güero or Xcatic  
Chipotle  
Guajillo

Ancho  
Yellow Wax  
Pimentón de la Vera  
Dried New Mexico Red

### PERU

Rocoto  
Aji Amarillo

Red Serrano



### PHILIPPINES

Siling labuyo

Piquin

### SPAIN

Pimiento de Padrón  
Pimentón de la Vera hot

Shishito, Friggitello  
Chipotle

### THAILAND

Small (*Prik kee nu*)  
Large (*Prik chee fah*)

Small Piquin, Chiltepin  
Yellow Wax

# RICK'S TIPS

The secret to getting the first course out pronto? What about cooking with peppers in your appetizers? Rick's got ideas.

by Rick McMillen

**WHEN MY WIFE AND I GO OUT TO EAT, WE LOVE TO ORDER FOUR OR FIVE APPETIZERS IN LIEU OF MAIN COURSES.** That way, we get to share a few different dishes for the same price and “real estate” in our stomachs. Plus, I find that appetizers tend to highlight more “of the moment” creations, where chefs put together a dish fast, often using scraps or leftovers. It's creativity at its finest!

When I cook apps at home, I always have a selection of breads, chips, and tortillas on hand. You can toast them, deep-fry them or slather them with sauces to complement whatever protein you're incorporating.

One of my favorite methods for first courses is deep-frying—these appetizer seem to have zero rules! The selection of oils you can choose from is almost as varied as the morsels being dropped into the grease. You can dunk almost any item in your fridge into a thick batter, or into the classic egg wash and breadcrumbs or panko, before popping into the fryer. Then, cover with whatever sauce you can dream up!

When it comes to cooking with peppers, most, if not all of them, can be stuffed or blended into a sauce. They can be baked, pan-fried, deep-fried or even eaten raw. Just be careful, since heat levels can vary like a significant other's decision while ordering from a 32-page menu. Another tip: Try to edit the ingredients you cook with; it's easy for the true flavor of the pepper to be masked by too much other stuff.

Grab a beer, glass of vino or your favorite cocktail—let's get started! **CP**



## STUFFED PIZZA BALLS WITH CHIPOTLE GOUDA

Talk about easy and tasty! Deep-fried to a golden brown, these pizza balls filled with a creamy, gooey chipotle gouda are irresistible. A warning: These will spoil dinner if you make too many, because I promise you will want to eat them all!

**YIELD** 8 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD

**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 2-3 MINUTES

- 1** (14-OUNCE) PACKAGE PIZZA DOUGH
- 8** OUNCES CHIPOTLE GOUDA CHEESE
- 2** TABLESPOONS BUTTER, MELTED
- 1** CUP BREADCRUMBS
- OIL FOR FRYING
- 1½** CUPS SPICY MARINARA
- ½** BUNCH PARSLEY

- 1.** Cut the dough into 8 pieces. Roll into balls, then make a well with your thumb and stuff each with 1 ounce cheese. Wrap the dough over the cheese, pinching the dough together and reshaping it into a ball.
- 2.** Preheat a deep dryer to 350°F.
- 3.** Place the melted butter in a shallow dish and the breadcrumbs in a second dish. Dredge the balls in the butter, allowing the excess to drip off, and then into the breadcrumbs.
- 4.** Working in batches, fry for about 2-3 minutes, until the breadcrumbs are golden brown and dough is cooked through. Serve with the marinara and garnish with parsley sprigs.



## FRIED SPICY STUFFED OLIVES

I love simplicity! These olives require just a few ingredients and a little time to send a lightning bolt of flavor to your tongue.

**YIELD** 6 SERVINGS

**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD-MEDIUM

**COOK TIME** 3 MINUTES

- 4** OUNCES GOAT CHEESE
  - 1** JALAPEÑO, SEEDED, MEMBRANES REMOVED AND MINCED
  - 1** TABLESPOON MINCED GARLIC
  - 1/2** CUP PARSLEY, FINELY CHOPPED
  - 24** LARGE GREEN PITTED OLIVES, DRAINED AND DRIED
- OIL FOR FRYING
- 1** CUP FLOUR
  - 1** EGG, BEATEN
  - 1** CUP BREADCRUMBS

- 1.** In a mixing bowl, combine the goat cheese, jalapeños, garlic and parsley.
- 2.** Gently stuff the mixture into each olive. Wipe the olives clean and set aside.
- 3.** Preheat a deep fryer to 375°F.
- 4.** Set up a dredging station by placing the flour, egg and breadcrumbs in three separate shallow bowls.
- 5.** Dredge the olives in the flour, then in the egg and finally in the breadcrumbs.
- 6.** Working in batches, fry the olives for about 3 minutes. Serve hot.



## ONION AND SERRANO WONTON CUPS

All the ingredients in this French-inspired appetizer work together beautifully. The onions complement the serrano peppers, and the creamy Gorgonzola cheese is a nice contrast to the crunchy wonton cup. These can be made in advance.

**YIELD** 12 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 12-14 MINUTES

- 36** WONTONS WRAPPERS
  - 1** EGG, BEATEN
  - 3** TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
  - 1** WHITE ONION, JULIENNED
  - 2** SERRANOS, SEEDED, MEMBRANES REMOVED AND DICED
  - 1** RED BELL PEPPER, JULIENNED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 4** OUNCES GORGONZOLA
  - 1/2** CUP HEAVY CREAM

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 2.** Coat a muffin pan with nonstick spray. Arrange 3 wonton wrappers in each muffin tin well, making a star-like shape. Brush the wrappers with the beaten egg. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden brown. Set aside.
- 3.** Warm the oil in skillet over medium-high. Add the onions and peppers and cook, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
- 4.** Cream together the cheese and cream in a bowl. Roughly chop half the onion mixture and add to the bowl. Mix to combine.
- 5.** Divide the mixture among the wonton cups. Serve at room temperature garnished with the reserved onions.

[7 DAYS, 7 WAYS]

# A Little BIT OF Everything



You know those irresistible sample platters on every sports bar menu? Making your own at home is easier than you'd think: Just plate up three or more of these small bites to get a taste of the whole menu, not to mention wow a crowd. Because variety really can spice up your life.

by the Chile Pepper staff

## SERRANO-OLIVE CHEESE BREAD

This past Christmas, Executive Editor Bambi Abernathy went to her in-laws for a get-together. While her father-in-law was making his drool-worthy Shrimp Creole, her mother-in-law was whipping up this bread, something Bambi had never before tried at their house. You're going to love this easy riff on homemade olive salad and muffaletta sandwiches, which we spiced up for you chileheads.

**YIELD** 1 LOAF

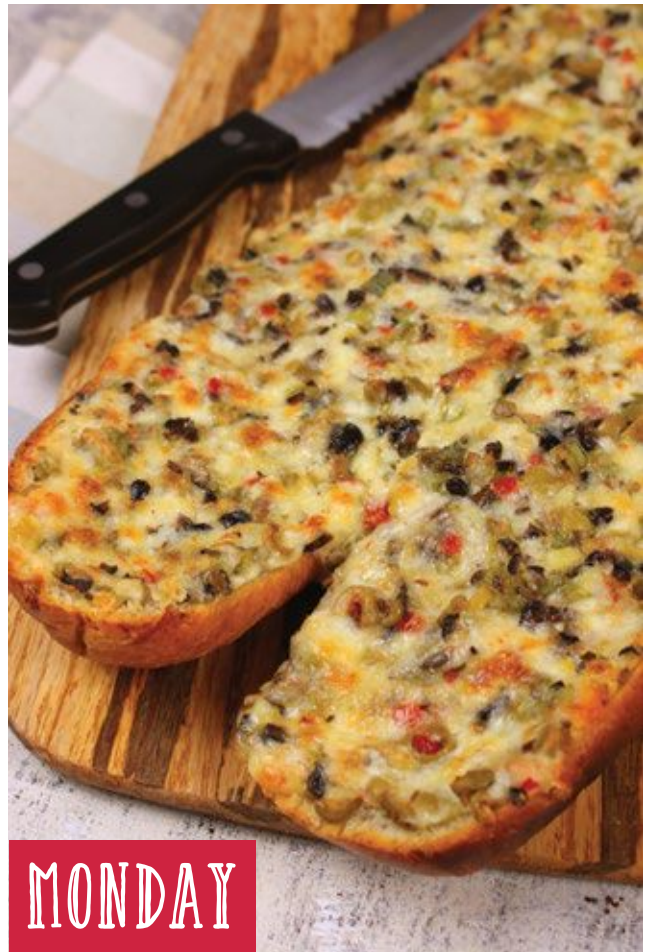
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**COOK TIME** 25 MINUTES

- 1/2 CUP MAYONNAISE
- 4 TABLESPOONS BUTTER, SOFTENED
- 1/4 CUP CHOPPED PIMENTO-STUFFED GREEN OLIVES
- 1/4 CUP CHOPPED BLACK OLIVES
- 4 SERRANOS, SEEDED AND MINCED
- 2 GREEN ONIONS, SLICED
- 1 POUND SHREDDED PEPPER JACK CHEESE
- 1 LOAF FRENCH BREAD, HALVED LENGTHWISE

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Combine the mayo and butter in a mixing bowl.
3. Add the remaining ingredients except the bread and mix to combine.
4. Spread the mixture onto the bread and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cheese melts and browns. Slice and serve warm.





## CAJUN PULL-APART PASTA BAKE

Stuffed with crawfish, cheese and the Cajun “holy trinity” of onions, celery and bell peppers, this fun and shareable appetizer can also stand in as a main course for smaller gatherings.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 30 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 30 MINUTES

**2** TABLESPOONS BUTTER  
**1** RED BELL PEPPER, DICED  
**1** ONION, DICED  
**2** CELERY STALKS, DICED  
**2** TEASPOONS CAJUN SEASONING  
**1** POUND CRAWFISH TAILS  
**1** TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES  
**1** (8-OUNCE) PACKAGE CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED  
**1** POUND JUMBO PASTA SHELLS, COOKED PER PACKAGE INSTRUCTIONS AND RINSED

**1** (16-OUNCE) JAR SPICY MARINARA SAUCE  
**½** CUP HOT AND SPICY BREADCRUMBS  
**½** CUP GRATED PARMESAN  
 CHOPPED PARSLEY FOR GARNISH  
**1.** In a skillet over medium-high, melt the butter. Add the vegetables and Cajun seasoning and cook for 5 minutes.  
**2.** Stir in the crawfish and red pepper flakes and cook

until the crawfish is warmed through, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and transfer to a mixing bowl.  
**3.** Preheat the oven to 375°F.  
**4.** Add the cream cheese to the crawfish mixture and mix well. Fill the cooked pasta shells with about 1-1½ tablespoons crawfish mixture.  
**5.** Pour half the marinara into a baking dish and arrange the shells inside at a 45 degree angle. Pour the remaining sauce on top and

sprinkle on the breadcrumbs and Parmesan.  
**6.** Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until the sauce is warm and the tips of the pasta shells are golden brown and crispy.  
**7.** Garnish with parsley and serve hot.

## STEAK AND JALAPEÑO BEER CHEESE POT PIES

This tastes like a smoky, spicy beer cheese soup but it's a bit more hearty thanks to the addition of potatoes. You can't go wrong with steak and potatoes, and the cheddar beer cheese makes this even more over the top.

**YIELD** 8 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD

**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 40 MINUTES

- 2** LARGE POTATOES
- 1** POUND BEEF CHUCK ROAST OR SHOULDER, CUT INTO 1-INCH CUBES
- ¼** CUP FLOUR
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 2** TABLESPOONS OIL, DIVIDED
- 1** SMALL ONION, DICED
- 2** JALAPEÑOS, SEEDED AND DICED
- 1** GARLIC CLOVE, MINCED
- 1** (12-OUNCE) BOTTLE BEER
- ½** CUP HEAVY CREAM
- 1** CUP SHREDDED SHARP CHEDDAR
- ½** CUP SHREDDED SMOKED GOUDA
- 1** (14.1-OUNCE) PACKAGE PIE CRUST DOUGH

- 1.** Peel the potatoes, poke with a fork and wrap in damp paper towels. Parcook in the microwave on high for 3½ minutes. Once cool enough to handle, cut into chunks.
- 2.** Place the meat, flour, salt and pepper in resealable bag and shake to evenly coat.

- 3.** Warm 1 tablespoon oil over medium and add the meat, shaking off any excess flour. Brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside.
- 4.** Add the remaining oil to the pan and sauté the potatoes, onions and jalapeños until tender, about 7-8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute.
- 5.** Add half the beer to deglaze, along with the reserved meat, and simmer for 5 minutes.
- 6.** Add the heavy cream, cheeses and remaining beer and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thick and creamy, about 5 minutes.
- 7.** Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 450°F. Coat a muffin tin with nonstick spray.
- 8.** Unroll the dough, cut into circles the size of your muffin tin wells and arrange the dough in the wells. Roll out the remaining dough with a rolling pin and cut into more circles to fill the pan. Poke holes in the dough with a fork and bake for 7 minutes.
- 9.** Remove the pan from the oven and ladle the soup into the wells. Return to the oven for 10-12 minutes. Serve hot.



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY

## HOT TAVERN LOAF

Like Sloppy Joe's but sans tomato paste or ketchup, this take on the tavern sandwich—which some believe may have come about at Ye Olde Tavern in Sioux City, IA, while others say it was at Maid-Rite in Muscatine in the 1920s—features French bread dough that's stuffed with loose meat, and then baked until warm, soft and crusty. Need a little tomato? Use spicy ketchup as your dip!

**YIELD** 4-6 SERVINGS  
**PREP TIME** 2 MINUTES

- 1 POUND GROUND CHUCK OR BEEF
- 1 ONION, DICED
- 2 CLOVES GARLIC, MINCED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 2 TABLESPOONS SPICY MUSTARD (TRY OUR GHOSTLY PEPPER MUSTARD ON PAGE 38)
- 1/2 TEASPOON WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
- WATER AS NEEDED
- 1 TABLESPOON FLOUR PLUS MORE FOR DUSTING
- 1 CUP HEAVY CREAM
- 7 OUNCES SPICY CHEDDAR, CUBED
- 1 (11-OUNCE) PACKAGE FRENCH BREAD DOUGH

1. Brown the meat in skillet over medium-high. Add the onions and garlic and cook until the meat is fully cooked, about 3-5 minutes. Drain the meat and season with salt and pepper.

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**COOK TIME** 50 MINUTES

- 2. Stir in the mustard and Worcestershire, then add just enough water to barely cover the meat.
- 3. Reduce to a simmer and cook until the water is absorbed, about 15-20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
- 4. Meanwhile, make a slurry with the flour and cream in a bowl. Pour into the skillet and simmer for about 3 minutes, until the mixture thickens. Set aside to cool, then add the cheese.
- 5. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 6. Unroll the dough on a surface lightly dusted with flour. Arrange the meat in the center, fold the dough to the center and press together to secure. Bake seam side down for 25 minutes.
- 7. Allow to cool for a few minutes, then cut into slices and serve with your favorite garnishes.

## CHILE BITE: SMOKY DOUBLE-PEPPER CHEESE CRISPS

This low-carb, gluten-free recipe has been floatin' around the the Internet, so we thought we'd put a little CP spin on it by doubling the peppers and the cheese. By the way, you can sub the second cheese with your fave, but you really need the Parmesan for the crispiness. Feel free to even add some crumbled bacon—*mmmm*.

**YIELD** 2 DOZEN  
**ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** 10-12 MINUTES

- 1 CUP SHREDDED PARMESAN
- 1/2 CUP SHREDDED SMOKED GOUDA
- 1 JALAPEÑO, THINLY SLICED
- 3 HABANEROS, THINLY SLICED

- 1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2. Spoon about 1 tablespoon Parmesan into a small mound on the parchment paper and top with about 1/2 tablespoon gouda. Repeat with the remaining cheese.
- 3. Place 1 slice jalapeño and habanero on top of each and press down to flatten a bit.
- 4. Bake for about 12 minutes or until golden brown and crispy. Allow to cool, then serve at room temperature.



## DECONSTRUCTED MEDITERRANEAN PORK PEPPER POPPERS

We took the three main components of jalapeño poppers—jalapeños, bacon and cream cheese—and deconstructed them to make this addictive, bite-sized app. Soak your toothpicks as the pork marinates so they won't flare up on the grill.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 40 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

- 2 TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
- 1 TABLESPOON RED WINE VINEGAR
- 1/2 LEMON, JUICED
- 3 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1/2 TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- 1/2 TEASPOON PAPRIKA
- 1/2 TEASPOON DRIED OREGANO
- 1/2 TEASPOON DRIED THYME
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 1/2 POUND PORK TENDERLOIN, CUT INTO 1-INCH CUBES
- 4 JALAPEÑOS, SEEDED AND CUT INTO 1-INCH CHUNKS
- 1/2 ONION, CUT INTO 1-INCH CHUNKS
- 4 OUNCES CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 6 BACON SLICES, CUT INTO THIRDS

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, spices, salt and pepper. Add the pork and stir to evenly coat. Marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat one side of the grill to medium-high and leave the other side off for indirect cooking.
3. Assemble the poppers by smearing cream cheese on 1 piece jalapeño. Add 1 piece pork and sandwich with 1 piece onion, then wrap the whole thing with 1 piece bacon. Secure with a soaked toothpick. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.
4. Grill the poppers over direct heat for about 5-6 minutes, turning them halfway through. Move to indirect heat and cook for another 8-10 minutes, until the pork and bacon are cooked. Serve hot.



## SPICY KOREAN RICE CAKES

There's nothing better than knocking back a couple of ice-cold beers while snacking on this popular Korean street dish. The rice cakes have a chewy bite, and are coated in a spicy and slightly sweet sauce; a shopping adventure to your local Korean market is definitely worth the trip for this recipe! The rice cakes can be found fresh or frozen, and the prepared fish cakes are usually in the refrigerated section.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

- 2 1/2 CUPS WATER
- 2 TABLESPOONS GOCHUJANG SAUCE
- 2 TABLESPOONS HONEY
- 1 TABLESPOON FISH SAUCE
- 1 POUND CYLINDRICAL RICE CAKES
- 1/2 POUND FISH CAKES, CUT INTO 3-INCH RECTANGLES
- 2SCALLIONS, CUT ON THE BIAS
- TOASTED SESAME SEEDS FOR GARNISH

1. In a skillet over medium-high, add the water, gochujang, honey and fish sauce. Stir to combine. Bring to a boil, then add the rice cakes.
2. Cook for 5-8 minutes, stirring often to prevent sticking as the sauce reduces and thickens. Add the fish cakes and toss to combine, cooking for another 2-3 minutes to warm through.
3. Remove from the heat. Garnish with the green onions and sesame seeds and serve hot.

## BEER-BRAISED BRISKET TACOS

In Mexico, it's traditional to braise a cut of meat called *suadero* in a liquid with a tomato and chipotle base; vinegar is added to help break down the meat and yield that melt-in-your-mouth texture. Since *suadero* might be difficult to find in the States, we've subbed with next best thing—brisket—and topped our tacos with the strawberry salsa on page 32.

**YIELD** 8 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 3 HOURS

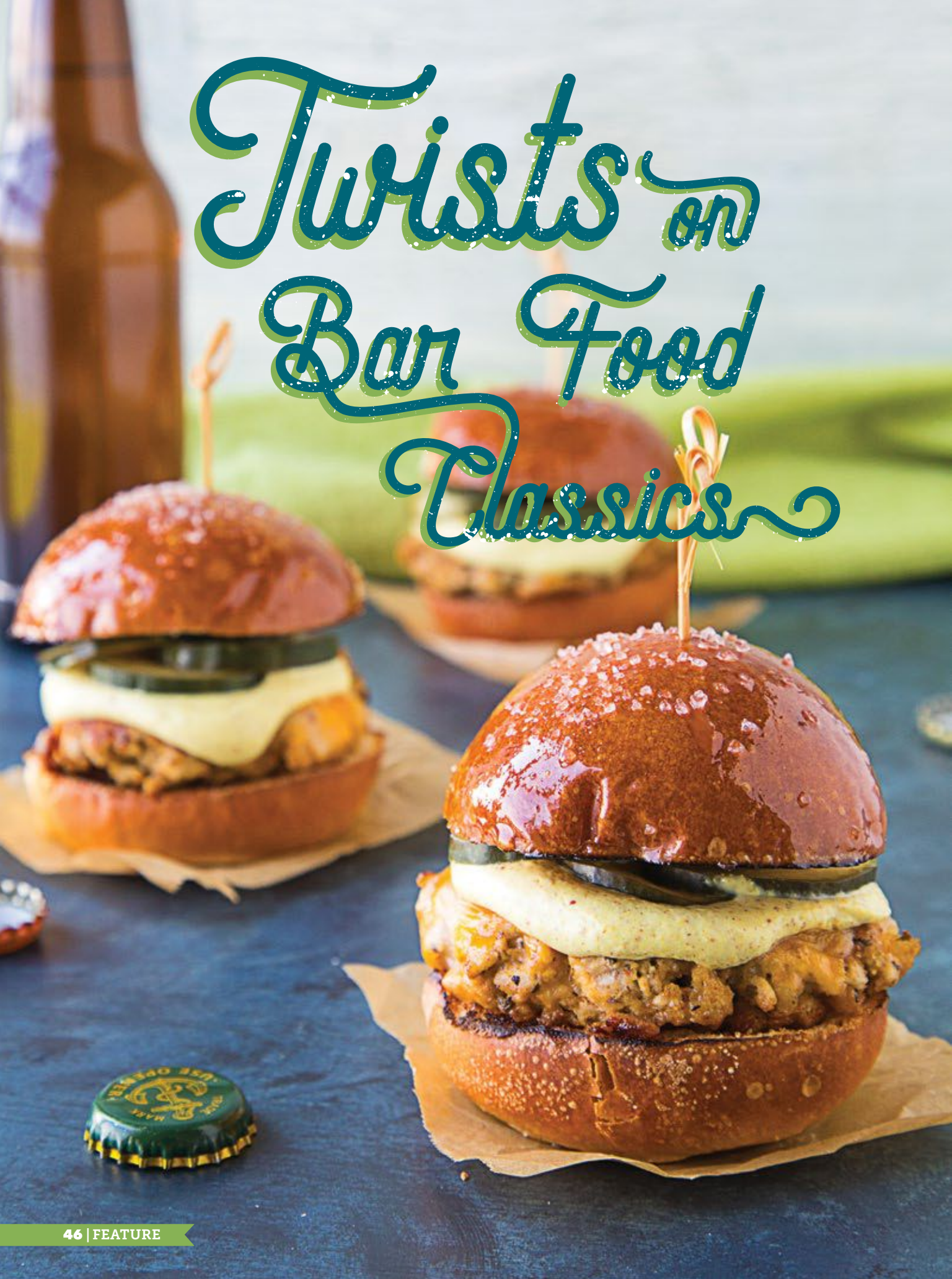
- 1/4** CUP VEGETABLE OIL
- 2** POUNDS BEEF BRISKET
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 1** ONION, DICED
- 4** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1** (10.75-OUNCE) CAN TOMATO PUREE
- 2** TABLESPOONS CHIPOTLES IN ADOBO, CHOPPED
- 2** TABLESPOONS CHILE POWDER
- 2** TEASPOONS GROUND CUMIN
- 1** TABLESPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- 1** BAY LEAF
- 1** (12-OUNCE) BOTTLE MEXICAN-STYLE BEER
- 1** TABLESPOON APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- CORN OR FLOUR TORTILLAS FOR SERVING
- YOUR FAVORITE TOPPINGS

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 325°F.
- 2.** Warm the oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high. Liberally season the brisket with salt and pepper. Brown the meat on all sides, about 10 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside.
- 3.** Reduce the heat to medium and add the onions and garlic. Cook for about 5 minutes, until the onions are just tender.
- 4.** Add the tomato puree, chipotles and sauce, chile powder, cumin, cayenne and bay leaf. Stir to combine and cook for 2 minutes.
- 5.** Stir in the beer and vinegar. Add the brisket, along with any juices, to the pot. Add water or stock, if needed to cover the meat and bring to a boil.
- 6.** Cover and bake for about 2½ hours or until tender. Shred the meat and return to the braising liquid.
- 7.** Serve hot with tortillas and your favorite toppings.



SUNDAY

# Twists on Bar Food Classics





# You've had them before, those ubiquitous kings of bar food—sliders, chicken wings, jalapeño poppers—but you haven't had them quite like this. Get ready for something new, and definitely for something spicy.

by Mike Hultquist • photos by Patty Hultquist

**I'M A TOTAL BAR GUY.** I love bars. I love craft beer, shooting pool and throwing darts, kicking back in the local townie joint and sipping collaborative ales made in local breweries. When I'm sitting on a bar stool, enjoying a rich and creamy stout or a fruity IPA, my mind inevitably turns to munchies.

I'm talking bar food, my friends. Peanuts and pretzel rods can only go so far, you know? Peruse any bar menu, and you're likely to find three of my favorite go-tos in the bar food world: sliders, chicken wings and jalapeño poppers. They're absolute classics.

Let's discuss sliders. It's hard to go wrong with these guys. They're

usually mini beef burgers topped with condiments and sliced pickles. I've enjoyed pork sliders made with pulled pork, too. While they're always a hit, I think we can change them up a little.

And then there are chicken wings. Entire chain restaurants exist around the concept of chicken wings, but most bars serve up their wings the same way. They're typically fried, sometimes double fried, and then tossed with a few splashes of buffalo sauce. I say we can do better.

Finally, we've come to the always-popular jalapeño popper. In most bars, an order of poppers means jalapeño peppers stuffed with cream cheese,

breaded and deep-fried. They're crazy good, but you know what? Our world is filled with ingredients, and what if you don't fancy them fried? I have some ideas.

This is why we're here, together, in this very moment. I've come to offer up a few ways to "twist" these bar food classics so you can make them at home. Your way. How about crispy baked wings, tossed with an ancho barbecue sauce? Or perhaps ground pork sliders topped with pickled cucumbers and mustard cream? Here are a few different recipes that will give the classics a run for their money. **CP**

## GROUND PORK SLIDERS WITH MUSTARD CREAM AND QUICK PICKLED CUCUMBERS

I like to grind pork shoulder at home for making these, though you can find ground pork at your local butcher or grocer. These sliders are lighter than you might think, thanks to the easy mustard cream. Pickled cucumbers add a welcome crunch factor.

**YIELD** 8 SLIDERS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD

**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

*For pickles:*

- 1** SMALL HOTHOUSE CUCUMBER, VERY THINLY SLICED
- 1** TABLESPOON SUGAR
- DASH SALT
- RICE WINE VINEGAR TO COVER

*For the mustard cream:*

- 1/4** CUP SPICY BROWN MUSTARD
- 1/4** CUP MEXICAN CREMA OR SOUR CREAM
- 1** TEASPOON HONEY
- DASH SALT

*For the sliders:*

- 1** POUND COARSELY GROUND PORK
- 1/4** CUP SPICY BROWN MUSTARD
- 1** TABLESPOON GROUND CAYENNE

- 1** TABLESPOON SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1** TABLESPOON DRIED BASIL
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 2** TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL PLUS MORE FOR FRYING
- 3** TABLESPOONS BREADCRUMBS PLUS MORE IF NEEDED
- 8** SMALL SLICES PEPPER JACK CHEESE
- 8** SLIDER BUNS, LIGHTLY TOASTED

- 1.** Make the pickles: Add the cucumbers to a pot and cover with vinegar. Add the sugar and salt, decrease the heat to low and let dissolve. Remove from the heat and cool.
- 2.** Make the mustard cream: Whisk together all the ingredients in a bowl.
- 3.** Make the sliders: In a mixing bowl,

- add the pork, mustard, cayenne, paprika, basil, salt, pepper, oil and breadcrumbs. Hand-mix, but don't overmix; add more breadcrumbs if needed.
- 4.** Form the mixture into 8 patties roughly the width of your buns. They will shrink a bit when cooked.
  - 5.** Warm some olive oil in a grill pan over medium and cook, about 3–4 minutes per side, or until cooked through.
  - 6.** Top with the cheese and cover. Cook for 1 minute to allow the cheese to melt. Set aside.
  - 7.** Serve the sliders on toasted buns topped with mustard cream and pickles.

## BUFFALO BLUE CHEESE CHICKEN SLIDERS

We're taking several traditional chicken wing flavors and incorporating them into a slider that will definitely satisfy your bar food cravings.

**YIELD** 8 SLIDERS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

- 1** POUND GROUND CHICKEN
- 4** SERRANOS, MINCED
- 1/2** CUP CRUMBLLED BLUE CHEESE PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 1/4** CUP BUFFALO SAUCE PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH
- 1** TABLESPOON SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1** TABLESPOON GARLIC POWDER
- 2** TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL PLUS MORE FOR FRYING
- 3** TABLESPOONS BREADCRUMBS PLUS MORE IF NEEDED
- 8** SLIDER BUNS, LIGHTLY TOASTED

LEAFY LETTUCE FOR SERVING

- 1.** Add the chicken, serranos, blue cheese, buffalo sauce, paprika, garlic, oil and breadcrumbs to a mixing bowl. Hand-mix, but don't overmix. If the mixture doesn't stick together enough, add more breadcrumbs.
- 2.** Form the mixture into 8 patties roughly the width of your buns. They will shrink a bit when cooked.
- 3.** Warm some olive oil in a grill pan over medium and cook the sliders, about 3-4 minutes per side, or until cooked through.
- 4.** Serve the sliders on toasted buns with lettuce, topped with buffalo sauce and extra blue cheese crumbles.



## CANDIED-BACON JALAPEÑO POPPERS

Candied bacon is a thing—and it's here to stay. Every time I serve it, everyone has the same reaction: "Where has this been all my life?" It's a great way to add a wow factor to your traditional bacon-wrapped poppers. Use milder pepper flakes if you'd prefer a bit less heat.

**YIELD** 16 POPPERS

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT

**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 30 MINUTES

- 8** JALAPEÑOS
- 8** OUNCES CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 3** TABLESPOONS HONEY, DIVIDED
- 2** TABLESPOONS GHOST PEPPER FLAKES, DIVIDED
- 2** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 2** TABLESPOONS BROWN SUGAR
- 16** SLICES BACON

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 2.** Slice the jalapeños in half lengthwise and scoop out the insides with a spoon. Set onto a greased baking dish.
- 3.** Add the cream cheese to a bowl and mix in the honey, 1 tablespoon pepper flakes, garlic, salt and pepper.
- 4.** Fill each jalapeño with the mixture.
- 5.** Mix the remaining honey and pepper flakes with the brown sugar in a bowl. Rub each bacon slice with this mixture. Get both sides nicely coated.
- 6.** Wrap each stuffed jalapeño with 1 slice bacon. Pierce with toothpicks to hold the bacon, if desired.
- 7.** Bake the poppers, about 20-30 minutes, or until the peppers soften and the bacon starts to get crispy. Place under the broiler for a few minutes if desired.
- 8.** Remove from the heat, cool slightly and serve.

## ANCHO BBQ CHICKEN WINGS

A local bar near me makes a version of these. I visit there just for the wings. Here's my version made with a homemade ancho barbecue sauce that's smoky and a tad sweet. The ranch dressing is not a requirement, but it's a nice finisher.

**YIELD** 2 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD

**PREP TIME** 40 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 60 MINUTES

*For the sauce:*

- 2** ANCHOS
- 1** TEASPOON VEGETABLE OIL
- 1/2** SMALL YELLOW ONION, CHOPPED
- 1** GARLIC CLOVE, MINCED
- 2** OUNCES TOMATO PASTE
- 2** TABLESPOONS APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- 2** TABLESPOONS LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
- 2** TABLESPOONS WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
- 1** TEASPOON MOLASSES
- 1/2** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- 1/2** TEASPOON PAPRIKA
- DASH CUMIN
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

*For the wings:*

- 2** POUNDS CHICKEN WINGS, SEPARATED AND WING TIPS REMOVED
- 1** TABLESPOON GARLIC POWDER
- 1** TABLESPOON GROUND CAYENNE
- 1** TABLESPOON PAPRIKA
- 1** TABLESPOON BAKING POWDER

- 1** TEASPOON SALT
- YOUR FAVORITE HERBS FOR GARNISH
- RANCH DRESSING FOR SERVING

- 1.** Make the sauce: Dry-roast the peppers in a hot pan, about 1-2 minutes per side. The peppers will puff slightly and the skins will begin to turn red. Place in a large pot of boiling water and remove from the heat. Let soak for 30 minutes.
- 2.** Remove the anchos from the pot, reserving the soaking liquid. When cool enough to handle, stem and coarsely chop the flesh. Place in a food processor.
- 3.** Warm the oil in a pan over medium and sauté the onions, about 3-4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook another minute or so, until fragrant. Add the mixture to the food processor.
- 4.** Add the remaining ingredients along with about 1-2 tablespoons soaking

- liquid to the processor and puree. Add more soaking liquid if necessary to achieve your desired consistency.
- 5.** Season with salt and pepper, then press the sauce through a coarse strainer into a bowl.
  - 6.** Make the wings: Pat dry, then place in a large bowl. Add the garlic, cayenne, paprika and baking powder. Toss to coat.
  - 7.** Preheat the oven to 250°F. Set the wings on a greased baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes. Flip the wings.
  - 8.** Increase the heat to 425°F and bake another 30 minutes, or until cooked through and crispy. Place under the broiler for a few minutes if you like 'em extra crispy.
  - 9.** Toss with the barbecue sauce, garnish with your favorite herbs and serve drizzled with ranch dressing.





## STICKY HABANERO GLAZED CHICKEN WINGS

Pepper jam is the not-so-secret ingredient in making sticky, slightly spicy chicken wings. I used a homemade pineapple-habanero jam for this recipe, though you can easily vary it to suit your own tastes. Just don't forget the chopped habaneros. The sweet counterbalances the habanero heat, but it's still plenty spicy.

**YIELD** 2 SERVINGS  
**PREP TIME** 15 MINUTES

- 2** POUNDS CHICKEN WINGS, SEPARATED AND WING TIPS REMOVED
  - 1** TABLESPOON BAKING POWDER
  - 1** TEASPOON GARLIC POWDER
  - 1** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
  - 1** TEASPOON MUSTARD POWDER
  - 1** TEASPOON DRIED BASIL
  - 1** TEASPOON CELERY SALT
  - 1** TEASPOON SALT
  - 1** TEASPOON PEPPER
  - 1** CUP PEPPER JAM
  - 1** TABLESPOON AGAVE NECTAR
  - 1** TABLESPOON BUTTER
  - 3** HABANEROS, MINCED AND DIVIDED
- DASH SALT

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**COOK TIME** 60 MINUTES

- 1.** Make the wings: Pat dry, then add to a large bowl. Add the baking powder and seasonings and toss to coat.
- 2.** Preheat the oven to 250°F. Set the wings on a greased baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes. Flip the wings.
- 3.** Increase the heat to 425°F and bake for 30 minutes, or until cooked through and crispy. Place under the broiler for a few minutes if you like things extra crispy.
- 4.** When the wings are nearly done, warm the pepper jam, agave nectar, butter, 2 habaneros and salt in a small pot, just until it becomes easy to pour.
- 5.** Add the wings to a large bowl and pour in the jam mixture. Toss to coat.
- 6.** Top with the remaining habanero and serve.

## SHRIMP AND GOAT CHEESE JALAPEÑO POPPERS

Goat cheese is as creamy as cream cheese and has a distinctive flavor that rocks these poppers. They say seafood and cheese don't mix, but these poppers will turn that adage on its head.

**YIELD** 20 POPPERS  
**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** 30 MINUTES

- 10** JALAPEÑOS (OR AS MANY AS YOU CAN FILL)
  - 1** TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL PLUS MORE AS NEEDED
  - ½** POUND SHRIMP, PEELED AND DEVEINED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 6** OUNCES GOAT CHEESE
  - ½** CUP SHREDDED PARMESAN
  - 2** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
  - 1** TABLESPOON HERBS DE PROVENCE PLUS MORE FOR SERVING

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 2.** Slice the jalapeños in half lengthwise and scoop out the insides with a spoon. Set onto a greased baking dish.
- 3.** Warm 1 tablespoon olive oil in a small pan. Season the shrimp with salt and pepper and cook for a few minutes per side, until cooked through and no longer pink. Cool slightly and roughly chop. Add to a mixing bowl.
- 4.** Mix in the goat cheese, Parmesan, garlic and herbs de Provence.
- 5.** Fill each jalapeño with the shrimp mixture. You might have some leftover, depending on the size of your peppers—just distribute evenly.
- 6.** Bake the poppers, about 20–30 minutes, or until the peppers soften and the cheese is bubbly.
- 7.** Remove from the heat and cool slightly. Dust with extra dried herbs and serve.



*Mike Hultquist runs the spicy food blog Chili Pepper Madness ([chilipeppermadness.com](http://chilipeppermadness.com)) with his wife, Patty. He's a chilehead who loves chiles of all types, from the mildest of the mild to the hottest of the superhots. He has written several chile-themed cookbooks, and is also a published fiction author and produced screenwriter.*

# Drinking It All In



On the heels of his fourth season, Jack Maxwell, the host of the Travel Channel's *Booze Traveler*, reveals the real reason he has the coolest job in the world. Hint: The booze is just the tipping point.

by Rima Jean

**IMAGINE IF YOUR JOB WERE TO TRAVEL THE WORLD AND SAMPLE A VAST ARRAY OF BEERS, WINES, COCKTAILS AND LIQUORS FROM EVERY CULTURE.** Meet Jack Maxwell, the host of the Travel Channel's show *Booze Traveler*, who quite possibly has the most enviable job on the planet. The fourth season of the show, which will follow Maxwell as he explores the globe's different cultures through their libations, is slated to premier in late 2017, with 16 new one-hour episodes in exotic locations that include Costa Rica and Norway.

Anyone who has seen the show knows Maxwell is utterly likeable—his friendly, gregarious nature and warm smile is enough to put anyone at ease. His self-deprecating humor is just one more quality that makes *Booze Traveler* compulsively watchable. "Did you know I came up with that

name?" he asks proudly. "Only reason I say that is because it's all I came up with. I didn't create the show, I just auditioned for it." After shooting the pilot, the producers asked Maxwell to come up with a name for the show, which he did—brilliantly. "My mom wanted me to suggest 'Jack On the Rocks,' but I said, 'That sounds like I'm down-and-out, Ma! How about something more positive?'"

Maxwell's unique personal history makes

him the perfect candidate to host a show about booze and how people around the world have used it to express themselves, come together and unwind. "I grew up very poor in the

**"It's a magical thing," Maxwell says, "getting together with friends, having a couple drinks and telling stories."**

projects of South Boston, with no father around, and my mother working a menial job. When I was eight or nine, I wanted to help out and make my own money, so I asked for a shoe-shine box for Christmas. I started

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** MAXWELL RELAXES WITH A COCKTAIL IN MAUI. **BELOW:** POSING WITH GHOST CATCHERS OF TAIWAN



**"If I go to a culture and they're going to share themselves with me—offer me the drinks they share with their own friends and family—I'm not going to thumb my nose at that."**

hitting the pubs along Broadway, just shining shoes." Young Maxwell was regaled with stories of travel and adventure by bar patrons as he shined their shoes. Some were more intoxicated than others, but all revealed a universal truth: "It's a magical thing," Maxwell says, "getting together with friends, having a couple drinks and telling stories."

It's clear that Maxwell is doing what he loves—and doing it with panache. When asked to share the craziest alcoholic drinks he's ever sampled, he replies, "Well, I'll run a few by you, and you decide." His words that follow definitely don't sound like they belong together: "Blended frog and moonshine in Peru, cow's blood and honey wine in Tanzania, cow urine in India..." He winces. "I wasn't

crazy about the cow urine. It tasted the way I expected it would."

Maxwell revels in telling the stories of his adventures, and his excitement echoes in his voice. "In Cambodia they make this tarantula venom wine. They put the tarantulas in a bottle of rice wine, and when they serve it, you get one in your glass. So when you tip your glass up, the tarantula falls on your face." He chuckles. "It's creepy, even though it's dead."

As it turns out, Maxwell has never turned down any drink, because, as he explains, "if I go to a culture and they're going to share themselves with me—offer me the drinks they share with their own friends and family—I'm not going to thumb my nose at that." The best part of his job, he says, is getting to experience the

**BELOW, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:**

MAKING FRIENDS WITH A SLOTH;  
DRINKING CHICAMEL, A HONEY  
AND CORN LIQUOR; WALKING A  
TREACHEROUS BROKEN BRIDGE  
IN COSTA RICA

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** ENJOYING A  
BOAT RIDE IN BERGEN, NORWAY





culture and people. "The drinks just get you into the scene."

And about those hangovers..."it happens," Maxwell concedes. "I drink a lot of water throughout the night if I'm going to have cocktails. Then I eat a fatty breakfast, and if I can find it, a nice, icy-cold glass of freshly squeezed orange juice. That always does the trick."

Even with all the hard liquor he's kicked back, Maxwell is a self-professed cocktail lover. His favorite spicy cocktail is the Bloody Bertha, and can only be found at the Blue Anchor Pub in Delray Beach, FL. The drink is named after Bertha Starkey, a young patron who was stabbed to death at the bar by her jealous husband when he discovered her with another man, and whose ghost is rumored to still haunt the bar today. While Maxwell himself never had any run-ins with Bertha's ghost, he did fall in love with her namesake sip. "It's hot, and I love it!" *Chile Pepper's* adaptation of the recipe, based on Maxwell's anecdote, can be found below, along with his version of the Paloma, another of his favorites.

To catch Jack Maxwell in the next season of *Booze Traveler*, visit [travelchannel.com](http://travelchannel.com) for the program guide. **CP**



### CHILE PEPPER'S BLOODY BERTHA

Our take on Maxwell's spicy favorite.

**YIELD** 1 SERVING  
**ZEST FACTOR** HOT  
**PREP TIME** 2 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** NONE

**2 1/4** OUNCES VODKA  
**1** CUPS TOMATO JUICE  
**1** TEASPOON PREPARED HORSERADISH  
**1** TEASPOON ENGLISH MUSTARD  
**1/3** TEASPOON JALAPEÑO JUICE  
**1/4** TEASPOON HOT SAUCE  
**1** TEASPOON WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE  
SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE  
LIME SLICES AND/OR CELERY STALKS FOR GARNISH

Combine all the ingredients except the garnishes in a shaker. Serve over ice, garnished with lime slices and celery.



### CHILE PEPPER'S PALOMA

This citrusy sip is refreshing and Maxwell-approved.

**YIELD** 1 SERVING  
**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**PREP TIME** 2 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME** NONE

CHILE POWDER, SALT AND LIME FOR RIMMING  
**2** OUNCES TEQUILA  
**1/4** CUP GRAPEFRUIT JUICE  
**1** TABLESPOON AGAVE NECTAR  
**1** TABLESPOON LIME JUICE  
**1/4** CUP GRAPEFRUIT SODA

1. Rim a glass with the chile powder, salt and lime. Fill with ice and set aside.
2. Combine the remaining ingredients in a shaker and pour over the ice.



Italy lays claim to countless varieties of the peperoncini. Learn more about some of our favorites, plus how you can integrate them in your own kitchen.

by Dave DeWitt and Harald Zoschke

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**JUST LIKE CORN AND TOMATOES, CHILE PEPPERS WERE UNKNOWN IN ITALY BEFORE COLUMBUS' DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD IN 1492.** Picture Italian cuisine without tomato sauce, polenta, risotto and *peperoncino*.

That all changed in the 16th century, when trade ships distributed the New World goodies across the globe. At first, hot peppers were considered poisonous because they're recognized as nightshades by some, but soon they became the spice of choice, especially in the Calabria, Puglia and Basilicata regions, as well as in Sicily. Why particularly in the south? One reason could be because of the antibacterial properties of the fiery fruit, which proved to be quite helpful in a hot climate without refrigeration back then. For example, there's a lot of *peperoncino piccante* in 'Nduja, the traditional Calabrian spreadable sausage.

Despite the fire that came with the hot pods, peperoncini were and are still mostly used with moderation in traditional Italian cuisine; flavor is considered more important than heat.

Similar to Mexico and New Mexico, chiles, both mild and hot, are tied to *trecce* (ristras) and air-dried in Italy. The mild dried *peperone* are fried crispy in olive oil (*peperoni cruschi*, pronounced "kruushki") to create a tasty appetizer. The hot ones are used for pepper flakes and for powder (*peperoncino macinato*).

Today there are endless varieties of peperoncini in Italy, as well as the mild relatives derived from them, the peperoni. The names given to them are also numerous, and vary from region to region. They're all of the *capsicum annum* species. But with the many chileheads in Italy these days, "international" chiles like the jalapeño, habanero or even Carolina Reaper can also be found throughout the country. In fact, many Italian interest groups, on Facebook as well as in real life, enjoy growing and consuming peppers from all over the world.

The following index and spicy recipes cover some of our favorite Italian peppers. Can't find the peperoncini? Check out our ideas for substitutes. **CP**

PHOTOS BY HARALD ZOSCHKE

# GET PEPPERED WITH THE PEPERONCINI



Diamante, a small town on the Calabrian west coast, became the European headquarters of heat. Since 1992, the annual Peperoncino Festival is held there in September, attracting tens of thousands of visitors. And the neighboring village of Maierà hosts the Museo del Peperoncino, a rather unique museum for everything chile peppers—a must-see when traveling the region. Both are organized by the Accademia Italiana del Peperoncino, also headquartered in Diamante. What follows is an index of the Italian peperoncini we're focusing on in the recipes that follow, along with U.S./Canadian substitutes.

**A. DIAVOLICCHIO** (Calabria): The name translates to "little devil," and with up to 100,000 Scoville Heat Units (SHU), the burn of these red little bullets is diabolical indeed. The thin-fleshed fruit dries well, even on the bush. The ½-inch long fruit can be consumed fresh, dried or cooked. We love the flakes—they're great on pizza and for a speedy *spaghetti aglio, olio e peperoncino*. Diavolicchio is highly prolific—our supply from just one plant lasted three years! Diavolicchio is most likely the hottest Calabrian chile. Substitutes: pequin or chiltepin.

**B. PEPERONCINO A MAZZETTO** (Sicily): "Mazzetto" means bouquet, and these attractive hot chiles grow like bunches of flowers. They're found in the Mount Etna area of Sicily, but also in Southern Calabria. With just around 25,000 SHU, these flavorful bundles of joy can spice up many dishes. The pointy pods are about 2 inches in length, and they mature to a bright red. If you can find seeds for Peperoncino a Mazzetto, this is also a great ornamental plant that does well in containers. Substitutes: NuMex Mirasol, thin-fleshed cayenne (milder), Santaka (hotter).

**C. TONDO** (Calabria): Tondo is the Italian version of the hot cherry pepper. They're mostly around 5,000 SHU, but there are some strains that reach 20,000 SHU—basically the range of jalapeños. The round pods are used almost solely for stuffing, often with porcini mushrooms or tuna. Packed in olive oil, they make a great appetizer and are often sold as such in Italian stores. The pods mature to red with a diameter of about 2.5 inches. The seeds and inner walls are easily removed with an apple corer. Substitutes: hot cherry, cherry bomb.

**D. FRIGGITELLO** (Campania): The famous Italian frying pepper has no heat, but like many New Mexican green chiles it has great flavor and is so versatile. Friggitelli originated in Campania, the region around Naples, but the pods, harvested green, are available throughout Italy almost year-round. There are various cultivars that differ in pod size (4 to 5 inches) in shades of green and various flavors. The rather thin-fleshed pods have a softer skin than New Mexican chiles and can be seared without peeling. They're also great stuffed, grilled, in stews or frittatas and for pasta sauces. If allowed to mature on the plant, Friggitelli turn red, become sweeter, and can even be smoked on the grill to make "Friggipotle." Substitutes: Pimientos de Padron, shishito, mild New Mexican green chile.

**E. CORNO DI BUE** (Piedmont): Various Italian regions from north to south came up with mild pepper varieties of the horn-shaped "corno" type. A famous one is Corno di Bue (ox horn) from Carmagnola in the northern region of Piedmont. Available red or yellow, these thick-fleshed sweet peppers grow over 8 inches in length. They're delicious cut up raw for salads, but can also be grilled or stuffed. Traditional recipes include pasta dishes, *peperonata* (stewed peppers, onions and tomatoes), risotto (with chopped or pureed peppers), and pods stuffed with cheese, meat or vegetarian filling, cooked in the oven (*al forno*). If you grow corno peppers in your yard, be sure to use some bamboo sticks to support the weight of the pods. Substitutes: corno di toro, carmen, cubanelle, gypsy, bell pepper.



## FIERY CHEESE LOLLIPOPS

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An interesting party appetizer that may leave some guests speechless, these lollipops can be prepared quickly and easily in the oven. A fresh (young) hard cheese works best; you'll need wooden skewers.

**YIELD** 6 LOLLIPOPS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 30 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 5-8 MINUTES

*For the Calabrian version:*

- 1** OUNCE PARMIGIANO REGGIANO OR GRANA PADANO, GRATED
- 2** TEASPOONS DIAVOLICCHIO FLAKES (SEE SUBSTITUTES)
- 1** TEASPOON DRIED OREGANO

*For the Yucatan version:*

- 1** OUNCE PARMIGIANO REGGIANO OR GRANA PADANO, GRATED
- 1** TEASPOON HABANERO FLAKES
- 1** TEASPOON ORANGE OR LEMON ZEST

- 1.** Soak flat wooden skewers in water for about 30 minutes.
- 2.** Preheat the oven to 400 °F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 3.** In a bowl, mix the cheese with either the Calabrian or Yucatan ingredients. Place about 1 heaping tablespoon of the mixture on the baking sheet, repeating with the remaining ingredients and generously spacing the heaps.
- 4.** Dry the skewers and insert one end into the center of the cheese heaps. Flatten the heaps, covering the skewer end.
- 5.** Bake for about 5-8 minutes, until the cheese melts and golden brown.
- 6.** Let the lollipops cool on the baking sheet, then remove carefully. Serve, either by sticking the skewers into half a melon or arranging them in a glass.

## PENNE PASTA WITH FRIGGITELLI AND TOMATOES

*Friggitelli* are the classic Italian frying peppers. They make a great speedy dish when combined with cherry tomatoes, anchovy fillets and penne pasta. Since these don't have heat, we're kicking things up with hot pepper flakes. If you don't like anchovies or would like to keep the dish vegetarian, just use one tablespoon rinsed salted capers instead.

**YIELD** 3 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 5 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 20-25 MINUTES

- 4 TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
  - 1 TEASPOON HOT PEPPERONCINO FLAKES
  - 1 GARLIC CLOVE, MINCED
  - 2 ANCHOVY FILLETS IN OIL, DRAINED AND DICED
  - 12 CHERRY TOMATOES, HALVED
  - 4 FRIGGITELLOS, SEEDS AND MEMBRANES REMOVED AND SLICED INTO RINGS (SEE SUBSTITUTES)
  - 9 OUNCES PENNE OR CAVATAPPI, UNCOOKED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE  
GRATED PARMESAN FOR GARNISH (OPTIONAL)

1. Warm the oil in a nonstick pan and sauté the peppers for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the pepper flakes, garlic and anchovies. Sauté for 2-3 minutes, then add the tomatoes.
3. Cook the pasta until al dente per package instructions, then drain.
4. Add the hot pasta to the pan with the pepper mixture, mix well and let sit for about 1-2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve hot, sprinkled with Parmesan if desired.



## GNOCCHETTI SABBIA D'ORO

Gnocchi are small Italian dumplings, and gnocchetti are an even smaller version. Spicy gnocchetti are a specialty at the Sabbia d'Oro restaurant in Diamante, Calabria. The little dumplings are served in a spicy sauce with peperoncini, shrimp and fresh herbs. At the restaurant, they're made by hand, but you can easily find them in the refrigerated section at your local Italian market.

If you'd like to make your own, prepare a dough out of four parts cooked potatoes, one part flour and some water as needed. Form little balls of about a half-inch in diameter, cook in boiling salted water, and after rising to the surface, simmer for 2-3 minutes. Remove carefully with a slotted spoon to drain.

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 5 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 10 MINUTES

- 5 TABLESPOON EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
  - 2 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
  - 1 CUP SMALL SHRIMP, PEELED
  - 2 LARGE ARUGULA LEAVES, COARSELY CHOPPED
  - 2 LARGE RADICCHIO LEAVES, COARSELY CHOPPED
  - 2-3 FRESH PEPPERONCINI LIKE PEPPERONCINO A MAZZETTO (SEE SUBSTITUTES)
  - 12 CHERRY TOMATOES, COARSELY CHOPPED
- SALT TO TASTE  
STORE-BOUGHT GNOCCHETTI

1. Warm the olive oil in a pan over medium, then add the garlic and sauté until lightly fragrant. Add the shrimp, arugula, radicchio, peppers, tomatoes and salt and sauté for about 3-5 minutes.
2. In a separate pot, cook the gnocchetti for about 3 minutes (or according to package instructions).
3. Drain the gnocchetti, mix with the sautéed mixture and serve.





## GRILLED CORNO PEPPERS WITH MEDITERRANEAN STUFFING

A quick grilled dish if you happen to have leftover barbecue or rotisserie chicken.

**YIELD** 2-4 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** VARIES

**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

- 2** COOKED CHICKEN THIGHS (E.G., GRILLED OR ROTISSERIE)
- 1** (4-OUNCE) BALL FRESH MOZZARELLA, CUT INTO ¼-INCH CUBES
- 2** TABLESPOONS CHOPPED ROSEMARY
- 1-2** TEASPOONS PEPERONCINO FLAKES
- ITALIAN SEASONING TO TASTE (LIKE HARALD'S ITALIAN SEASONING RECIPE ON PAGE 61)
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 4** CORNOS
- COOKED SPAGHETTI, OLIVE OIL, OLIVES AND CAPERS FOR SERVING

- 1.** Remove the skin and debone the chicken thighs, then cut into small cubes. In a bowl, combine the chicken, cheese, rosemary, seasoning, salt and pepper. Set aside.
- 2.** Place the peppers in a pot of boiling water for about 1 minute, remove, rinse with ice water and dry well.

- 3.** Preheat the grill for medium or indirect heat.
- 4.** Place the peppers on a working surface. Cut a slit in each, leaving about an inch near the stem. Using your fingers, carefully spread the slit. Remove the membranes and seeds with a small spoon and fork. (Do not cut through the outer wall on the other side!)
- 5.** Using the fork or spoon, fill the peppers with the stuffing, leaving some headspace.
- 6.** Brush the stuffed peppers lightly with oil and grill with lid on for about 15-20 minutes, checking every so often, until the peppers are cooked, lightly browned and the stuffing is bubbling. Carefully remove from the grill.
- 7.** Serve immediately on a bed of spaghetti cooked al dente, drizzled with olive oil and garnish with olives and capers.

## TUNA-STUFFED CHERRY PEPPERS

Tondo (round) or cherry peppers are a popular antipasto in Italy, often stuffed with tuna, spiced with capers and sometimes with anchovy fillets. They keep covered and refrigerated a few days, so you can make them a day ahead for a brunch buffet or party.

Should your peppers be too mild, add a teaspoon of peperoncino flakes to the tuna stuffing. Attention chile gardeners: There are seeds available for yellow cherry peppers; when mixed with red ones, they become a real eye-catcher at the buffet.

**YIELD** 12 PEPPERS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD-MEDIUM, DEPENDING ON THE VARIETY

**PREP TIME** 3½ HOURS

**COOK TIME** 8 MINUTES

*For the chiles:*

- 1 CUP WHITE WINE
- 2 BAY LEAVES
- 1 TEASPOON BLACK PEPPERCORNS
- 1 ROSEMARY TWIG
- 12 TONDOS, STEMMED, SEEDED AND MEMBRANES REMOVED (SEE SUBSTITUTES)

*For the filling:*

- 1 (5-OUNCE) CAN TUNA IN OLIVE OIL, DRAINED
  - 1 TABLESPOON CAPERS IN SALT, RINSED AND DRAINED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE  
OLIVE OIL IF NEEDED

1. Make the chiles: Combine the white wine, bay leaves, peppercorns and rosemary in a pot and bring to a boil. Let simmer for a few minutes to let the aromas unfold.
2. Submerge the peppers in the liquid. Simmer for 4–5 minutes, then remove with tongs. Place upside down on paper towels and let dry for 2–3 hours.
3. Make the filling: Shred the tuna well with two forks in a bowl. Finely chop the capers, then mix with the tuna, salt and pepper. (You can add some olive oil if the mixture seems dry.)
4. Stuff the peppers with the filling using a teaspoon. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving.



## Peperoncini vs. Peperoni

In Italy, hot peppers are called peperoncini (singular: peperoncino). This is the diminutive form of peperone, standing for sweet capsicum, like bell peppers. Peperoni, though, is an American type of salami made from cured pork and beef that's seasoned with paprika.

## HARALD'S ITALIAN SEASONING

Here's a spice mix that will add that "Bella Italia" feeling to your dishes—use it in pasta sauces, or on veggies, pizza, grilled fish or fresh cheese, or to flavor sundried tomatoes. When properly stored, the spice mix keeps for at least six months. The seasoning will be particularly aromatic if you grind the cumin, cloves and coriander seeds fresh. We bought a cheap electric coffee grinder just for that.

**YIELD** ½ CUP

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 2 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** NONE

- 2 TABLESPOONS PEPERONCINO POWDER ("MACINATO") OR HOT RED NEW MEXICAN POWDER
- 2 TABLESPOONS DRIED OREGANO
- 1 TABLESPOON DRIED THYME
- 1 TABLESPOON DRIED BASIL
- 1 TABLESPOON DRIED ROSEMARY
- 2 TEASPOONS GRANULATED GARLIC
- 1 TEASPOON GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 1 TEASPOON GROUND CUMIN
- 1 TEASPOON GROUND FENNEL SEEDS
- 1 TEASPOON SALT

Combine all ingredients in an airtight container. Store in a cool, dark place.



# NA-CHO AVERAGE NACHOS



# Forget chips and dips—these loaded triangles are what app dreams are made of!

by the Chile Pepper staff

## FRIED OYSTER NACHOS

These fancy, special-occasion nachos are more like hors d'oeuvres. Although they require a few components and some assembly, the end result makes the extra work more than worth it!

**YIELD** 4-6 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 30 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

*For the tartar sauce:*

**1/2** CUP PREPARED TARTAR SAUCE  
**2** CHIPOTLES IN ADOBO  
**1/2** LEMON, JUICED

*For the oysters:*

VEGETABLE OIL FOR FRYING  
**2** DOZEN SHUCKED OYSTERS  
**1 1/2** CUPS BUTTERMILK  
**2** CUPS CORNMEAL  
**2** CUPS CORNSTARCH  
**2 1/2** TEASPOONS PAPRIKA  
**2 1/2** TEASPOONS CHIPOTLE POWDER  
SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

*For the nachos:*

**2** DOZEN TORTILLA CHIPS  
**1** CUP PICO DE GALLO (SEE RECIPE AT RIGHT)

1. Make the tartar sauce: Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and puree with an immersion blender. Set aside in the fridge.
2. Make the oysters: In a high-walled pot or deep fryer, preheat the oil to 375°F.
3. Place the oysters in a bowl and add the buttermilk. Soak for 10-15 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the remaining ingredients on a shallow plate.
4. Dredge the oysters in the cornmeal mixture and fry in batches until golden brown, about 2-3 minutes. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate.
5. Assemble the nachos: Spread tartar sauce on each tortilla chip. Add the pico de gallo and top each with a fried oyster. Serve warm.

## CHILE BITE:

### EASY CHILE LIME TORTILLA CHIPS

Frying your own chips from corn tortillas is simple, and that's good news if you prefer a chip with more body for piling on nacho goodness. Our chile-lime seasoning gives the chips some extra oomph.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 10-15 MINUTES

*For the seasoning:*

**2** TEASPOONS CHILE POWDER  
**1** LIME, ZESTED  
**1/2** TEASPOON SALT  
**1/4** TEASPOON ONION POWDER  
**1/4** TEASPOON GARLIC POWDER

*For the chips:*

VEGETABLE OIL FOR FRYING  
**12** CORN TORTILLAS

1. Make the seasoning: Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Make the chips: In a high-walled pot or deep fryer, preheat the oil to 375°F.
3. Cut each tortilla into 6 wedges. When the oil is hot, fry the chips in batches until golden brown, about 2-4 minutes. Drain on a paper towel-lined tray. Sprinkle with the seasoning. Repeat with the remaining chips and seasoning. Cool before serving.

## CHILE BITE:

### GARLICKY PICO DE GALLO

Here's a simple pico de gallo recipe we developed in the test kitchen for garlic lovers. Red onions instead of the usual yellow or white varieties add a little more kick. This can be made ahead of time, and makes enough for use in a few of the following nacho recipes. If you prefer more heat, simply swap the serrano for something hotter, say a habanero.

**YIELD** 2 1/2 CUPS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 1 HOUR      **COOK TIME** NONE

**1** MEDIUM RED ONION, DICED  
**2** ROMA TOMATOES, DICED  
**2** SERRANOS, SEEDED AND DICED  
**3** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED  
**1/2** CUP CHOPPED CILANTRO  
**1 1/2** LIMES, JUICED  
SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

Combine all the ingredients in a nonreactive mixing bowl and cover. Chill for 1 hour before using.



## BEEFY CHORIZO NACHOS

Most people think of gooey, melted cheese when they think of nachos, so you can't go wrong with this version at the next tailgating party. Serve these nachos with the cheese and meat piled on top of the chips, or make a layered dip with the meat on the bottom, cheese in the middle and our chunky guac on top. Either way, it's a win!

**YIELD** 4-6 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

### For the guacamole:

- 1** LARGE AVOCADO, DICED
- 1** CUP PICO DE GALLO (SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 63)

### For the beef:

- 1** TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL
- 1/2** ONION, DICED
- 1** POUND GROUND BEEF
- 1/2** PACKET HOT TACO SEASONING
- 1** (8-OUNCE) PACKAGE MEXICAN CHORIZO

### For the nachos:

- 16** OUNCES VELVEETA CHEESE, CUBED
- 1** (15-OUNCE) CAN HOT DICED TOMATOES AND HABANEROS
- 2** CUPS SHREDDED JACK CHEESE
- 1 1/2** CUPS MILK
- TORTILLA CHIPS AS NEEDED
- 2** CUPS SHREDDED ROMAINE LETTUCE
- 2** GREEN ONIONS, SLICED
- SOUR CREAM OR MEXICAN CREMA FOR SERVING

- 1.** Make the guacamole: Combine the avocado and pico de gallo mixture in a bowl. (If you prefer a smoother consistency, mash the avocados a bit.) Cover and set aside in the fridge.
- 2.** Make the beef: Warm the oil in a skillet over medium-high. Add the onions, beef and taco seasoning and cook for 3-5 minutes. Add the chorizo and brown until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Set aside.
- 3.** Make the nachos: In a saucepot over medium, add the Velveeta and diced tomatoes and habaneros. Allow the cheese to melt. Stir in the shredded cheese and milk. Keep warm over low.
- 4.** On a serving platter, arrange a layer of chips. Drizzle on the warm cheese sauce and top with the lettuce and beef. Finish with the guacamole and garnish with the onions and sour cream. Serve warm.

## S'MORES NACHOS

Spicy chocolate sauce, gooey marshmallows and fragrant spices on top of a crispy, crunchy chip are proof that nachos can stand in as dessert! Make your own chips for this recipe because you'll want the ability to spice them up with our cinnamon mixture.

**YIELD** 4-6 SERVINGS      **ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**PREP TIME** 20 MINUTES      **COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

### For the chocolate sauce:

- 1 1/2** CUPS HEAVY CREAM
- 2** CUPS DARK CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- 1** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE

### For the cinnamon-sugar:

- 1/4** CUP SUGAR
- 1** TABLESPOON GROUND CINNAMON
- 1** TEASPOON GROUND GINGER
- 1** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE

### For the nachos:

- VEGETABLE OIL FOR FRYING
- 12** CORN TORTILLAS
- 2** CUPS MINI MARSHMALLOWS

- 1.** Make the chocolate sauce: In a small saucepot over medium, bring the cream to a simmer, then turn off the heat and stir in the chocolate and cayenne. Stir until the chocolate melts and the sauce takes on a smooth, glossy sheen. Set aside.
- 2.** Make the cinnamon-sugar: Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl and set aside.
- 3.** Make the nachos: In a high-walled pot or deep fryer, preheat the oil to 375°F.
- 4.** Cut each tortilla into 6 wedges. When the oil is hot, fry the tortillas in batches until golden brown, about 2-4 minutes. Drain on paper towels and cool for 1 minute.
- 5.** Toss the chips in the large bowl with cinnamon-sugar. Shake off any excess sugar and transfer to a parchment-lined baking tray.
- 6.** Preheat the oven to broil. Drizzle the chips with the chocolate sauce and top with the marshmallows. Broil for 3-5 minutes, until the marshmallows are puffy and gooey. Serve warm.





## SALSA VERDE BLACK BEAN CHICKEN NACHOS

A word of advice: Pick up a rotisserie chicken from the store for this recipe. This will save you some energy to focus on making our salsa verde from scratch, which can be made ahead and used on all sorts of things if you decide to double the batch (trust us, you will want to!).

**YIELD** 4-6 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 30 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

*For the salsa:*

- 1** TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL
- 4** TOMATILLOS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 1** LARGE ONION, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 3** SERRANOS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 4** GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1** BUNCH CILANTRO, CHOPPED
- 2** LIMES, JUICED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

*For the nachos:*

- TORTILLA CHIPS AS NEEDED
- 1½** CUPS SHREDDED JACK CHEESE, DIVIDED
- 2** CUPS SHREDDED ROTISSERIE CHICKEN
- ½** CUP CANNED BLACK BEANS, DRAINED AND RINSED
- PICKLED JALAPEÑOS FOR GARNISH

- 1.** Make the salsa: In a skillet over medium-high, warm the oil. Sauté the tomatillos, onions, peppers and garlic until softened and lightly browned, about 5-7 minutes.
- 2.** Transfer the veggies to a blender and add the cilantro, lime juice, salt and pepper. Puree and set aside.
- 3.** Preheat the oven to 425°F.
- 4.** Make the nachos: On a large baking sheet, spread

the chips out in a single layer. Sprinkle with half the cheese and top with the chicken and black beans. Drizzle the salsa on top to taste and sprinkle with the remaining cheese.

- 5.** Bake for 5-10 minutes, until the cheese melts. Garnish with pickled jalapeños and serve hot.

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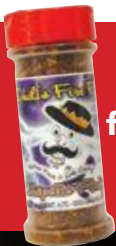


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# TOO MANY CHILES

## PART TWO

Plants still producing pods? Too much of a good thing can be a good thing, as long as you know what you're doing. Enter Plan P.

by Dave DeWitt



**YOU'VE FROZEN OR DRIED ALL THE CHILES YOU'LL NEED FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR** (see "Pepper Patch" in our previous issue), but your plants are still producing pods. It's time for Plan P.

One of the best ways to handle an overwhelming chile crop is to pickle the peppers. Pickling will preserve them at least until next year's crop comes in, and makes near-fresh chiles available throughout the year. They can be pickled by themselves or in combination with other chiles or vegetables. With just a little imagination, it's easy to turn out attractive, multicolored jars of pickled peppers that make great gifts. Although pickling does require some time at the stove, it's an easy way to preserve a lot of chiles at once.

## PICKLING RULES

Here are a few basic guidelines to follow:

1. Sterilize jars and lids in a boiling water bath for 10 to 15 minutes. I generally bring a large pot to a boil with an inch or two of water, and place the jars mouth down into the water; the lids can be set between the jars. Then I turn down the heat just enough to keep the pot slowly boiling or simmering.
2. Use pickling salt, rather than table salt, which contains undesirable (for pickling) additives.
3. Use 5 to 6 percent distilled white vinegar to avoid discoloring your chiles. Apple cider vinegar, on the other hand, will cause some discoloration, but it lends a better flavor.
4. Do not boil the vinegar for a long period of time, as that will reduce the acidity.
5. Poke or cut a hole into each chile to keep them from floating and to allow the pickling solution to work into the entire chile.
6. After filling each jar, remove any trapped air with a spatula or knife inserted between the chiles and the wall of the jar, or by gently tapping the jar.
7. After processing in a boiling water bath, transfer the jars to a draftfree location and allow to cool for 12 hours before handling.

## PICKLED PEPPERS TWO WAYS

These methods work well with jalapeños, serranos, yellow wax, cherry, habaneros or pepperoncini chiles. If you're a lover of pickled peppers, tab this page—you'll be using these recipes a lot. Note: These pickles require advanced preparation, but don't have to be processed in a water bath.

**YIELD** 4 PINTS

**ZEST FACTOR** VARIES

**PREP TIME** OVERNIGHT FOR THE BRINE; 4-6 WEEKS FOR THE PICKLING SOLUTION

**COOK TIME** NONE FOR THE BRINE; 10 MINUTES FOR THE SOLUTION

### BRINE

- 3** CUPS WATER
- 1** CUP PICKLING SALT
- 2** POUNDS CHILES OF YOUR CHOICE

Combine the salt and water and pour over the chiles in a bowl. Place a plate on the chiles to keep them submerged in the brine. Allow to soak overnight. Drain, rinse well and dry.

### PICKLING SOLUTION

- 3** CUPS WATER
- 3** CUPS 5-6 PERCENT DISTILLED WHITE VINEGAR
- 3** TEASPOONS PICKLING SALT

- 1.** Poke a few small holes on the top of each chile and pack tightly in sterilized jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace.
- 2.** In a pan, combine the water, vinegar and salt. Bring the solution to a boil and pour over the chiles, leaving no headspace. Remove any trapped air bubbles. Store for 4-6 weeks in a cool, dark place before serving.

## PRESERVING IN ALCOHOL

One final method of "pickling" chiles is to preserve them in liquor. This method has several advantages, including the fact that the process can be completed without using the stove. Also, alcohol doesn't tend to change the chiles as much as vinegar. Simply cut or poke a hole into each chile and cover with your preferred liquor. Vodka, gin, vermouth and rum all produce tasty results. Not only does this process preserve the chiles, it also produces some very interesting cocktails!

The process is simple. Just clean the chiles and remove all the seeds and stems. Slice them in quarters lengthwise and place in jars. Fill the jars with the liquor of choice, and place in a cool, dark area for a minimum of two weeks. **CP**

## A Creative Preservation Technique

European chilehead Harald Zoschke recently revived the little-known technique of candying. He writes, "Candying is one of the most ancient forms of preserving the harvest—the ancient Egyptians preserved nuts and fruits with honey. Like spice, candied fruit like wild oranges, melons and apricots, were brought to Europe by traders from the Middle East and China in the Early Middle Ages. Until sugar was introduced during the Crusades, honey and palm syrup were used, later replaced mostly by sugar-based syrup. The technique is the same, though—by placing fruit in syrup with gradually increased sugar content, their cell liquid is getting replaced by sugar. This migration through semi-permeable cell walls is called osmosis, not to be confused with *Ozzmosis*, the great '95 album by Ozzy Osbourne. Typically, 70 to 75 percent of the extracted cell liquid, mostly water, will be replaced by sugar, while shape, color and a good portion of the flavor will be preserved. That way, candied fruit will keep almost indefinitely." For more from Zoschke on candying, visit [fieryfoodscentral.com](http://fieryfoodscentral.com)—search for "Candied Capsicums."





# Sweet

&

# Salty

Munch on these perfectly balanced treats, filled with crunchy bar standbys like nuts, pretzels and chips, to satisfy your sweet tooth without that sugar-shock feeling. Fair warning, though: These salt-flecked snacks are addictive!

*by the Chile Pepper staff*

## SALTED CHILE CARAMEL CORN WITH ALMONDS

Caramel corn on steroids! The almonds get candied in the caramel and add another depth of crunchiness. This is a perfect treat for your next game night.

**YIELD** 8-10 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD

**PREP TIME** 1-2 HOURS

**COOK TIME** 40 MINUTES

- 1 STICK BUTTER
- 2 CUPS BROWN SUGAR
- 3/4 CUP LIGHT CORN SYRUP
- 2 TEASPOONS SALT
- 3/4 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
- 1 TEASPOON GROUND CARDAMOM
- 1 TEASPOON CHILE POWDER
- 1 1/2 CUPS SLICED ALMONDS
- 8 CUPS POPCORN

1. Preheat the oven to 250°F.
2. In a saucepan over medium-high, melt the butter. Stir in the sugar and syrup and let the mixture boil for 5 minutes without stirring.
3. Remove the caramel from the heat. Stir in the salt, baking soda and spices; the caramel will aerate and lighten in color.
4. Combine the popcorn and almonds in a large mixing bowl (or two). Quickly drizzle the caramel on top, tossing to coat. Transfer to two parchment-lined baking sheets, spreading into even layers.
5. Bake for 30 minutes (if you want the caramel to harden a bit more, bake for another 15-30 minutes). Let the popcorn cool, then break up the clusters before serving.

## CHILE BITE:

### HONEY-ROASTED HABANERO NUTS

Make your own honey-roasted nuts for the next poker night—our version serves up some serious sweetness and heat! Habanero powder can be ordered online and found in specialty stores. You can also turn this into a trail mix with the addition of a handful of raisins and pumpkin seeds. Feel free to use your favorite mixture of nuts.

**YIELD** 6-8 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** HOT

**PREP TIME** 1 HOUR

**COOK TIME** 15 MINUTES

- 3 1/2 CUPS NUTS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 2 TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
- 3 1/2 TABLESPOONS HONEY
- 1 TABLESPOON SUGAR
- 1/2 TEASPOON HABANERO POWDER

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Place the nuts in a mixing bowl. Combine the oil and honey in small bowl and pour over the nuts. Toss to combine, then transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 7-8 minutes, stir, then bake for another 7-8 minutes. Remove from the oven.
3. Combine the sugar and habanero powder in a bowl. Sprinkle the mixture over the nuts and stir to combine; let the nuts cool completely before serving.



## PRETZEL PEANUT BUTTER PIE WITH HABANERO BERRY COMPOTE

This pie is our take on the classic savory and sweet snack, the PB&J sandwich. Making the crust out of pretzels adds a crunch factor and salty goodness, which would also pair well with other fruit pies and cheesecakes.

**YIELD** 8 SERVINGS  
**PREP TIME** 2-4 HOURS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM  
**COOK TIME** 30 MINUTES

*For the pie:*

- 4 CUPS PRETZELS, CRUSHED
- 4 TABLESPOONS BUTTER, MELTED
- ¼ CUP BROWN SUGAR
- 2½ CUPS HEAVY CREAM
- 3 TABLESPOONS SUGAR
- 1 (8-OUNCE) PACKAGE CREAM CHEESE, SOFTENED
- 1¼ CUP CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR
- 1½ CUPS SPICY PEANUT BUTTER

*For the berry compote:*

- 3 CUPS BERRIES OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 HABANERO, MINCED
- 1 LEMON, ZESTED AND JUICED
- 4 TABLESPOONS SUGAR

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Make the pie: Combine the pretzels, melted butter and brown sugar in a bowl. Press the mixture into a 9-inch pie pan and bake for 10-15 minutes. Let the crust cool.
3. Meanwhile, whip the heavy cream and sugar in a mixing bowl until stiff peaks form. Set aside.
4. Beat the cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and peanut butter in a mixing bowl until well combined. Gently fold half the whipped cream into the peanut butter mixture.
5. Pour the pie filling on top of the crust. Spread the remaining whipped cream on top. Refrigerate for 2-4 hours, or until set.
6. Meanwhile, make the compote: Combine all the ingredients in a saucepot over medium. Cook until the berries break down, release their juices and thicken, about 15-20 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool.
7. To serve, spoon the compote over a slice of pie and devour.



## SALTY SNACKS FUDGE BARS

Potato chips, pretzels and salted nuts are all classic bar snacks, and we've married them in this rich fudge—with a subtle kick to balance out the savory notes.

**YIELD** 10 BARS  
**PREP TIME** 2-4 HOURS

**ZEST FACTOR** MILD  
**COOK TIME** 10 MINUTES

- 3½ CUPS DARK CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- 1 (14-OUNCE) CAN CONDENSED MILK
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA
- 1 TEASPOON CHIPOTLE POWDER
- ½ CUP POTATO CHIPS, CRUSHED
- ½ CUP PRETZELS, CRUSHED
- ½ CUP CASHEWS, CHOPPED
- ½ CUP WHITE CHOCOLATE CHIPS

1. In a saucepot over medium, combine the chocolate and condensed milk. Stir in the vanilla and chipotle and continue stirring until the chocolate melts and takes on a glossy sheen, about 5-10 minutes. When the mixture starts to ball up away from the sides of the pot, remove from the heat.
2. Pour the fudge into a parchment-lined 9-x-9-inch pan. Top with the crushed and chopped ingredients and set aside.
3. In a small microwave-safe bowl, melt the white chocolate in 30-second intervals, stirring in between, until smooth. Drizzle over the fudge.
4. Cover and place in the fridge for 2-4 hours before slicing and serving at room temperature.

## CORNMEAL PANCAKES AND BEER-BATTERED FRIED CHICKEN



This play on chicken and waffles was a major hit.

**YIELD** 4 SERVINGS

**ZEST FACTOR** MEDIUM

**PREP TIME** 30 MINUTES

**COOK TIME** 20 MINUTES

*For the pancakes:*

- 1** CUP FLOUR
  - 1** CUP CUP CORNMEAL
  - 1** TEASPOON GROUND CAYENNE
  - 2** TABLESPOONS SUGAR
  - 4** TEASPOONS BAKING POWDER
  - 1** TEASPOON SALT
  - 2** EGGS
  - 1<sup>1/3</sup>** CUPS MILK
  - 1** TABLESPOON CHOPPED CHIVES
- VEGETABLE OIL AS NEEDED

*For the chicken:*

- VEGETABLE OIL FOR FRYING
- 4** CUPS FLOUR, DIVIDED
  - 2** TABLESPOONS SALT
  - 1** TABLESPOON PEPPER
  - 1** TABLESPOON GARLIC POWDER
  - 2** EGGS
  - 4** TABLESPOONS HOT SAUCE, DIVIDED
  - 1** (12-OUNCE) BOTTLE BEER
  - 2** POUNDS CHICKEN TENDERLOIN STRIPS
- SPICY HONEY FOR SERVING

- 1.** Make the pancake batter: In a large bowl, whisk together all the ingredients except the oil until smooth. Set aside.
- 2.** Preheat the oil to 375°F in a deep fryer or high-walled pot.
- 3.** Make the chicken: Combine 2 cups flour with the salt, pepper and garlic powder in a shallow dish. Beat the eggs and 2 tablespoons hot sauce in a separate shallow dish. Whisk together the remaining flour and hot sauce with the beer in a third dish.
- 4.** Dredge the chicken in the flour. Shake off the excess and dredge in the egg. Return to the flour, then dredge in the beer batter. Fry the chicken in batches until golden brown, about 7-10 minutes.
- 5.** Meanwhile, cook the pancakes: In a nonstick skillet, warm 1 tablespoon oil over medium. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup batter and cook for 2 minutes per side. Repeat with the remaining batter, adding more oil as necessary.
- 6.** Serve the chicken and pancakes warm with a drizzle of spicy honey.



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