

COOK

with

What

You Have



Nicole Sauce & Mama Sauce

Cook with What You Have

by Nicole Sauce & Mama Sauce

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Nicole@LivingFreeinTennessee.com

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Acknowledgments

No one, and I do mean *no one*, completes a book without help from many directions, and this book is no different. I'd like to acknowledge some of the help I'm grateful for.

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The Tactical Redneck cooks with me, tossing ideas back and forth, no matter where in the world he is. This has led to some fun collections of ingredients to consider that I never before thought of combining. He never lets me give up. Thank you.

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Finally, this book would have never happened had Mama Sauce not taken on the management of the project, the layout, the recipes of the week. Nor would it have happened had she not been so into making things from scratch when I was a kid. Her example set the foundation for everything we do here at Living Free in Tennessee.

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IT'S ABOUT

Cooking with what you have

You'll notice a recurring theme in this book: cooking and family go together.

I've talked and talked about putting together a cookbook on seasonal eating, a cookbook that highlights the story of my grandparents, and a cookbook of my own recipes. I have started the text a few times and petered out. Then, on the 14-hour drive with Mama Sauce, I got to talking about the need to get this thing done already. As we chatted, I realized my biggest hurdle is that I rarely use recipes.

It's funny how the world has forgotten how to cook without a book or iPad.

If you read Martha Washington's *Booke of Cookery and Booke of Sweetmeats*, you realize that it's a journal with ingredients. Sure, Marie Kimball has gone through and made Martha's words into recipes – *The Martha Washington Cook Book*. But please notice that the Mt. Vernon kitchen produced a Thanksgiving-scale meal every single day, and they did it mostly with guidelines, not recipes ... in a rustic outdoor kitchen.

That's how the idea hatched:

Why not put together a few books, but start with the core concept of how to cook? After all, unless you are doing something very specific – like, oh, say, canning beans – the exactness of the recipe hardly matters. People have become so attached to recipes that they have no idea how to cook something if they lack something on the list of ingredients.

The reality of explaining special dishes that we create here at the Holler Homestead does necessitate including the ingredients and amounts I use. So as you read this book and see something you wish to try, ask yourself this, "What can I use to replace a missing ingredient? Will it fundamentally change the dish? If it does change the dish, will it still be tasty?"

When you find a recipe you love, try it with different ratios of ingredients and see how it changes. Who knows? You may end up launching a book of your own.

With few exceptions, my recipes are always changing, based on what is available, my mood, the needs of our visitors and, more importantly, what we have too much of. So this book will grow and change as we release future editions.

Want to take this journey with me?

I will share notes and as the cookbook develops over time on the membership portal at LivingFreeinTennessee.com. And should you join, please offer feedback! The next group of recipes may cover your interest or need.



Satisfying main dishes

In the city, it is very easy to forget the art of folding one meal into another, going from baked chicken to chicken stew and following that with a nice chicken salad. The grocery store is often moments away and the modern world seems to downplay on a system built around seeking variety from the same ingredients and prefer the much more wasteful approach of cooking something completely different each day and tossing the leftovers in the trash.

On the other hand, a creative mind loves the challenge of making something wonderful even when bound by what's available. This cook doesn't need constant access to any possible ingredient at the drop of a hat.

Take a large venison roast, for example. An eight-pound roast can feed two people for an entire week, but the palate grows weary of the same dish, day after day. So a creative cook finds a way to present that in multiple, inviting dishes.

For example, we start with a 24-hour sous vide at 130°F in a simple marinade of salt, pepper, garlic, and rosemary. Then we sear the roast and serve with roasted potatoes and greens. The already-sliced leftovers and bone go into the crockpot with water, an onion, garlic, and celery for 12 hours. The unsliced meat goes in the fridge. The following day, we often make a venison Indian-style curry from the crockpot stock, added vegetables, and cubes of roast. We sear off other pieces for lunch salads. If some venison remains, it probably ends up mixed with hard-boiled eggs, mayonnaise, spices, and pickles as an appetizer spread; or made into venison tacos, a stew, or sautéed into fried rice. The options seem endless.



So it always astounds me when someone says me they cannot stand leftovers. Leftover main dishes are invitations to invent and explore. We have included in this book some ideas of how to repurpose these main dishes, just to get you started down the path of folding one meal into the next.



Pork and Kraut

Once upon a time, Mama Sauce looked around the kitchen, stumped about what to make for dinner. Shelves, countertops, refrigerator, and freezer held a disparate collection of ingredients: a drying corner of cheddar, a smelly crock of fermented sauerkraut, a can of peas and carrots, and a collection of pork cuts. Without knowing what she was doing, she assembled a German take on smothered pork chops.

The recipe has so many ingredients, it'll be easy to omit those that violate your special diet.

This has what it takes to anchor your stomach after a long day farming and immediately appealed to us kids. On a cold winter's night, it'll make you sing "Wouldn't It Be Lovely."

Sauerkraut Chops

serves 3 - 4

3-4 pork chops
2 cups undrained sauerkraut
1 tsp caraway seed
2 thin-sliced onions
¼ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp nutmeg
3 TBSP sherry
1 cup milk

⅓ cups flour (choose your favorite type, replace with 2 TBSP cornstarch, or forego thickener)
about 2 cups peas and carrots, fresh, canned, frozen, or a combination
1 cups shredded cheese

Brown chops.

Add kraut, caraway, onions, seasonings, sherry.

Simmer 15 minutes.

Blend and add milk and flour. Simmer, covered, until chops are cooked, about 30 minutes.

Add peas and carrots and cheese and stir until blended and heated through.



Pan-seared Tandoori

serves 4

Tandoori Seasoning Mix

1 TBSP cayenne pepper
1 TBSP cumin
1 TBSP salt
1 TBSP turmeric
1 tsp black pepper

1 TBSP smoked paprika (use plain old paprika if that's what's on your shelf)
1 TBSP red pepper flakes

Mix spices and herbs and coat all sides of serving-sized pieces of meat or other protein.

Grill, or heat some oil and sear both sides, then reduce heat and cook through.

Freeze leftover pieces into cubes. Use straight from freezer to perk up other dishes or on top of salads and soups. Or serve on skewers alternating with vegetables, over rice.



Protein and Other Possibilities

Chicken or other poultry
Venison, beef, pork
Extra-firm tofu, drained
Tempeh or seitan
Veggie burgers, breakfast sausages

Jackfruit

Mushrooms:

Portobello, Cremini, shiitake, or large mushrooms

Potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, winter squash

Vegetables that slice: eggplant, cauliflower, summer squash



A Treat without Buying a Plane Ticket

Here's a meal in a dish that requires only a few minutes of prep time – time that can be combined with prep for another chicken dinner. The noodles make the salad – but if you're off wheat, try a can of La Choy crispy rice noodles. Better yet, make your own (recipe on page 8).

Additions and Substitutions

Asian Chicken Salad is good as is and even better when you personalize.

Add or substitute:

- * red cabbage
- * thin-sliced sweet onion
- * colored sweet peppers
- * crisp lettuce – romaine, for example
- * sesame seeds, peanuts, almond slivers, or cashews
- * leftover cooked beans or corn
- * jicama, radish, or water chestnut slices
- * shaved fresh ginger
- * cucumber chunks
- * wild salad greens

You can even make your own crispy rice noodles. I simplified the noodle recipe from *The Spruce Eats*.



Asian Chicken Salad

serves 3 - 4

1/3 cup rice vinegar
2 TBSP soy sauce
2 TBSP honey mustard
1 TBSP grated peeled ginger
3 TBSP vegetable oil
3 TBSP sesame oil
1 pound skinless, boneless chicken

1 small head Napa cabbage in bite-size pieces
1 carrot, thinly sliced
4 scallions, thinly sliced
1/4 pound snow peas, cut diagonally
Salt
1/2 cup chow mein noodles

Whisk vinegar, soy sauce, honey mustard, and ginger in a medium bowl, then add the oils in a slow stream.

Marinate chicken 10 minutes to overnight in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dressing

Grill chicken over medium heat, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Cool slightly, then cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces to toss with vegetables or into thin slices to top the salad.

Toss cabbage, carrot, scallions, and snow peas with the remaining dressing in a large bowl.

Adjust salt.

Top with chow mein noodles – or make your own crispy noodles.



Crispy Rice Noodles

1 package thin rice noodles

1 cup oil

Separate rice noodles into manageable amounts.

Use scissors to cut into 4-5" lengths. Save a few long noodles to test oil heat.

Heat oil over medium-high heat in a pan with sides: the smaller the pan, the less oil.

The oil is hot enough when the submerged parts of test noodles bloom quickly into puffy, crispy noodles.

Drop by handfuls in hot oil. In a few seconds, flip them once, then remove. Drain on paper towels.



Snack Option

Sprinkle with salt or other spices and munch while crisp. They pick up humidity quickly and become soggy.

Tortilla Española with Roasted Pepper Sauce

serves 6

1 pound zucchini in 1/8" rounds
2 tsp salt
1 1/4 cup olive oil
2 pounds potatoes in 1/8" rounds

1 onion in 1/8" rounds
10 eggs
1 cup Parmesan, grated
1 cup fresh basil, chopped

Preheat oven to 425°F

Toss zucchini with salt in a colander over a bowl. Drain about 30 minutes, pressing occasionally.

Preheat 1 cup oil in a cast iron skillet over high heat. Add potatoes and onion and reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring and scraping, until potatoes are tender but not browned, 30 to 35 minutes.

Add zucchini and cook until tender, stirring gently, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain this mixture 5 minutes.

Whisk together eggs, Parmesan, and basil and stir in potato mixture.

Wipe skillet clean and heat remaining 1/4 cup oil over high heat.

Add egg mixture and reduce heat to low.

Cook until edges begin to set, running a spatula around sides to prevent eggs from sticking, about 10 minutes.

Transfer to oven and bake until center is set and edges are golden brown, about 12 minutes.

Let cool 5 minutes.

Run a paring knife around edge of tortilla to loosen, then invert on a wire rack.

Top with a second wire rack, flip tortilla, and let cool completely, about 1 hour.

Serve in wedges, topped with a dollop of sauce.



Roasted Pepper Sauce

- ¼ cup blanched almonds, toasted**
- 1 clove garlic**
- 1 jar (10 ounces) roasted piquillo peppers, drained or roast your own sweet peppers with a little olive oil and salt**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 2 tsp vinegar**

Pulse almonds and garlic in a food processor until coarsely ground. Add peppers, oil, and vinegar; purée smooth or leave slightly chunky.

Refrigerate, covered, until ready to serve.



Greek Grilled Chicken with Green Beans

serves 4

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts** (If bone-in, cook them longer)
- 1¼ pounds green beans**
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes or tomato chunks**
- 2 TBSP olive oil**
- 2 TBSP red wine vinegar**

- 8 cloves smashed garlic**
- 1 TBSP oregano**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill**
- Salt and pepper**
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese**

Preheat grill to medium high.

Combine olive oil, vinegar, garlic, oregano, dill, and some salt and pepper. Marinate chicken in half this mixture.

Place beans and tomatoes in a foil pan and cover with the rest of the oil mixture.

Grill chicken about 15 minutes, turning halfway through.

Meanwhile, grill vegetables 10 to 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender.

Present chicken and vegetables on a platter or individual plates.

Top with cheese.



Quick Crustless “Quiche”

serves 4

3 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup onion, chopped
2 to 3 cups of vegetables & meat

3 to 5 eggs
salt to taste
(herbs and spices you love)
Cheese

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Grease a pie dish and sprinkle in the vegetables and meats you dig up from the refrigerator.

Use a blender to thoroughly combine eggs and any liquid ingredients (sour cream, gravy, leftover casserole, ...). Pour wet mixture over the fun stuff in the pie dish.

Top with cheese.

Add pie to oven, reduce heat to 325°F, and bake 25-35 minutes, until toothpick comes out clean.

Let rest 5 minutes before serving.

If you love pie crust, go right ahead: either add ½ cup pancake flour (See recipe for Master Mix on page 37) to the mixture in blender or go whole hog and line the greased pie dish with a crust. Adjust the baking time to cook the crust.



Adobo, Not Adobe

Warm your insides with a spicy, satisfying meal that needs only rice and a salad or vegetable to be complete.

This crockpot adaptation makes dinner prep easy on a busy day.

Adobo Seasoning

- 2 TBSP salt**
- 1 TBSP paprika**
- 2 tsp pepper**
- 1½ tsp onion powder – about 1 onion, diced, dried, and powdered – or use a fresh onion when you cook**
- 1½ tsp epazote (oregano, if you have no epazote)**
- 1½ tsp cumin**
- 1 tsp garlic powder**
- 1 tsp chili powder**
- 10 bay leaves, crumbled (I powder them.)**

Mix and store as you would any herb or spice.

Now let's use the seasoning.



Adobo

serves 4 - 6

- 3 - 4 pounds meat (chicken, pork, beef, venison, or a mixture of meats)**

- ½ cup vinegar**
- ½ cup soy sauce**
- 1 cup water**

- 2 TBSP Adobo seasoning mix or:**

- * 2 - 3 bay leaves, crushed**
- * 2 tsp peppercorns**
- * 4 garlic cloves**
- * 1 onion, chopped**
- * ¾ tsp pepper**
- * 2 tsp salt**

Marinate meat 3 hours or more in vinegar, soy sauce, and water with spices and herbs or adobo seasoning mix.



Cook 3 hours on high or 6 hours on low. Serve with rice.

Ommm Buddha Bowl

serves 4

Bowl

- 1 pound boneless chicken (or any meat)**
- 2 cups broccoli, in florets**
- 1 cups carrots, shredded**
- 1 cups spinach leaves**
- 1 cups garbanzo beans, cooked**
- 2 tsp sesame oil, divided**
- 2 cups cooked rice** (brown rice adds flavor and maybe a little nutritive value)
- 2 cups broccoli, in florets**

Cube chicken, roast a single layer at 400°F for 25 minutes on nonstick or oiled flat sheet. Move to a shallow bowl.

Mix Peanut Sauce ingredients and warm gently over low heat.

Add half the peanut sauce and let marinate 10 minutes or until you're ready to assemble the meal.

Toss broccoli (or green beans, or really anything green) with 1 tsp oil. Roast 20 minutes.

Heat the remaining 1 tsp oil in a wok or large skillet. Add batches of chicken, along with marinade, and toast until golden and crispy, about 4 minutes.

To serve, place ½ cup rice in each of 4 bowls. Divide carrots, spinach, broccoli, garbanzos, and chicken among bowls and drizzle with reserved peanut sauce.

Vary the vegetables and meat, fish, or tofu as your pantry provides.

Peanut sauce

- 2 TBSP sesame oil**
- ¼ cups soy sauce**
- ¼ cups maple syrup**
- 2 tsp chili garlic sauce**
- ¼ cups peanut butter**
- dash pepper**





Soups and Stews

Our transition to the Holler Homestead was rocky. The kitchen faucet – the only one that worked at all – barely trickled out water. There was no heating system, and that became a concern as the year grew later. The former owners had left so much stuff behind that, 12 years later, we are still finding random rolls of fencing as we clear new areas of the land. The water pipe from the pump house to the cabin had more holes than we could patch. And the ground in front of the house was a mass of broken glass, roofing tiles, and dirt.

That first year, there wasn't much time for epic country cooking. Winter was coming and we had stuff to do before the first freeze. Taking a page from an early kitchen mentor, I looked to older times for inspiration and began to read about "pottage."

Pottage is a thick stew with lots of vegetables and some meat that cooks low and slow for days. As servings are pulled from the pot, you add items, resulting in a constantly-evolving, ready-to-serve one-pot meal. It is no wonder that peasants of old favored this kind of cooking, because it was the perfect way to leverage what was available, use a single cooking vessel, have something that cooked itself while one was off working, and provided as much nutrition as possible.

The modern crockpot is perfectly designed to support this style of cooking. Our first attempt lasted for four weeks, started as a chicken stew, and ended with venison. A neighbor took to stopping by for a bowl of what he called "Holler Stew." We managed to get a woodstove installed, a front deck built, the water pipe replaced, and the yard ready for spring chicks.

But the best lesson from the winter of pottage was this: a great soup requires flavors – lots of varied flavors. This is an example of how recipes are nice, but serve more as a wireframe, setting a basic sketch for the meal, than an owner's manual that details the how and when of everything.

To make a great soup or stew almost every time, I like to fill my pot with as many chunky ingredients as I can: green beans, potatoes, greens, meat, whatever I can lay my hands on. Then I add a chopped onion and cook it slowly with stock, milk, or water.



There are variations to this theme, but having at least one whole onion and lots of ingredients to make the broth come to life results in a stew with a hearty mouth feel and tasty broth. If I "follow" a recipe and do not have a certain spice such as sage or basil, I don't worry. If I am out of onions, I worry.

Pottage remains a frequent meal in our house, but, as you know, we also love intentional meals. So we'll start this section with a roasted pumpkin apple soup that's good for paleo diets.

Pumpkin Apple Soup

serves 8

4 pounds pumpkin or squash in 2" chunks
4 apples, unpeeled, cored, cut in eighths
¼ cup olive oil
1¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper
1 TBSP chopped fresh sage
6 cups broth of any kind
⅓ cup chopped hazelnuts, toasted
2 TBSP hazelnut oil (or any oil)

Preheat oven to 450°F

Toss pumpkin and apples with olive oil, 1 tsp salt, and pepper. Spread on a large baking sheet. Roast 30 minutes, stirring once.

Stir in sage and continue roasting until very tender and starting to brown, 15 - 20 minutes more.

Purée ⅓ of the pumpkin and apples with 2 cups broth. Repeat until all are puréed.

You can prepare this ahead, cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Season with remaining ¼ tsp salt, heat through over medium-low heat for about 6 minutes, stirring constantly.



Top each portion with hazelnuts and maybe even drizzle with hazelnut oil. Or sprinkle with crisp bacon bits, other seeds (including seeds from your soup squash), or chopped fresh herbs.

Holler Stew

Broth
Meat or meat substitute
Onion
Garlic
Vegetables
Leftover bits of this and that

Herbs, spices
Salt, pepper
Starch if you want it
Splash of wine
Garnishes like croutons, seeds, bits of bacon

There are days when the refrigerator contains too many leftovers; you're tired of them, and, there's not enough of any one dish.

Grab a crockpot about midday or a kettle about 4 pm.

Chop a few cloves of garlic and $\frac{1}{2}$ to a whole onion and toss them in the bottom. Add oil or drippings and sauté gently.

Think through what's available, starting with the hefty basic ingredients, meat and broth. Decide on your mix, and add them.

Toss in a little bit of macaroni and cheese, or taco makings from two days ago (if they are around): keep a pleasing blend of tastes.

If you're adding starch and it's uncooked, now is the time for rice, pasta, potato, or yam pieces.

Add vegetables, herbs, spices, and maybe some wine to make it fun. Make it as thin or thick as you want.

Simmer crock pot for an hour or six (depending on what you put in there), kettle for 45 minutes.

Garnish and serve.



Greek Chicken Lemon Soup

serves 6

6 cups chicken broth
1 small onion
1 small carrot
1 stalk celery
1 bay leaf
½ tsp salt

2 chicken breasts
1 cups rice
2 eggs
¼ cups lemon juice
2 TBSP chopped parsley
Pepper to taste

Simmer 30 minutes: broth, onion, carrot, bay leaf, salt, chicken.

Remove and cut chicken into thin strips. Set aside.

Add rice, simmer 20 minutes.

Whisk eggs and lemon juice frothy. Slowly whisk 2 cups hot soup into egg-lemon mixture.

Take soup off the heat, drizzle in egg mixture.

Sprinkle with parsley, season with pepper.





What's a Salad?

Greeks ate salad. Romans called it *salata*, meaning “salted things.” In old-time France, they ate *sallade*; in 14th-century England, *sallet*. It's a special sort of side dish, originally a cold dish consisting of raw greens with some sort of dressing, the dressing often made from an acid, an oil, and seasoning. Salads have become more than simple vegetable mixtures with dressing.

Here at the Holler Homestead, we try to serve a salad every day, and we have started growing heat-hardy greens, like malabar spinach, to support this effort. The best part of being surrounded by wilderness is forage. An evening stroll with shears and a bag brings wild foraged plants, such as plantain, hairy vetch, mustard flower, day lillies – or really whatever sounds good.

Special salads show the touch of genius through the centuries: Waldorf from New York, Caesar from Tijuana; Cobb from the Brown Derby in Los Angeles; Southern chopped, and Salmagundi – now named, without as much panache, chef's salad – among them.

But the key to a great salad is the dressing. Homemade dressings are so simple to make, and vastly superior to most commercial options. Vinaigrette, for example, is a basic sauce that every good cook masters. You'll find the ingredient ratio in “Nicole's Vinaigrette” (page 24).

Salad dressings occupy page after page in cookbooks, but don't let recipe lists confine you! Use your cupboard's contents, the salad components on hand, and your own creativity to make every salad memorable.



About Salad Ingredients

Vinegar

For some years now I've used really good balsamic vinegars, but apple cider or specialty infused vinegars can add great flavor variations. For the recipe that follows, if you do not use a balsamic reduction, which has natural sweetness, you probably should use less vinegar and add a little honey, maple syrup, or sugar.

Oil

This year, I use a fine grade of avocado oil. This offers a taste different from olive, grape seed, nut, or any other oil. Any oil will work. Any fine oil will yield a good result.

Beyond Vinaigrette Ingredient Ideas

Sweetness

Sorghum syrup
Honey

Maple syrup
Sugar or brown sugar

Use what you have and what will blend well with other ingredients.

Frequent additional ingredients

Mayonnaise
Sour cream
Herbs and spices, fresh or dried
Garlic
Mustard
Wine
Peanut butter
Beer
Citrus juice
**Raspberries, when using
raspberry-infused vinegar**

**Parmesan or other hard, aged
cheese, grated fine**
**Dried fruits like cranberries,
raisins, chopped dried
apples or pears**
Nuts and seeds
Chives
Garlic scape, minced
Green onions, minced
Olives

The sky is the limit! We will share more salad dressing possibilities as Nicole sits down to write them.

Nicole's Vinaigrette – a ratio, really

1 cup Avocado oil
⅓ cup this specific Balsamic Raspberry Vinegar
4 demitasse spoonfuls Salt
2 demitasse spoonfuls Pepper)

1 cup Sour Cream or mayonnaise
1 demitasse spoonful garlic powder
Water (until the right consistency)

Place ingredients directly into a mason jar and cap it securely.

Shake vigorously and taste. Check for liquidity and if it has enough salt. Thin with water until it is just right. When using sour cream, more water is required than with mayonnaise.

Dilly Potato Slaw

serves 6

1½ pounds potatoes, peeled or not, in 1" pieces
Salt and pepper
6 cups any cabbage, cored and thinly sliced

1 cup sour cream
⅓ cup oil
3 TBSP fresh dill, chopped
2 TBSP vinegar

Simmer potatoes and 1 TBSP salt until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain.

Cool 15 minutes.

Combine sour cream, oil, dill, vinegar, salt, and pepper.



Toss salad and refrigerate at least an hour before serving. If you leave it in the refrigerator overnight, the taste and texture meld to perfection.

It never hurts to crumble bacon on top!

Tomato Basil Salad with Feta

serves 4

- 1 bunch basil, stems removed, diced**
- 20 cherry tomatoes halved, or 10 small tomatoes, quartered**
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled and sliced**

- ¼ cup feta cheese, crumbled**
- 2 tsp balsamic vinegar reduction (or substitute 1 tsp balsamic vinegar)**
- 1 tsp honey**
- 1 tbsp mustard**
- 1 tbsp plain yogurt**

Mix all ingredients and serve at room temperature.

Salt and pepper to taste

Spice it up with cayenne powder for a kick.



Corn, Cucumber, and Avocado Salad

serves 4

- 2 ears fresh corn, steamed and cut from cobs**
- 2 cucumbers, peeled or unpeeled**
- Cherry tomatoes, halved**
- A handful of cilantro**
- A hunk of chives**
- 1 - 2 avocados**
- 1 sweet red pepper**
- 1 - 2 limes (or rice vinegar)**
- 1 TBSP olive oil**
- salt and pepper**

This is really simple: chop, mix, drizzle, season, and serve.

This stood up to three days in a cooler on a river rafting trip, adding the avocado fresh every night.



Egg and Bean Dinner Salad

serves 4 as a main dish: 6 as a side

6 eggs
4 turnips in 1" pieces or similar
volume of baby turnips
3 TBSP butter
2 TBSP fresh tarragon, chopped
2 TBSP chives chopped
3 TBSP olive oil

2 TBSP lemon juice
large bowl of mixed salad
greens in bite-sized pieces
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 14-ounce can cannellini beans,
drained and rinsed
Salt and pepper

Cover eggs and turnips with water and bring to a boil.

Remove from the heat, cover, and let stand 10 minutes.

Remove the eggs; peel and quarter.

Keep turnips in hot water until tender, about 2 - 3 minutes more; drain.

Return turnips to the warm pan and toss with the butter.

Toss with tarragon, chives, olive oil, and lemon juice.

Season greens, celery, and beans with salt and pepper.

Add the eggs and turnip mixture and gently toss.

If you just can't leave well enough alone, add shrimp, marinated tofu squares, or leftover last night's meat.





Vegetable Adventures

Years ago, I subscribed to a CSA, a weekly delivery of vegetables from a local farm. At the time, I had never tasted swiss chard, kale, or kohlrabi. My palate was used to lettuce, cucumbers, winter squash, celery, carrots, potatoes, yams, green beans, cabbage, and broccoli. As each week unfolded and a vegetable I had never encountered arrived, I stretched to figure out how to prepare them. Google was not around yet and, besides, the internet was relatively new.

This approach worked best for me:

1. Try a bite raw and think about what it might pair well with.
2. If distasteful, don't give up on the vegetable.
3. Sauté it with onions and garlic and decide if that is tasty.
4. Steam it *al dente*.
5. Toss it into a stew.
6. Try it on a salad.

Over time, it got easier to know what to do with different vegetables – how to include them in a nice risotto, for example, or what sorts of vegetables go well in soup.

And the best part was that this method allowed me to learn the true flavor of different things, without bias.

It is so easy to just hit Google and learn what other people have done when you encounter something new – and don't get me wrong – this is helpful. But using your own preferences and palate to develop *your* favorite way to prepare foods often yields finer results than constantly following the latest side dish recipe.

So as you read through the recipe idea in this section, take them as just that: ideas and methods for preparing vegetables, not the gospel on how to prepare one of them.

Broccoli Spoon Bread is definitely a comfort food – hot, starchy, and cheesy – from plain ingredients. It's also health food, containing protein; calcium; Vitamins A, B6, C, and K; trace elements like iron and potassium; and fiber. Finally, it's simply yummy.

It takes half an hour of prep time, an hour to bake, and 10 minutes of rest after you pull this dish from the oven, but it's worth the wait.



Broccoli Spoon Bread

serves 4

1 bunch broccoli in florets
1½ cups milk
½ cup cornmeal
2 eggs, separated

2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 TBSP sugar

Arrange broccoli in a tall-sided, greased 1½ quart casserole.

Mix milk into cornmeal and cook about 5 minutes, stirring continually. Cover and cool slightly.

Add a bit of warm mush to beaten yolks, then stir into mush. Stir in sugar and salt, then baking powder.

Beat egg whites stiff and fold into mixture. Pour the mixture over broccoli.

Bake 45-50 minutes at 375°F, until golden and toothpick comes out clean.

Cheese Sauce

2 TBSP butter
1 TBSP cornstarch
1 cup milk
½ cup water or vegetable broth

½ tsp salt
⅛ tsp pepper (try white pepper)
¼ tsp nutmeg (Nicole Sauce omits this)
1 cup grated cheese (try hard, aged cheese)

Make a white sauce with the first 7 ingredients, then gradually stir in cheese.

Pour sauce over spoon bread, let sit for 10 minutes, and serve.

If you have leftover corn on the cob, don't hesitate to add some to the spoon bread.

Wild Mushroom Sauté

Mushrooms
Bacon drippings



Clean and cut the mushrooms into edible pieces.

Add bacon drippings and sauté, stirring frequently.

If you can't finish the dish, add it to nearly anything else you eat that day.

As you see, this sauté is easy and excellent when cooked outdoors, using funghi you just harvested. Mushrooms from the grocery store work, too, of course!

Asparagus Parmigiano Pie

serves 4

1 pie crust, baked
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound fresh asparagus
 $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
dash pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp each oregano, thyme, basil
8 ounces tomatoes or a bit less tomato sauce
4 ounces Mozzarella cheese, sliced thin
 $\frac{1}{8}$ cup Parmesan, grated

Cook and drain asparagus.

Sauté garlic and onion in oil.

Mix tomatoes or tomato sauce with herbs, salt, and pepper.

Layer into the crust: onion mixture, asparagus, Mozzarella. Pour tomato sauce over the top and sprinkle on the Parmesan.

Bake 20 minutes at 375°F.

A polenta crust is a wonderful variation. I'll admit I sprinkle with bacon bits.

Simply Scrumptious Summer Squash

serves 4

Summer squash in $\frac{3}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "
"coins"
Cherry tomatoes or chunks of
slicing tomatoes
Olive oil
Garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
Hard cheese, grated

Oregano, basil, and thyme;
garam masala and curry; or
paprika; dill; epazote; or any
other fun herb combination
Garnishes like scallions or
cilantro, lime wedges,
chopped hot pepper, or
crumbled bacon



Preheat oven to 400°F and
butter or oil a baking sheet.

Spread squash coins in a
single layer on baking sheet.

Spray or drizzle with oil.

Mix garlic, herbs, salt, p
epper, and cheese and sprin-
kle evenly over squash.

Roast on middle rack 25 - 30
minutes. Garnish.

This recipe is great grilled.

Honey Mustard Carrots

3 cups carrots
3 TBSP honey

2 TBSP prepared mustard
oil or bacon drippings



Cut carrots into 3" pencils. We don't peel.

Steam or boil in a little water for about 7 minutes, if
the carrots are mature – 5 minutes if they're young.
Don't go beyond *al dente*.

Drain, return to the skillet, add bacon drippings,
and sear for 3 min-
utes or so.

Add the honey and
mustard, coat the
carrots, and serve.



Monterey Jack Vegetable Bake

serves 6

½ pound broccoli
1 smallish onion, diced
½ pound carrots, diced, in coins, or in pencils
other vegetables hanging around
3 cloves garlic, chopped fine
6 eggs
1¼ cup milk

4 TBSP soy sauce
¾ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
1 tsp dill weed
1 tsp celery seed
1 pound Monterey Jack cheese, in cubes

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place vegetables in a 3-quart baking dish.

Grate cheese in a blender, using the milk and eggs. Add soy sauce, spices, and herbs. Pour this mixture over the vegetables.

Bake about 50 minutes at 350°F, until top is golden and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

On a hectic night, a vegetable bake turns hamburger patties into a full-blown dinner. This is roughly the oven-vegetable equivalent of a Holler Stew.





When recipes matter

I was lucky to have a close relationship with my grandparents beyond college. One year, they dropped by my apartment for a visit on their way home from Arizona and it was a bread-baking day.

Grandpa watched very closely as I baked the bread and I was a bit confused as to why he had such a keen interest in the loaf. I was using a method I had learned from another friend where you could shortcut one rising cycle by making a sponge and letting it bubble away for 45 minutes, then finish the bread dough with flour, let it rise once, and toss it in the oven.

When I served the bread, he was both pleased and a little surprised that it really worked.

I found out that he had baked most of the bread I had eaten at their house over the years and we kids had never figured it out.

Grandpa was a master bread baker. His bread came out so perfectly that it was suitable for sandwiches, rolls with dinner, and won prizes at the state fair. He achieved this through years of baking bread on a consistent basis. And Grandpa followed his recipes every time.



Baking is one of the areas where following the recipe is important. There are ways to substitute, say, applesauce for oil in a cake, but the core ratios have to be in place for everything to work.

In fact, Michael Ruhlman wrote a book entitled "*Ratio: The Simple Codes Behind the Craft of Everyday Cooking*," and it is well worth a read.

In my kitchen at the Holler Homestead, I keep a collection of quick-reference recipes, many of which are related to baking: pasta, biscuits, dumplings, pie crust, and so on.

We have built baking into our regular rhythm, and it has become clear where the recipe must be followed and where we can take a little bit of license. We always start by looking at the recipe, if only as a reminder.



This applies to Master Mix (“Master Mix” on page 37).

I boost protein content with extra eggs, add anything from the refrigerator that needs to be eaten, and freeze the results to meter out when the morning hungries hit. Bear in mind that ingredients vary with inspiration and availability – and have fun.

Make paleo-friendly or gluten-free muffins by choosing different flours. Don’t be afraid to mix several types of flour in a batch of muffins.

^ What I call “additions” make each batch different. You might like ginger, cinnamon, chopped canned fruits, dates, mashed banana, nuts, or seeds. Or fold in bacon or sausage, grated cheese, and perch a slice of pickled jalapeño on top.

Easy Muffins

12 muffins

1 - 2 cups flour or flour mix *
½ tsp salt
2 tsp baking powder
(¼ tsp Xanthan gum)
2 TBSP sugar (honey, sorghum,
maple syrup, last 2 dabs of jam
in the jar)
1 - 4 eggs (adjust liquid content)

2 TBSP butter, melted
1 cup milk (water, juice, ½ cup
canned fruit syrup with ½ cup
water, or 1½ cups expired-
but-not-moldy sour cream or
yogurt)
**up to 1 cup of your choice of
addition ^**

Preheat oven to 400°. Melt a dab of butter in each muffin cup or line with paper.

Mix dry ingredients. If you use a syrupy sweetener, add with wet ingredients.

Make a well, drop in the eggs, and whip them a bit with a fork.

Pour in butter and other moist ingredients and mix well.

Blend everything: get most of the lumps out, as with pancakes. Adjust dry and moist ingredient amounts to make a thick batter. If you’re using flour with gluten, don’t over-mix or the muffins will be tough.

Stir in your selected additions.

Pour each muffin cup $\frac{2}{3}$ full.

Bake 20-25 minutes at 400°F.*



A very quick muffin: use pre-made pancake mix instead of flour. Check out **Master Mix** recipe on page 37. It stays fresh on your shelf for several months.



Crêpes

10 crêpes

1 cup flour
2 eggs
½ cup milk

½ cup water
¼ tsp salt
Butter

Stir together flour, eggs, milk, water, and salt until there are no lumps. Let stand in refrigerator for 45 minutes.

Stir again, because you really, really, really don't want lumps.

Preheat a nonstick pan so that a flicked water drop spits and disappears. Cast iron works well. Grease with butter or bacon fat.

Measure ¼ cup of batter. Holding the heated pan in one hand, pour in batter, swirling to spread batter evenly and thinly.

If the crêpe is too thick, thin the batter and test again. Batter should be neither too thin nor too thick. You'll soon recognize the right consistency.

When it has cooked for 30 seconds to a minute, place the fillings on half the crêpe.

Fold in half over the filling when the bubbles pop and do not refill.

Turn once so both sides are golden brown. Serve.



Basis for Many a Good Thing

Who needs Krusteaz, Kirkland, or even Pamela's? Make Master Mix.

Create pancakes, muffins, waffles, and biscuits easily and to your taste, with control over ingredients' sources.

Here are tested regular, gluten-free, and paleo-friendly options.

Ingredient Notes

Any flour will work. My gluten free version uses finely-milled rice flour. Nut, sorghum, coconut, squash, and bean flours spring to mind for both no-gluten and paleo options. Buckwheat's strong flavor and short shelf life suggests a 1:4 ratio with other flour.

Try powdered goat, buttermilk, or coconut milk.

By "shortening" we mean a fat of your choice. I use coconut oil for a shelf-stable mix, or butter if there's room in the refrigerator for the Master Mix.

"Sugar" means the sweetening agent you like best. Ground dried fruit works. You can also omit everything sweet and add a teaspoon of honey or maple syrup when you mix.



Master Mix

- 9 cups flour.**
- 1/3 cup baking powder**
- 1 1/2 cup dry milk powder**
- 1 TBSP salt**
- 2 tsp cream of tartar**
(1/2 tsp Xanthan Gum if using gluten-free flour)
- 1/4 cup "sugar"**
- 2 cups shortening**





Sift dry ingredients together three times. This is one of very few recipes for which I sift flour.

Cut in shortening to cornmeal consistency.

Store, tightly capped, with a bay leaf taped inside the lid to discourage flour weevils.

The recipe is less daunting in half batches during your own testing process. You'll soon hit on the proportions and ingredients that work for your household.

Now, how do you use this?

Pancakes

serves 4

2 cups Master Mix
2 - 3 eggs

1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/3 - 3/4 cup water



Combine ingredients.

Stir wheat-flour Master Mix as little as possible so you don't build gluten. A few lumps of dry ingredients in the batter are fine.

Gluten-free cooks: mix first, then beat the batter until you see bubbles.

If you like light pancakes, separate the eggs, whip the whites and fold them in at the end.

Or use half water and half strong coffee for a completely different take on flapjacks.

Cook on medium-hot greased griddle or frypan, flipping when the bubbles pop and don't refill.



Quick Crêpes

Add 1 - 2 more eggs, 1 TBSP melted butter, and more water to pancake recipe..

Quick Waffles

Add another egg and 1 TBSP melted butter to pancake recipe..

Biscuits

a panful

3 cups Master Mix
1/3 cup water

Mix, then knead 15 times.

Roll 12" thick and cut.

Bake 15 - 20 minutes at 425 °F.



Sweet Bread

Preheat oven to 425°F

Mix a batch of muffins; pour into greased loaf pans.

Reduce heat to 350° or 375° when you put the loaves in and bake 25 - 40 minutes, until the toothpick test is successful.

Let rest at least 15 minutes before inverting pan.



Protein-Boosted Master Mix Muffins

1 dozen

3 cups Master Mix
1 tsp baking soda
2 - 4 eggs
sweetener to taste: honey, syrup, jam

½ tsp vanilla extract
⅓ cup or so fruit juice or water
additions like fruit, nuts, seeds, spices, dessert remnants, grated vegetables.

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Combine Master Mix, baking soda, and spices.

Make a well, break in the eggs, and whip them a bit.

Add sweetener and vanilla.

Wheat option: Add liquid to make the right consistency, stirring gently as little as possible.

Gluten-free: Add liquid to make the right consistency and beat the holy heck out of the batter until it's bubbly. Consider separating the eggs, whipping the whites, and folding them in just before baking.

Stir in additions.

Fill muffin holders or greased muffin tins $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

Reduce heat to 350° and bake 25 - 40 minutes, until the toothpick test is successful.

Let rest 10 minutes before removing from pan.

You can freeze the batch and take out one or two at a time for a fresh breakfast. They thaw in half an hour.



Herb Crackers

36 2" crackers

2 cups almond flour (not almond meal)
¾ tsp salt
2 TBSP herbs

(¼ cups seeds or nuts)
1 TBSP olive oil
2 TBSP water

Combine dry ingredients, including fresh or dried herbs.

Whisk together olive oil and water, then stir into dry ingredients.

Roll dough or press between two sheets of parchment paper to ⅛" thick.

Transfer to a baking sheet and use a pizza cutter to make 2" squares. Or be adventurous with your knife and cookie cutters.

Bake until golden at 350°F for 9-11 minutes.

Vary the flavor by varying the herbs. Try herbes de provence (savory, marjoram, rosemary, thyme, oregano, and sometimes lavender leaves or flowers). Perhaps add toppers like pressed-in coarse salt or chili powder.

These fit paleo, gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan diets. When impromptu guests drop by, set a plate of herb crackers, cheese, and sausage, or set crackers next to Olé Guacamole (page 46), Use-the-Zucchini Pesto (page 45), and other dips and spreads.





Little Bites

Summertime in Tennessee is quite hot. Our second summer on the homestead, I set up the screened-in porch with an “outdoor kitchen” consisting of a camp stove, large electric roasting oven (think giant crockpot) and a grill. The air conditioning kept the living room cooler if we did not heat the house with cooking, so we tried to cook as much outdoors as possible.

More often than not, we ended up just cutting up whatever was fresh from the garden to pair with meats, cheeses, spreads, and pickled treats on a giant appetizer platter. The first time I did this, I mistakenly thought that what we were eating would be a starter instead of a whole meal.

Since that time, we have come to love the “farmer’s platter” and its many permutations throughout the summer. There is nothing more decadent than making a bunch of starters and having a snack meal paired with a cocktail.

Modern restaurants often get too fancy with their starter offerings – deep-frying everything, for example. Or they drench it all in heavy sauces. These starters, while tasty, miss the whole point of starterdom: to take the hunger edge off with something light that wakes up your palate.

Once, just once, I would like to go to a hip “farm to table” place and see a cut veggie tray with dipping sauce and radish florets rather than fried pork belly on arugula. Not that the pork belly is bad – quite the opposite. But a nice, clean veggie tray is the perfect way to open an evening of tasty enjoyment.

3-Ingredient Kale Chips

3 cups

kale
1 TBSP olive oil
¼ tsp salt



Preheat oven to 400°F

Wash, then pat the leaves dry.

Remove center rib and tear into large pieces.

Toss with olive oil and salt, other seasonings, and maybe seeds.

Place a single layer on a baking sheet so each crisps.

Bake 5 minutes. Rotate sheet and bake 5 minutes more. After your first batch, you’ll know how fast your oven roasts kale.

You’ll soon invent flavors to make these chips your own. One variation calls for Old Bay seasoning: if you have that with your spices, give it a try.



Use-the-Zucchini Pesto

3 cups

1½ pounds zucchini
2 TBSP olive oil, divided
2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 TBSP water
1 cup fresh parsley leaves
¼ cup slivered almonds, toasted
¼ cup fresh mint leaves
½ tsp grated lemon rind

2 tsp fresh lemon juice
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp black pepper
¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
2 cup green beans
2 cup grape or cherry tomatoes
2 yellow bell peppers, sliced
**Any other dipper your
imagination surfaces**

Shred zucchini. Squeeze dry.

Sauté zucchini, 6 tsp oil, and garlic for 15 minutes over medium-low heat. Add 2 TBSP water during last 2 minutes. Cool.

Finely chop parsley, almonds, and mint in a food processor. Add zucchini mixture, remaining 2 tsp oil, rind, juice, salt, and pepper. Pulse until combined but not smooth.

Stir in cheese.

Cook beans 3 - 4 minutes in boiling water. Rinse with cold water.

Serve dip with green beans, tomatoes, bell peppers, or even crackers and chips.



Olé Guacamole

2 cups

3 - 4 avocados, depends upon size

juice of 1 lime

2 TBSP minced fresh cilantro

1 clove minced garlic

Mash the avocado meat and stir in other ingredients.

Grab a chip and taste. Adjust salt and hot pepper.

If you prefer to avoid chemical-laden (but so good!) commercial chips, use Herb Crackers (page 41) to scoop this dish.

For fun, roll the cracker $\frac{1}{16}$ " thin instead of $\frac{1}{8}$ " and make a baked chip. Or replace some or all the almond flour with cornmeal or masa harina that you've ground fine – although this removes the paleo-friendly nature of the original cracker.

1 TBSP minced onion or scallion
1 tsp salt
1 tsp dried or chopped fresh hot peppers (choose your heat)



Kathie's Midwest Dill Pickle Wraps

Dill pickles

Cream cheese

Ham, cut deli-thin and rollable

Dry pickles and ham with paper towels.

Spread softened cream cheese on ham, then wrap this around a pickle.

Store in the refrigerator in layers on paper towels.

You can make these a few days ahead.



Cheesy Thumbprints with Hot Pepper Jelly

makes 20

2 cups Cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup flour
¼ cup chilled butter, chopped
½ cup hot pepper jelly

Preheat oven to 400°F

Blend cheese, flour, and butter in a food processor until it resembles coarse meal and can be formed into a ball. Wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Shape dough into 20 1" balls, placed 1 inch apart on a baking sheet.

Bake 5 minutes at 400°F.

Remove from oven and immediately press your thumb into the top of each ball.

Fill this depression with jelly and return to oven for 5 minutes more.





Timely Treats

One of my favorite childhood memories is coming home from school craving something sweet. Mom was home and handed me a carrot, knowing that I would turn into beast if given sugar. In true child form, I whined that I wanted something sweet and she told my quite confidently, “Carrots are sweet.”

This one attempt at subterfuge failed, but she managed to trick us over the years with healthy but sweet treats like “ice” popsicles and the like. By no means did I live a childhood bereft of baked treats and dessert. Mama Sauce just wanted us to learn to eat many kinds of foods and be nutritionally balanced.

One of her memorable inventions was the peanut butter bar. Dad worked at a peanut factory so we had unlimited access to free peanut butter. It was both nutritionally favorable and budget conscious to produce foods using peanut butter. Her bars were a mix of powdered milk, peanut butter and honey, chilled in the refrigerator. The result was like a tasty piece of fudge packed with calcium, favorable fats, and protein, sweetened with honey from our own bees.

We may not discuss sweets much on the podcast, but several times per year I go into baking overdrive, tapping into the old family recipes or inventing new ways to serve seasonal fruits. Homemade shortbread, for example, is much nicer than the cake pucks one gets at the store.

Homemade can have less sugar and leave room to let the peachness of a peach, blueberryness of a blueberry or strawberryness of a strawberry shine.

When my nieces visit, it is fun to dust off the old gingerbread or sugar cookie recipes invented back when sugar was expensive and fat was not, and try one of Grandma’s or Mama Sauce’s childhood treats.

Blueberry Season!

Here's something to tickle your sweet tooth, even if you limit gluten intake.

And there are other benefits to reap from this not-too-sweet dessert.

Blueberries are antioxidants, help fight inflammation, boost digestion and brain function, and promote a healthy heart. They contain vitamins B6, C, E, and K; thiamine, riboflavin, copper, and manganese. Cornmeal boasts iron and phosphorus.

A combination of corn, squash, and dried beans is a perfect protein – you can include the squash and beans in the meal that precedes this dessert.

With frozen blueberries and corn, you can make the dish all year long. Just measure the berries or kernels while frozen.



Blueberry and Corn Crisp

serves 12

Filling

5 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen whole

1/3 cup sugar

2 tsp grated lemon zest

3 TBSP lemon juice

1 TBSP cornstarch

1/4 tsp salt

Topping

2/3 cup gluten-free flour

2/3 cup coarse-grind cornmeal

1/3 cup sugar

1 tsp salt

10 TBSP chilled butter, in pieces

1 cup fresh corn kernels (1 ear)

Preheat oven to 375°F

Toss filling ingredients in a shallow two-quart baking pan.

Combine flour, cornmeal, sugar, and salt. Work in butter to make a grainy mixture that holds together when you squeeze it. Add the corn kernels. Distribute clumps of topping over the filling.

Bake 50 - 60 minutes, until golden.

Cool 30 minutes before serving.



Healthy Chocolate Cake

1 mugful

¼ cup almond flour
2 TBSP cocoa powder
2 TBSP maple syrup

1 tsp coconut oil
1 tsp vanilla
1 egg

Thoroughly beat everything together. Pour into an 8 - 10-ounce mug.

Microwave time depends upon your oven: 45 - 120 seconds. Err on the side of leaving a little goo showing: cake will continue to cook after you stop the microwave.

This goes beautifully with Holler Roast coffee!

A note about “healthy:” it’s not as healthy as a plateful of greens and raw meat, but it’s made

of simple ingredients and intended for once in awhile. The only cooking implement to clean is the mug you eat from.

For those who hate to eat microwaved food, bake 10 minutes in an oven-safe ramekin at 350°F.



Coconut Macaroons

2 dozen

6 egg whites
Pinch of salt
⅔ cup maple syrup

1 TBSP vanilla
1½ cups unsweetened shredded coconut

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Line cookie sheet with parchment. If you don't have parchment, use tin foil and oil lightly.

Whip egg whites with salt.

Gently add syrup and vanilla.

Fold in coconut.

Drop 2 TBSP mounds on prepared pan and bake golden about 15 minutes.

Eat within a few days.



Triple-Rich Toffee Bars

36 bars

1 cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
1¼ tsp salt

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup white flour
**1 cup sweet or semi-sweet
baking chocolate**
½ to 1 cup nuts, chopped

Preheat to 350°F.

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, vanilla, salt, and flour, stirring only to blend.

Spread in 9X13" pan.

Bake 30 minutes at 350°F.

While it bakes, melt chocolate and stir glossy, adding a little warm water if necessary.

Spread on warm cookies.

Sprinkle with nuts, pressing them in. Cut when cool.

Obvious substitutions are rice for wheat flour and brown sugar or other sweetener for white sugar.



Summer Pudding

serves 6

7 slices soft white bread
Butter, soft
3 cups berries

½ - ⅔ cups sugar
⅓ cup water or berry juice
Heavy cream

Butter one side of each slice. Set a slice aside.

Line a 3 - 4 cup bowl with 6 slices, butter facing out. Leave the tops sticking up above the bowl.

Cook fresh berries, sugar, and water for 10 minutes. Canned berries don't need cooking. Simply toss frozen berries with sugar. Pour in berries.

Top with the reserved slice of bread, then fold the tops of other slices inward to fully cover top of the dessert.

Place a saucer on top and press down. Pour off and save excess juice.

Chill at least 6 hours.

Serve from the bowl with cream and excess juice or turn out the pudding and decorate.



Molasses Crinkle Cookies

3 dozen

¾ cup shortening
1 cup packed light brown sugar
¼ cup molasses
1 egg
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 TBSP baking soda

1½ TBSP ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp ground cloves
¼ tsp salt
Granulated or larger-grained decorator's sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Cream shortening and brown sugar until smooth. Beat in molasses and egg.

In another bowl, combine flour, soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and salt. Blend with the creamed mixture.

Cover and refrigerate for 1½ - 2 hours, until thoroughly chilled.

Grease a cookie sheet or line with a silicon mat. Place ⅓ cup granulated sugar into a small bowl. Have at hand a bowl of water and a flat-bottomed cup or glass.

Form dough into 1" balls. Dip the top of each ball into the sugar and place on sheet 2 - 3" apart, sugar side up.

Dip the cup or glass in water and gently press the top of each cookie to moisten lightly. There's no need to flatten the balls; the cookies will spread while baking.

Bake 7 - 10 minutes at 375°F.



Lemon Bars

24 cookies

Crust

1 cup butter
dash salt
½ cup powdered sugar
2 cups flour (wheat or rice)

Preheat oven to 350°F

Combine.

Press into a 9X13" greased pan.

Bake 15 minutes.

Filling

2 cups sugar
¼ cup flour (wheat or rice)
6 TBSP lemon juice
2 TBSP lemon zest

Combine.

Pour over crust right after you remove it from oven. Bake another 25 minutes.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Cut while warm. Cool to room temperature before serving.



Italian Holiday Cookies

3 - 4 dozen

½ cup butter
⅓ cup sugar
1 egg, separated
¼ tsp vanilla

1¼ cup sifted flour
½ tsp salt
1 cup flaked coconut
preserves of your choice



Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cream butter and sugar. Beat in yolk and vanilla.

Stir in flour and salt. Chill.

Shape 1" balls. Dip each in beaten egg white, then coconut.

Place on baking sheet, make a thumbprint, and fill it with preserves.

Bake 20 - 25 minutes at 350°F. Cool on rack.



Roll Cookies

about 40 2" cookies

½ cup white or brown sugar
½ cup butter
1 tsp vanilla
2 eggs

2½ cup sifted flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Cream sugar and butter.

Beat in vanilla, eggs, baking powder, salt, and flour.

Chill 3 - 4 hours. I've often rolled without chilling at all: you choose.

Roll ¼" thick. Cut shapes with cookie cutters or a glass.

Bake 7-12 minutes at 375°F.

Decorate.

Make a double batch if you want lots!



Rich Roll Cookies

about 50 2" cookies

1 cup butter
¾ cup sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla or almond extract

2½ cups sifted flour
½ tsp salt
(½ tsp grated lemon rind, or 1 TBSP cinnamon, or 2 TBSP poppy seeds)

Preheat oven to 350°F

Cream butter, sugar, egg and extract.

Combine flour and salt, then stir into creamed ingredients.

Chill 3 - 4 hours.

Roll ¼" thick and cut shapes..

Bake 8 - 10 minutes at 350°F.

Cool completely before decorating.



Grandma Ida's Gingerbread Men

about 30 people

1½ cups dark molasses
1 cup packed brown sugar
1½ cups cold water
1½ cups shortening or butter
7 cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 tsp ground allspice
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cloves

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cream molasses, brown sugar, water, and shortening.

Mix in remaining ingredients.

Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours.

Roll dough ¼" thick on floured board.

Cut with floured gingerbread cutter.

Place about 2" apart on lightly greased cookie sheet.

Bake until no indentation remains when touched,
10 - 12 minute at 350°F.

Cool, then decorate.



Magic Window Cookies

2 dozen

¾ cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla or ½ tsp lemon extract
2½ cups flour (any type)

1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
6 packages clear-colored Life Savers candy
1 drinking straw

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Cream butter, sugar, eggs, extract.

Mix, then blend in flour, powder, salt.

Chill 1 hour to overnight.

Crush candies to approximately ¼" chunks, keeping colors separate.

Roll ⅛" thick and cut shapes, then cut areas from the center of each.

Transfer cookies to foil-lined baking sheets. Fill the interior hole with crushed candy. Each Life Saver adequately fills a quarter-sized hole.

Use the straw to make a hole near the top of each cookie. After baking, add a ribbon if you intend to hang these cookies on your tree or in your windows.

Bake 7 - 9 minutes at 375°F, let cool, then peel the foil from the cookies.



Mexican Mocha Balls

6 dozen

1 cup butter
½ cup sugar
2 tsp vanilla
2 cups sifted flour
¼ cups cocoa
½ tsp salt

1 TBSP instant coffee powder or
2 TBSP espresso
1 cup chopped nuts
½ cup chopped maraschino
cherries
powdered sugar

Preheat to 325°F.

Cream butter, sugar, vanilla.

Sift together flour, cocoa, coffee powder and add to batter.

Stir in nuts, cherries.

Chill. Shape 1" diameter balls.

Bake 20 minutes at 325°F.

Dust hot cookies with confectioner's sugar. Cool on rack.





PRESERVE IT

Plan for the Future

The year is 2009. The Holler Homestead has two large garden spots, meat and egg chickens, more cats than we know what to do with, and my love of preserving seasonally is well established. That year, I suggested that I quit my day job and focus on building the homestead full-time, paired with a blog.

It didn't happen. The income from my job was simply too tempting to ignore. Imagine where the podcast would be today if I had started back in 2009!

Instead, *Living Free in Tennessee* was born as an escape hatch. I kept finding myself doing marathon canning sessions on Saturdays after a visit to the local farmers market and talking to myself about the process and tricks I had learned over the years to make things easier. The first lesson was: eat what you can rather than "saving" it for a rainy day, because if you do not eat what you can, it goes bad and all your efforts are for nothing.

My biggest love on the homestead is finding wild plants and preserving things seasonally – both wild and home-grown. It started with a jar of green beans back in my early 20s at Grandma and Grandpa's house. They showed me how to ensure things were safe and methodically done. Many years passed and Mama Sauce was in town when I had too many cucumbers. So she showed me how to make pickles.

That year, we canned 24 jars of tomato sauce after she left and by the next summer, I was dehydrating, canning, and freezing something almost every weekend from late spring through early fall. My phone number was on speed dial for many locals to ask canning questions as they preserved their own food. They had discovered my passion for food safety – a joke among friends – and my willingness to chase down the right answer when I did not know.

"If you want to risk killing your family with botulism, then do that," became an oft-used slogan.

The fear of making someone sick is the main reason people are so afraid of doing things wrong in canning and fermenting. The good news is that it is very difficult to make people sick with high-acid and fermented foods, because they smell and/or look horrible when things go wrong.

It is in the low-acid foods that the risk lies. They must be pressure-canned *and also* boiled on the way out of the jar. This reduces the risk of food-borne pathogens nearly to zero.

But like many things in the homestead kitchen, it is best to learn one skill at a time and not commit to all the things at one time, and the best place to start is pickling and sauerkraut, which carry the lowest risks in preservation aside from freezing and dehydrating.

If you are new to canning - head to the National Center for Home Canning's website and follow their instructions. Start with pickles, then do jams, then move on to fruits, and add low-acid vegetables and meat last.



Nicole Sauce

If I were to boil my talents into a few words, I'd say: I can inspire people to grow, can learn and teach skills and lost crafts; and can build the kind of community in which shared interests and trust lead to better lives.

I do this in the back hills of Tennessee on a small homestead, where I run Holler Roast Coffee – a craft coffee roasting business – and host a podcast show called *Living Free in Tennessee*.

These two efforts have spawned an extraordinary community of people who “#get stuff done” – the TN GSD Crew. I also provide business start-up and marketing services and build websites.

I am intensely interested in learning the essence of how things work. It started in college and with simple things. I learned how to make paper, read music, make my own sourdough starter, and weave fabric. No matter where I have focused, I have always felt this unerring need to learn how things work.

So, 12 years ago, when life took me from a city life to a quieter country homestead, I had already mastered important homesteading skills that included home canning and other means of food preservation, basic construction skills, gardening and farming, and how to make great food from scratch.

Little did I know that the next decade would awaken a whole new set of passions: how to identify and use wild medicinal and edible plants and fungi, raise goats and ducks, grow plants organically, make cheese, cure meats (and make bacon), process animals, roast coffee, and field a podcast.

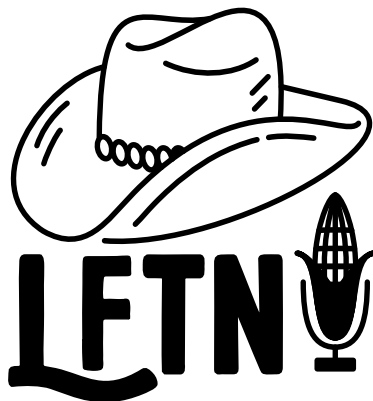
So meet me in the kitchen or on the air. Every new member of the community brings new riches, knowledge, and promise.

Cook with What You Have

is a product of Living Free in Tennessee. It's available free to members of Living Free in Tennessee.

It will soon be available for purchase on Amazon.

Living Free in Tennessee is a regular podcast, set of blogposts, and membership community. Find out more at LivingFreeinTennessee.com.



Holler Roast Coffee is a small-batch craft roasting business in rural Tennessee. Enjoy delicious coffee from premium coffee beans, delivered to your doorstep within a few days of roasting.

Check out HollerRoast.com.



Cook with What You Have

This valuable guide to the science and art of home cooking starts with one woman's kitchen experience and simply removes the mystery from practical cooking. In addition to good eating, you'll soon see how to decide:

“Is it safe?”

“Do I need that? What can I use instead?”

“Can I make this? It sounds hard.”

and a hundred other questions you will love leaving behind.

Nicole Sauce

... created this book when she realized that some people are a little afraid of striking out on their own in the kitchen. Since practical cooking is one of Nicole's joys, she hopes you'll find this little volume valuable.

Mama Sauce

... is along for the ride.

Praise for Cook with What You Have

Real recipes, from a real kitchen, cooking for real people. No over complicated TV-glam recipes here; just a lot of great ways to turn real ingredients into great food. This cookbook illustrates perfectly the relationship between Nicole's garden and her kitchen and reveals some of the secret “sauce” needed to bring the same to your own home.

~ Michael Leonido

Cook with What You Have
is available at
LivingFreeinTennessee.com
and soon on Amazon.

\$14.95



COOK

with

What

You Have



Nicole Sauce & Mama Sauce