

How to



Simple Recipes
for the Best Baking

Bake

Everything

Mark Bittman

Bake

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Weights of Everyday Baking Ingredients

Use the chart below to convert many common baking ingredients to weights, or to figure out how much you need to buy of a certain ingredient (like condensed milk or chocolate) if the recipe calls for a volume:

INGREDIENT	WEIGHT PER CUP
All-purpose flour	4.25 ounces
Rolled oats	3.5 ounces
Granulated sugar	7 ounces
Brown sugar	7.5 ounces
Confectioners' sugar	4 ounces
Milk, yogurt, or sour cream	8 ounces
Sweetened condensed milk	11 ounces
Vegetable oil	7 ounces
Nut butter	9.5 ounces
Chopped chocolate	6 ounces
Cocoa powder	3 ounces
Corn syrup or maple syrup	11 ounces
Molasses or honey	12 ounces

Banana Bread

MAKES: 1 loaf

TIME: About 1 hour

Who doesn't love banana bread? This one is just sweet enough, with fabulous crunch if you add walnuts and coconut, as I always do. There's no better solution for over-the-hill bananas, and the batter comes together in less than 10 minutes. I've been making this recipe—created by my late dear friend Sherry—for almost fifty years; it's incredibly reliable.

- 1 stick butter, melted, plus softened butter for greasing**
- 2 cups flour**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 cup sugar**

- 3 very ripe bananas, mashed with a fork until smooth
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan with softened butter.
2. Whisk together the flour, salt, baking powder, and sugar in a large bowl.
3. Mix together the melted butter and mashed bananas in a separate bowl. Beat in the eggs and vanilla until well combined. Stir this mixture into the dry ingredients just enough to combine everything. Gently fold in the nuts and coconut if you're using them.
4. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until the bread is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center of the bread comes out almost entirely clean. Cool the pan on a rack for 15 minutes, then carefully turn it upside down to release the loaf. Serve warm or at room temperature or wrap in plastic and keep at room temperature for a couple days.

HONEY WHOLE GRAIN BANANA BREAD For a delicately sweet, nuttier bread: Substitute 1¼ cups whole wheat flour and ¾ cup oat bran for the all-purpose flour. Reduce the sugar to ¾ cup and whisk in 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Add ¼ cup honey to the melted butter.

7 WAYS TO TOP ANY QUICK BREAD

- Coconut Glaze (page 567)
- Cinnamon Glaze (page 567)
- Orange Glaze (page 567)
- Whipped Butter (page 583)
- Cream Cheese Frosting (page 562)
- Chocolate-Hazelnut Spread (page 586)
- A drizzle of honey

7 WAYS TO TOP ANY QUICK BREAD

- Toasted chopped nuts, up to 1 cup
- Chocolate chips, up to 1 cup
- Ground spices, like cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger, up to 2 teaspoons
- Bourbon, up to 1 tablespoon
- Pumpkin or sunflower seeds, up to ¾ cup
- Citrus zest, up to 2 tablespoons
- Chopped dried fruit, up to 1 cup
- Shredded carrots, up to 1 cup
- Yogurt or sour cream, ¼ cup

CHOCOLATE BANANA BREAD Reduce the flour to 1½ cups. Add ½ cup Dutch-process cocoa powder to the flour. Fold up to 1 cup chopped dark chocolate into the batter.

TROPICAL BANANA BREAD Brown sugar and a few choice add-ins transform basic banana bread into a tropical treat: Replace half the sugar with ½ cup packed dark brown sugar. Fold ½ cup chopped dried pineapple, ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut, and ½ cup chopped macadamia nuts into the batter.

ORANGE BANANA BREAD Whisk 2 tablespoons grated orange zest into the dry ingredients. Mix ¼ cup fresh orange juice into the melted butter and bananas.

PUMPKIN BREAD Substitute 1 cup pumpkin purée for the bananas. Whisk 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg, ¼ teaspoon ginger, and ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves into the dry ingredients.

PEANUT BUTTER BANANA BREAD Add ½ cup peanut butter to the bananas. Cut the butter down to 5 tablespoons.

APRICOT CREAM CHEESE BREAD The soft tang of cream cheese is a wonderful flavor and texture enhancer for quick breads: Replace the bananas with ½ cup apricot

Lemon-Poppy Bread

MAKES: 1 loaf

TIME: A little more than 1 hour

Lemon-Poppy Bread offers light, refreshing flavor in a rich cake. It's not too sweet, as the nutty seeds offset the lemon's tang. For dessert, top the loaf with a Lemon Glaze (page 567), pair it with a fruit sauce (page 573), or serve with macerated berries (page 575).

This recipe can serve as the foundation for a variety of citrus cakes (see the next page for ideas).

- 1 stick butter, melted and cooled, plus softened butter for greasing**
- 2 cups flour, plus more for dusting**
- 1 cup sugar**

- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 1½ tablespoons grated lemon zest**
- ¼ cup poppy seeds**
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice**
- ⅓ cup milk**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

- 1.** Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan with softened butter and dust with flour.
- 2.** Whisk together the flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder in a large bowl. Stir in the lemon zest and poppy seeds until distributed evenly.
- 3.** Whisk together the melted butter, lemon juice, milk, eggs, and vanilla in a separate bowl. Pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Do not overmix; it's okay if the batter is not perfectly smooth.
- 4.** Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until the bread is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out almost entirely clean. Cool the pan on a rack for 15 minutes, then carefully turn it upside down to release the loaf. Serve warm or at room temperature or wrap it in plastic and keep at room temperature for a couple days.

LEMON CORNMEAL BREAD For a more crumbly, cornbread-like texture: Replace ½ cup of the flour with ½ cup yellow cornmeal. Substitute brown sugar for granulated. Replace the milk with buttermilk.

OLIVE OIL TANGERINE BREAD The flavors of Sicily: Swap the lemon zest for tangerine zest. Replace the lemon juice with ¼ cup orange liqueur and ¼ cup tangerine juice. Use ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil instead of the melted butter.

LIME-POPPY BREAD Lime is so tart that the amount of zest and juice is cut back: Substitute 1 tablespoon lime zest for the lemon zest and ⅓ cup lime juice for the lemon juice. Increase the milk to ½ cup.

Crêpes

MAKES: 8 to 12 crêpes, depending on the size

TIME: 40 minutes

Crêpes are great at any time of day and as good savory as they are sweet. The batter can be made a day ahead, as can the unfilled crêpes—refrigerate them, then wrap them in foil and reheat in a 325°F oven. If you want to freeze them, cool them entirely, stack them with wax paper between crêpes, and wrap the whole thing tightly in plastic wrap. Defrost in the fridge.

With such a thin batter, you may have to make one or two crêpes before they're perfectly thin and perfectly round; this is normal, and there's plenty to allow for some error. But even a misshapen crêpe is a tasty one.

1¼ cups milk, plus more if needed

1 cup all-purpose flour

2 eggs

2 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled

1 tablespoon sugar (optional)

1/8 teaspoon salt
Butter for cooking

- 1.** Whisk the milk, flour, eggs, melted butter, the sugar if you're using it, and the salt until smooth; you can do this in a blender. If the mixture isn't quite pourable, add a little more milk. If time allows, let the batter rest in the refrigerator for an hour or up to 24 hours.
 - 2.** Put an 8- or 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat and when it's hot, add a small pat of butter. Stir the batter and pour a scant ladleful into the skillet. Swirl it around so that it forms a thin layer on the bottom of the pan.
 - 3.** When the top of the crêpe is dry, after about a minute, carefully flip it and cook the other side for 15 to 30 seconds. (The crêpe should become only slightly brown and not at all crisp.) Bear in mind that the first crêpe almost never works, so discard it if necessary; there is plenty of batter.
 - 4.** Stack the crêpes on a plate as you make them and keep them warm in a 200°F oven until ready to serve. Even better, fill each crêpe while it's still in the pan, putting the filling in the center of the bottom third of the crêpe. Either roll the crêpe starting at the end with the filling or fold it in half, then into thirds. If you want your filling warmed, keep the filled crêpe over low heat for a few minutes. Repeat this process,
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special equipment—a heavy pot and candy thermometer if you fry or (in most cases) a special doughnut pan if you bake. If this is your first time deep frying, *Fats for Frying* (page 134) will tell you all you need to know; the learning curve isn't steep.

Doughnuts firm up quickly as they age, but you can revive them even a day or two later with a quick run through the microwave just before serving.

Glazed Doughnuts

MAKES: About 1 dozen

TIME: About 3 hours, mostly unattended

Crispy, with a pillowy interior and thin sugar glaze, homemade doughnuts are leagues ahead of the best store-bought versions. The dough needs to rest twice—that's what makes it so light—but you can prepare it the night before. The bit of extra work is well worth it, and once you've made the dough, preparing any yeast-raised doughnut is just a matter of switching the filling and frosting. See the variations for ideas or use the lists on pages 129 and 132 as jumping-off points.

- 1½ cups milk, lukewarm
- 2¼ teaspoons (1 package) instant yeast
- 2 eggs
- 1 stick butter, melted and cooled
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4¼ cups flour, plus more for rolling out the dough
About 8 cups neutral oil (like canola or vegetable) for frying, plus more for greasing
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Using an electric mixer or a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, beat 1¼ cups of the milk, the yeast, eggs, butter, granulated sugar, and salt. Add half the flour and mix until combined, then mix in the rest of the flour until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Add more flour, about 2 tablespoons at a time, if the dough is too wet. If you're using an electric mixer, the dough will probably become too thick to beat; when

it does, transfer it to a floured surface and gently knead it until it is smooth.

2. Grease a large bowl with oil. Transfer the dough to the bowl and cover with plastic wrap or a kitchen towel. Let rise at room temperature until it doubles in size, about 1 hour; if you prefer, you can let the dough rise in the refrigerator overnight.

3. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface and roll it to ½-inch thickness. Cut out the doughnuts with a doughnut cutter, concentric cookie cutters, or a sturdy drinking glass and a shot glass (the larger one should be about 3 inches in diameter), flouring the cutters as you go. If you like, reserve the doughnut holes (highly recommended). Knead any scraps together, being careful not to overwork, and let rest for a few minutes before repeating the process.

4. Arrange the doughnuts on 2 floured baking sheets so there is plenty of room between them. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rise in a warm place for another 45 minutes or so, until they are slightly puffed up and delicate. If your kitchen is not warm, heat the oven to 200°F at the beginning of this step, then turn off the heat and leave the door slightly ajar before letting the dough rise in the oven.

5. About 15 minutes before the doughnuts are done rising, place a candy thermometer in a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, add the oil, and heat over medium heat. Heat to 375°F, watching it carefully to make sure it doesn't get too hot. Meanwhile, line racks, baking sheets, or plates with paper towels.

6. Carefully add the doughnuts to the oil, a few at a time. If they're too delicate to pick up with your fingers (they may be this way only if you let them rise in the oven), use a metal spatula to pick them up and slide them into the oil. It's okay if they deflate a bit; they'll puff back up as they fry. After about 45 seconds to 1 minute, when the bottoms are deep golden, use a slotted spoon to flip and cook for another minute or so on the other side. Doughnut holes cook faster, less than 30 seconds per side. Transfer the doughnuts to the prepared racks or plates and repeat with the rest of the dough, adjusting the heat as needed to keep the oil at 375°F.

7. To make the glaze, whisk the confectioners' sugar with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk and the vanilla until smooth. When the doughnuts are cool enough to handle, dip the tops into the glaze; if you like, flip them so they're completely covered. Transfer to racks to let the glaze set and serve as soon as possible. If you can't serve them right away, keep them warm in a 200°F oven or store for one day in an airtight container at room temperature.

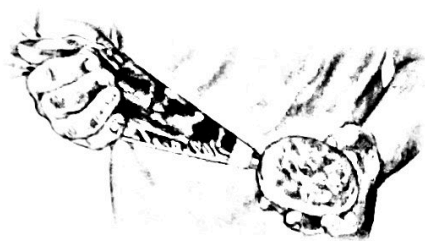
BAKED DOUGHNUTS Not as tender or puffy, but a decent alternative that spares you the hassle of deep-frying: Proceed with the recipe through Step 5. Bake the doughnuts on a greased or parchment-lined baking sheet in a 375°F oven until they're fluffy and golden, about 8 minutes.

CHOCOLATE-GLAZED DOUGHNUTS This glaze is thin and sweet; for a richer, thicker topping, use still-warm Chocolate Ganache (page 557): For the glaze, decrease the confectioners' sugar to $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocoa powder. Dip only the tops of the doughnuts.

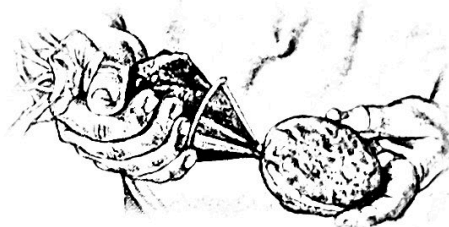
JELLY DOUGHNUTS Use a cookie cutter or the rim of a sturdy glass to punch out the doughnut but do not punch out a doughnut hole. When the cooked doughnuts are hot but cool enough to handle, dip both sides in granulated sugar. Poke a chopstick or skewer through one side of the doughnut and hollow out the center of the doughnut. Fit a pastry bag or zipper bag with a round tip and fill it with your favorite jelly or jam (see page 575 to make your own)—you'll need about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per batch. (See the illustrations at right and No Pastry Tip? No Problem on page 128.) Insert the pastry tip into the center of the doughnut and fill it with 1 to 2 tablespoons jam; as you pipe, slowly pull the bag toward you to keep the doughnut from exploding.

CUSTARD-FILLED DOUGHNUTS Like an American éclair: Follow the directions above for making filled doughnuts, using 2 cups of your favorite flavor Pastry Cream (page 578) as the filling. Dust the doughnuts with confectioners' sugar.

Filling Doughnuts



Use a pastry bag fitted with a round tip to pipe filling into the doughnut.



Alternatively, press or squeeze the filling through a funnel and into the doughnut.

BOSTON CREAM DOUGHNUTS Follow the preceding variation, omitting the confectioners' sugar. Make the glaze in the Chocolate-Glazed Doughnuts variation and dip the tops of the filled doughnuts into it.

CREAM-FILLED DOUGHNUTS An airier but equally rich version of custard doughnuts: Whip $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream until it holds stiff peaks. Fold in 1 cup Pastry Cream (page 578) until incorporated and fill the doughnuts as directed.

LOUKOUMADES Honey and cinnamon give these Greek doughnut holes a warm sweetness: Proceed with the recipe through Step 3. Instead of rolling and cutting the dough, shape it into balls, about 2 tablespoons each. Rest and fry as directed. For the glaze, combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each of honey and water in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Let cool slightly before adding 2 teaspoons cinnamon and drizzling the syrup over the loukoumades.

Pastry tips are cheap and easy to find, but if you don't have them, you can use a funnel to fill soft pastries like doughnuts and cream puffs. Since funnels are rigid like pastry tips, they give you good control. For filled doughnuts, spoon the filling directly into the funnel or put it in a zipper bag, snip the corner, and put the bag in the funnel. Make a hole in the side of a doughnut and insert the funnel; squeeze the bag or use a spoon to push it through. If the filling is concentrated in the center, gently squeeze the top of the doughnut to distribute it into the gaps.

Cake Doughnuts

MAKES: About 1 dozen

TIME: About 1 hour

These old-fashioned doughnuts are leavened with baking powder rather than yeast, which gives them a denser, more cakelike crumb and a satisfyingly crisp crust. This dough doesn't need to rest, making it a good choice for spontaneous breakfasts. Coat it with Vanilla Glaze (page 567), Lemon Glaze (page 567), or Jam Glaze (page 568), or eat it as is.

- 3½ cups flour, plus more for rolling out the dough**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ¾ teaspoon nutmeg (optional)**
- 2 eggs**
- 1⅓ cups sugar**
- ¾ cup milk**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted and cooled**
- About 8 cups neutral oil (like canola or vegetable) for frying, plus more for greasing**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**

1. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt, and the nutmeg if you're using it. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and ⅔ cup of the sugar until thick, then add the

milk and melted butter. Add the flour mixture a little at a time, mixing first with a whisk and then switching to your hands once it gets too thick. The dough should be sticky but hold together; if it's too wet, add flour a tablespoon at a time until it comes together.

2. Transfer the dough to a well-floured surface and knead a few times. Roll it out to ½-inch thickness; if it contracts as you roll, let it rest for a few minutes, then try again. Dip a doughnut cutter, a 3-inch cookie cutter, or the rim of a sturdy glass in flour to cut out the doughnuts; cut out the holes with a smaller cookie cutter or shot glass (save them and fry along with the doughnuts). Knead any scraps together, being careful not to overwork, and repeat. Arrange the doughnuts on a floured or parchment-lined baking sheet and cover with a kitchen towel while you heat the oil.

3. Place a candy thermometer inside a large heavy pot or Dutch oven and heat the oil to 375°F. Watch very carefully; too-hot oil is a fire hazard, and oil takes a while to cool down. Line racks or plates with paper towels.

4. Gently add the doughnuts to the oil, a few at a time. After 45 seconds to 1 minute, when the bottoms are deep golden, flip them with a slotted spoon and cook on the other side for another minute. Doughnut holes cook faster, less than 30 seconds per side. Transfer the doughnuts to the prepared racks and repeat with the rest of the dough, adjusting the heat as needed to keep the oil at 375°F.

5. Combine the cinnamon and remaining ⅔ cup sugar in a bowl. When the doughnuts are still hot but have cooled enough to handle, roll them in the cinnamon sugar. Eat them while they're still warm.

CHOCOLATE DOUGHNUTS Great for dipping in coffee, and classic with Vanilla Glaze (page 567): Decrease the flour to 2½ cups and add 1 cup cocoa powder; omit the nutmeg. Use 3 eggs, decrease the sugar to 1¼ cups, and replace ¼ cup of the milk with buttermilk. If the dough is too dry, add more buttermilk, a tablespoon at a time, until it comes together. Fry for 1 minute 15 seconds per side.

APPLE CIDER DOUGHNUTS Dipped in cinnamon sugar and served hot, these are hard to beat: Boil 1 cup apple cider over high heat until it reduces to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup; let it cool. Decrease the milk to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and add the cooled cider along with it in Step 1. Omit the nutmeg.

CRULLERS This twisted doughnut holds on to glazes well and is fun to eat: On a well-floured surface, roll out the dough into a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick rectangle. Cut the dough into strips about 10 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide. Make the crullers by folding each strip in half, twisting a few times, then pinching the ends to seal them. Fry for a minute or so per side.

Sour Cream Old-Fashioned Doughnuts

MAKES: About 10 doughnuts

TIME: 1½ hours

Crunchy on the outside and tender inside, these are where doughnuts meet biscuits. They're fried at a lower temperature and flipped twice, giving them their characteristic ridges, which are perfect for clinging to glaze. Coat with any of the glazes you'd use for Glazed Doughnuts (page 126).

- 3 cups flour, plus more for rolling out the dough
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, softened
- 3 egg yolks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sour cream
- About 8 cups neutral oil (like canola or vegetable) for frying, plus more for greasing

1. Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, beat the sugar and butter until the mixture is like wet sand, then mix in the egg yolks and sour cream. Add the flour mixture a little

at a time, mixing first with a whisk and then switching to your hands once it gets too thick. The dough should be slightly sticky but hold together; if necessary, add more flour or sour cream a tablespoon at a time until it comes together. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour or overnight.

2. Place a candy thermometer inside a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven and heat the oil to 325°F, watching carefully to make sure it doesn't get any hotter. Line racks or plates with paper towels.
3. Transfer the dough to a well-floured surface and knead it a few times, then roll it to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thickness. Dip a doughnut cutter, 3-inch cookie cutter, or the rim of a sturdy glass in flour and cut out the doughnuts; cut

TOPPING IDEAS

A simple glaze is the favorite topping, but with or without it, you can roll doughnuts in any number of other toppings. Make sure they're still moist from the fryer so the toppings stick and put the toppings in a shallow bowl for easiest coverage:

- Vanilla Glaze, Lemon Glaze, or Jam Glaze (pages 567–568)
- Confectioners' sugar, sifted beforehand
- Sugar mixed with 1 tablespoon cinnamon or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cardamom
- Drizzled honey or maple syrup
- Rich Chocolate Sauce (page 580)
- Sprinkles
- Finely grated citrus zest
- Chopped toasted nuts
- Shredded unsweetened coconut
- Chopped cooked bacon (this is great mixed with pecans)
- Finely chopped dried fruit
- Crushed graham crackers or Chocolate Wafer Cookies (page 159)
- Caramel Sauce (page 581) or Butterscotch Sauce (page 582)
- Marshmallow Sauce (page 587)
- Peanut Butter Sauce (page 588)
- Crushed or finely chopped cereal or Granola (page 138)

out the holes with a smaller cookie cutter or shot glass. Knead any scraps together, being careful not to overwork, and repeat.

4. Gently add the doughnuts to the oil, one at a time. Don't crowd them. They will sink at first; when they float to the top, fry for another 15 seconds and then flip. Cook until the underside cracks and turns golden, 1½ to 2 minutes, then flip and repeat on the other side. Doughnut holes cook faster. Transfer the doughnuts to the prepared racks and repeat with the rest of the dough, adjusting the heat as needed to keep the oil at 325°F. Eat them while they're still warm, or store for one day in an airtight container at room temperature.

LEMON OLD-FASHIONED DOUGHNUTS Lemon adds to the tangy lightness: If you can find crème fraîche, use it in place of the sour cream; otherwise, decrease the sour cream to ½ cup and add ½ cup cream. Add 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest and coat with Lemon Glaze (page 567).

Carrot Cake Baked Doughnuts

MAKES: About 1 dozen
TIME: About 40 minutes

A baked doughnut is essentially a quick bread with a different shape. And so it follows that every quick bread and many cakes can be adapted for doughnuts (see 10 Quick Breads That Can Double as Doughnuts on page 131). If you decide to glaze this carrot-cake-inspired doughnut (nice but not necessary) use Cream Cheese Frosting (page 562).

This recipe and all its variations can be fried instead of baked if you prefer. To do so, you need to turn the batters into doughs: Once the batter is all mixed, stir in flour a heaping spoonful or so at a time until the batter holds together in a dough. Once it does, follow the rolling, cutting, and frying directions for Cake Doughnuts (page 128).

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup milk
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted and cooled, plus more for greasing
- 1 cup grated carrots
- ½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 350°F and grease a doughnut pan.
2. Stir together the flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs, then add the milk and melted butter. Stir the egg mixture into the dry ingredients, just enough to moisten; do not overmix. Fold in the carrots and the nuts if you're using them.
3. Spoon the batter into the doughnut pan so that the cups are nearly full. Bake until the doughnuts are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Remove from the pans immediately and cool on racks.

WHOLE GRAIN DOUGHNUTS This works well with the main recipe or any of the following variations: Replace half the all-purpose flour with 1 cup of any whole grain flour.

BANANA BREAD DOUGHNUTS Swap 1 teaspoon vanilla extract for the cinnamon (add it to the wet ingredients) and 2 mashed overripe bananas, about 1 cup, for the carrots. Decrease the milk to ½ cup.

PUMPKIN BREAD DOUGHNUTS Use 1 cup pumpkin purée (canned is fine) in place of the carrots and decrease the milk to ¼ cup. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and ¼ teaspoon nutmeg.

GINGERBREAD DOUGHNUTS Not as dense as a gingerbread loaf but with the same warm spices and molasses flavor: Instead of the granulated sugar, use ½ cup packed brown sugar and 2 tablespoons unsulfured molasses

tight container, this will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

ORANGE CURD A softer, more subtle citrus: Substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated orange zest and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh orange juice for the lemon zest and juice.

LIME CURD Equally good, much more unexpected: Substitute lime zest and juice for the lemon zest and juice.

GRAPEFRUIT CURD A citrus to brighten cold winter months: Substitute grapefruit juice and zest for the lemon zest and juice.

MANGO CURD A wonderful tropical surprise inside of a cake, especially a Coconut Layer Cake (page 213): Instead of milk, purée 2 cups chopped mango with the sugar; substitute lime zest and 3 tablespoons lime juice for the lemon zest and juice and combine with the mango, yolks, and butter. Proceed with the recipe.

Zabaglione (Sabayon)

MAKES: About $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

TIME: About 15 minutes

This warm, airy, wine-spiked dessert—somewhere between light sauce and egg-rich custard—is truly singular. No one would ever guess just how quick and easy it is to make. The key is to whisk constantly to incorporate as much air into the egg yolks as possible and to prevent burning. If you'd like to add a brighter flavor, squeeze a little lemon into the mix, to taste. Depending on the wine you choose, you may want to increase or decrease the sugar; in any case, make sure to use a wine you like to drink. Eat this alone or with fruit, spoon it into a trifle, or pair it with gelato.

- 4 egg yolks**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- Pinch of salt**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Marsala (or whatever wine you have on hand)**

Bring a couple inches of water to a simmer in a small saucepan; do not boil. Whisk together the egg yolks, sugar, and salt in a glass or metal bowl large enough to sit on top of the pot. Whisk in the wine until foamy. Place the bowl over the pot to create a double boiler (see page 59) and continue to whisk until the custard is thick and puddinglike. Remove from the heat and continue to whisk until it cools slightly. Serve warm.

Other Sauces

Some of these may be new to you, while others are DIY versions of familiar staple sauces. Try them when you want to branch out: you may be surprised at how easy and gratifying it is to make Roasted Nut Butter (page 586) or Chocolate-Hazelnut Spread (page 586) and never go back to the store-bought versions. Butter sauces—from simply flavored Whipped Butter (page 583) to the boozy Hard Sauce (page 584) that melts over warm desserts—are such a treat that they deserve a spot in any baker's arsenal. And it's impossible to serve Marshmallow Sauce (page 587) or Peanut Butter Sauce (page 588) without eliciting smiles. Have fun with these.

Rich Chocolate Sauce

MAKES: About $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups

TIME: 15 minutes

More substantial than your average chocolate syrup, this rich sauce is thinner than ganache, so it can be drizzled over everything from cakes to pie to ice cream. See my favorite uses in the list below. Leave a jar in the fridge for mixing up the best chocolate milk anytime you like and see the Hot Fudge Sauce variation to bring the ice cream parlor into your own kitchen.

- 4 ounces chocolate, chopped**
- 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) unsalted butter**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar**
- Pinch of salt**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

1. Combine the chocolate, butter, sugar, salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water in a small saucepan over very low heat. Cook, stirring, until the chocolate melts and the mixture is smooth.
2. Add the vanilla and serve immediately, keep warm over hot water until ready to serve, or refrigerate for up to a week and rewarm before using.

HOT FUDGE SAUCE This classic sauce turns chewy and fudgy when it hits the ice cream: After the chocolate has completely melted, add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup corn syrup to the mixture. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to low, and cook for 5 to 10 minutes, until thick and shiny. Add the vanilla and serve hot. Or store for up to a week and reheat very gently (a double boiler is best) before serving.

10 Uses for Rich Chocolate Sauce

Homemade chocolate sauce adds rich cocoa flavor to nearly anything:

- Stir it into a glass of milk (dairy or nondairy)—the more you use, the richer it will be.
- Drizzle it or, even better, the Hot Fudge Sauce variation, over ice cream. Add a pinch of flaky salt for a refined dessert or make a sundae with fruit compote, chopped nuts, Whipped Cream (page 556), Caramel Sauce (this page), or more chopped chocolate.
- Blend it into a milkshake.
- Make an egg cream, a classic New York treat that's like a lighter milkshake (and, deceptively, contains no egg): Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole milk with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chocolate sauce in a chilled glass. Top with 1 cup seltzer and stir to combine.
- Make dessert for breakfast (or breakfast for dessert) by pouring it over pancakes, crêpes, waffles, or French toast (pages 98–120).
- Drizzle it over Cream Puffs (page 451), Éclairs (page 456), or Profiteroles (page 452).
- Pour it over fresh fruit: Raspberries, strawberries, bananas, and oranges are all excellent.
- Salty and sweet: Dip pretzels or potato chips into it.
- Use it to glaze a dense pound cake (pages 201 and 214).

- Make a trifle (page 332) with cubed cake, Whipped Cream (page 556), and your favorite fruits and sauces.

Caramel Sauce

MAKES: About $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups
TIME: 20 minutes

It's hard to beat the flavor of caramel: sweet, salty, nutty, and complex, with so many options to tweak the flavor. It's a versatile topping on its own for almost every kind of dessert and also pairs beautifully with chocolate or any fruit; try it anytime you use ganache (page 557).

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract (optional)

1. Spread the sugar in an even layer in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Start cooking it over medium heat, resisting

7 Ways to Flavor Any Dessert Sauce

The beauty of a sauce is that you can stir other flavorings into it with no fear of compromising consistency as you would with a baked recipe.

- Ground spices, like cinnamon, cardamom, allspice, nutmeg, and star anise
- Fragrant teas, like Earl Grey or rooibos (steep in the hot cream or other liquid for 10 minutes or so and strain before proceeding)
- Freshly brewed espresso or instant espresso powder (try with any chocolate-based sauce)
- Maple syrup
- Any nut butter (pair with Rich Chocolate Sauce, page 580)
- Citrus zest, grated or finely minced (orange is nice with Chocolate Ganache, page 557, or Butterscotch Sauce, page 582)
- Minced candied ginger or grated fresh ginger (excellent in Raspberry Jam Glaze, page 568, or any other fruit sauce)

the urge to stir (which will cause the sugar to crystallize in hard clumps) but swirling occasionally to keep the sugar evenly distributed over the heat. It can be helpful to dip a clean pastry brush in water to brush down any sugar crystals clinging to the sides of the pan. The sugar will dissolve, bubble, and gradually darken; it can burn quickly, so keep a close eye on it. Cook until it's a deep copper color, like an old penny. Use your nose here: It should have that telltale nutty caramel scent, but you must not let it burn.

2. When it's the color you want, remove it from the heat and immediately whisk in the butter. Once it melts, add the cream; it will bubble up when you first add it, so be careful, since hot sugar is extraordinarily painful if it burns you. Stir in the salt and the vanilla if you're using it. Let cool slightly before using or transfer to a container and refrigerate for up to a week or two.

BOOZY CARAMEL SAUCE For a boozy Apple Pie (page 266): Add 2 or 3 tablespoons liqueur in Step 2, after you've removed the pan from the heat.

SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE Drizzle it over Vanilla Ice Cream (page 309) or Chocolate Cake (page 196): Add 1 tablespoon flaky sea salt or fleur de sel in Step 2.

COFFEE CARAMEL SAUCE Add 1 to 2 shots freshly brewed espresso at the end.

SPICED CARAMEL SAUCE Drizzle over Pecan Pie (page 281) or Chocolate-Ginger Stout Cake (page 204): Add 2 teaspoons cinnamon, ½ teaspoon ginger, and ¼ teaspoon nutmeg with the vanilla.

CREAM CHEESE CARAMEL FROSTING A tasty pairing for Banana Cake (page 212): Make the Caramel Sauce and let it cool completely. Whip 1 pound softened cream cheese until fluffy and drizzle in the caramel until thoroughly mixed; thin with a little milk or cream as needed.

CARAMELIZED SUGAR Made of just sugar and water, this can be baked with custard for Flan (page 338) or used as the starting point for caramel candies

(page 349) and countless other recipes; on its own, it becomes brittle, so you can use it as a crunchy candy coating or a handy "glue": In Step 1, increase the sugar to 2 cups and pour ½ cup water over it. When it's the color you want, remove it from the stove and use right away, as it will harden as it cools.

Butterscotch Sauce

MAKES: About 1½ cups

TIME: 10 minutes

A classic for its taste and simplicity; there's no excuse not to jazz up every dessert with a drizzle.

- ¾ cup cream
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract (optional)

1. Combine the cream and butter in a small saucepan and cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the butter melts.
2. Stir in the sugar and salt and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture is thick and shiny and the sugar is dissolved, 5 to 10 minutes. Taste and add more sugar if you like, along with the vanilla if you're using it. Use right away or refrigerate, well covered, for up to 1 week and rewarm before using.

MAPLE BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE Serve this with Bread Pudding (page 340) or French Toast (page 117) for an indulgent brunch: Reduce the cream to ½ cup and substitute maple syrup for the brown sugar. In Step 2, add an egg yolk along with the maple syrup. Proceed with the recipe. Keeps for up to 3 days.

BOURBON BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE Add 2 to 3 tablespoons bourbon after Step 2.

GINGER BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE Peel a knob of ginger and add it to the saucepan with the cream and butter.

About 8 cups neutral oil (like canola or vegetable) for frying
Confectioners' sugar

1. In a saucepan, whisk together the ricotta, eggs, 2 tablespoons very cold water, and the vanilla until smooth. Whisk in the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt and put the saucepan over low heat. Cook the mixture, stirring constantly, until some of the moisture cooks out and a thin film forms on the bottom of the pan, about 5 minutes. Transfer the dough to a clean bowl and refrigerate it while the oil heats.

2. Place a candy thermometer in a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, add the oil, and heat to 350°F. Line a baking sheet, plate, or rack with paper towels.

3. Scoop the dough into balls, about 1½ tablespoons each, and carefully drop them into the oil; don't overcrowd the pot. Cook until the bottom is deep golden, 1 to 2 minutes, then flip and cook for another minute, until deeply golden all over. Adjust the heat as needed to keep the temperature at 350°F. Transfer the zeppole to the prepared racks and coat them with confectioners' sugar while they're still hot. Repeat with the rest of the dough. Serve right away; these don't last.

CINNAMON SUGAR ZEPPOLE WITH CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Combine 1 cup granulated sugar with 1½ teaspoons cinnamon. Omit the confectioners' sugar. When the zeppole are still hot but just cool enough to handle, roll them in the cinnamon sugar. Drizzle with or dip in Rich Chocolate Sauce (page 580).

Fried Dough

MAKES: 8 pieces
TIME: 30 minutes

Fried dough is just about universal around the globe, whether you call it frybread, bannock, sopapillas, chiacchiere, or merveilles. This carnival classic gets a little extra crispiness from seltzer; if you prefer, you can use still water and replace the baking soda with baking powder.

2 cups flour, plus more for rolling
1½ teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons butter, cold and cubed
¼ cup seltzer, lukewarm
Neutral oil (like vegetable or canola) for frying
Confectioners' or granulated sugar (optional)

1. Combine the flour, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. Work in the butter using a fork or your hands or pulse the mixture in a food processor until it is barely incorporated and the mixture resembles wet sand. Add the seltzer and stir until combined. Shape the dough into a ball, cover, and let rest for 15 minutes.

2. Fill a Dutch oven or large frying pan with ½ inch of oil and place it over medium heat. Heat the oil to 375°F, watching carefully to make sure it doesn't get any hotter. Line a plate or rack with paper towels.

3. Divide the dough into 8 pieces and roll each one on a floured surface to ¼-inch thickness, about 6 inches in diameter. Drop one piece of dough into the oil and cook until the bottom is golden, 30 to 45 seconds; flip and cook on the other side. Transfer to the prepared plate and serve immediately or keep warm in a 200°F oven. Repeat with the rest of the dough. If you like, dust with confectioners' or granulated sugar while they are still warm.

MERVEILLES A lightly sweetened French version: Replace the baking soda with 1 teaspoon baking powder. To the dry ingredients, add ½ cup granulated sugar and 1 tablespoon grated lemon or orange zest. Use softened rather than cubed butter, omit the seltzer, and add 3 beaten eggs along with it. Cover and let rest for 15 minutes. Roll the dough out to an ⅛-inch thickness and cut it into long, narrow triangles. Fry as directed; these take a little longer to become golden. Dust with confectioners' sugar.

CHIACCHIERE An Italian favorite during carnival season: Follow the preceding variation, adding 2 tablespoons brandy or grappa when you add the eggs. Roll the dough out to ⅛-inch thickness, cut it into rectangles, and fry.

Since it's flat and thin when it's fried, you can pile things on top of fried dough as you would with crackers, bread, or toast—it's a good party trick whether you're serving it as breakfast, lunch, dinner, or dessert. Anything from the list of 16 Doughnut Toppings (page 129) works beautifully here, but here are some savory options:

- Ricotta with finely chopped fresh herbs, salt, and freshly ground black pepper
- Good extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar
- Scrambled eggs and bacon or sausage
- Beans, salsa, and cheese
- Roasted vegetables, like tomatoes or eggplant, and Parmesan cheese
- Cooked ground meat or seafood with cumin
- Tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, and your favorite pizza toppings

PURI This puffy Indian bread is the perfect thing to serve alongside a curry: Heat the oil first. Omit the baking soda, substitute 2 tablespoons neutral oil for the butter, and use water rather than seltzer, starting with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup and adding just enough to form a stiff dough. Don't chill the dough; knead it, divide the dough into 8 balls, and roll them out to a little more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick, using oil to help you roll if necessary, not flour. Fry as directed.

Funnel Cake

MAKES: About 8 servings
TIME: 20 minutes

This state fair favorite gets its name and its distinctive swirled shape because it's poured into the oil through a funnel (although the job can be done with a pastry bag, zipper bag, or squeeze bottle). It's fun to eat and could hardly be simpler to make.

- Neutral oil (like canola or vegetable) for frying
- 2 eggs
- $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- 3 cups flour
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Confectioners' sugar for dusting

1. Place a candy thermometer in a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, add 2 inches of oil, and heat it to 375°F over medium heat while you make the batter. Line a plate or rack with paper towels.
2. In a large bowl, lightly beat the eggs, then add the milk and vanilla. Whisk in the flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt until combined.
3. To pour the batter into the oil, you can use a pastry bag with a round tip, a zipper bag with the corner cut off, a squeeze bottle with a wide opening, or a large funnel. For each cake, squeeze out the batter in overlapping

Fats for Frying

For deep-frying, there are two main factors: smoke point and cost. You don't want the oil to burn before it reaches frying temperature (about 350°F), and since you need several inches of it in the pot, you can't use liquid gold. Peanut, vegetable, and corn oils are all great standbys; it's worth keeping a big bottle of one in your pantry. Even olive oil is good, and since it smokes at 375°F, it's perfectly appropriate for frying.

If you can get your hands on it, lard satisfies these criteria and crisps food up beautifully; clarified butter, or ghee, doesn't have the milk solids that cause butter to burn, so it's far more heat resistant, and grapeseed is wonderfully neutral. All three are sufficiently expensive that you're not likely to fill a pot with them and make doughnuts.

What to do with a pot full of hot, used oil? Don't throw it down the drain (dangerous) or in the trash (expensive and messy). Let it cool to room temperature, strain out the solids, and store it in the fridge or a cool, dark place. Do this and you can reuse it several times; as soon as it starts to smell a little funky, throw it away: Let it cool, refrigerate in a disposable container, then throw it in the trash.

circles (or whatever crazy shape you like). Fry until golden, 45 seconds to 1 minute; flip and cook for another minute or so. Transfer to the prepared plate, dust with confectioners' sugar, and serve immediately.

JALEBI These extra-crisp Indian cakes are sensational on their own or soaked in saffron syrup: Omit the eggs and use 4 cups buttermilk in place of the milk; add 2 tablespoons melted butter or ghee (Indian clarified butter). Replace the vanilla with ½ teaspoon cardamom and omit the baking powder. To make the syrup, bring ½ cup water and ½ cup sugar to a boil. Stir in ⅛ teaspoon saffron threads and turn off the heat. Cook the cakes until they are deep golden and very crisp. Dip the cooked cakes in the syrup or just drizzle some over the top; serve immediately.

Apple Fritters

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings
TIME: 20 minutes

The batter here is very similar to that of a cake doughnut, but where a doughnut is characterized by dough, fritters are all about the filling; the batter is just there to hold it all together. These fluffy fritters need no resting time and have a sweet apple flavor that stands on its own, although a dip in Vanilla Glaze (page 567) or a dusting of confectioners' or granulated sugar certainly doesn't hurt. To make this with other fruits, see Endlessly Adaptable Fritters, page 137.

- Neutral oil (like canola or vegetable) for frying, plus more for the bowl
- 2½ cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 large apples, peeled and chopped into roughly ¼-inch pieces (about 2 cups)

1. Place a candy thermometer in a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, add 2 inches of oil, and heat to 350°F while you make the batter.
2. Combine the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a bowl. In a large bowl, lightly beat the eggs with the sugar, then whisk in the milk, melted butter, and vanilla. Stir in the flour mixture until just combined, then add the apples. Stir to combine; the mixture should be a very thick batter with apples suspended within.
3. Add the batter to the oil 1 heaping spoonful at a time; don't overcrowd the pot. Cook until golden, 1½ to 2 minutes per side, adjusting the heat if necessary to keep it at a steady 350°F. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate or rack and serve right away.

BANANA FRITTERS Popular in Indonesia: Slice 6 ripe bananas in half lengthwise, then cut them in half crosswise. Omit the cinnamon, salt, and baking powder. Decrease the sugar to ¼ cup; omit one of the eggs. Gently fold the bananas into the batter, taking care not to break them, so that each piece is coated all over in batter. Fry a few pieces at a time, until golden and crisp all over.

WHOLE WHEAT APPLE FRITTERS These are no lighter, but the flavors are nuttier and more intense. If you have it, use whole wheat pastry flour, which makes the fritters extra-tender: Use ½ cup apple-sauce and ½ cup apple juice in place of the milk. Omit the butter. Substitute whole wheat flour for the all-purpose.

Quick Fudge Frosting

MAKES: Enough for any 9-inch layer cake or 2 dozen cupcakes
TIME: 10 minutes

Use this as a thick, rich frosting for Chocolate Cake (page 196) or let it set and eat it like candy. Sift the confectioners' sugar if you want the smoothest texture.

- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 8 ounces dark chocolate, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- Butter for greasing (optional)

1. Put the milk in a medium saucepan or microwave-safe bowl. Warm gently, over low heat or in the microwave in 30-second increments, until hot. Stir in the chocolate and vanilla and stir gently until the chocolate is fully melted, then beat in the sugar. If the texture is too loose, put the bowl in the refrigerator until firmed up enough to use as frosting.

2. To eat the fudge as candy, grease a square baking dish and line it with parchment paper. Pour in the fudge and freeze until set. Cut the fudge into 1-inch squares, layer the squares with parchment paper in a container, and store in the refrigerator or freezer for about a week.

Lemon Glaze

MAKES: Enough for any cake
TIME: 10 minutes

The perfect something extra for all kinds of desserts, from cakes to cookies to quick breads; see the list on page 568 to brainstorm all the things that are even better with a little glaze. You can replace the lemon with nearly any other citrus. For a thicker glaze that can be spread on cookies, decrease the total amount of lemon juice and water by a tablespoon or two.

- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

3 cups confectioners' sugar, plus more as needed

Combine the lemon zest and juice, ¼ cup water, the vanilla if you're using it, and the sugar and beat until combined and smooth; it should be about the consistency of thick maple syrup—just pourable. Adjust the consistency by adding a little more juice or a little more sugar. Use immediately or store, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

VANILLA GLAZE An all-purpose sweet but simple glaze: Substitute ½ cup milk for the lemon juice and water and omit the lemon zest. Increase the vanilla to 2 teaspoons.

ORANGE GLAZE A milder citrus that pairs easily with a variety of cakes and quick breads: Substitute orange zest for the lemon zest and ½ cup orange juice for the lemon juice and water.

CREAMY LEMON GLAZE A touch of cream and some butter make for a richer glaze: Substitute ¼ cup cream for the water and add 3 tablespoons very soft butter. Whisk until smooth and glossy.

CINNAMON GLAZE Substitute ¾ cup milk for the lemon juice and water and 1½ teaspoon ground cinnamon for the zest. Omit the vanilla.

GINGER GLAZE Follow the previous variation, using ground ginger instead of cinnamon.

COCONUT GLAZE Drizzle this over Tropical Banana Bread (page 63) or Coconut Layer Cake (page 213): Substitute ½ cup coconut milk for the lemon juice and water and ¼ cup shredded unsweetened coconut for the zest. Omit the vanilla.

MAPLE GLAZE A rich, sugary glaze for doughnuts (page 126) or Maple-Cinnamon Scones (page 89): Substitute maple syrup for the lemon juice and milk for the water. Omit the lemon zest and vanilla.

Flavoring and Filling Macarons

Don't be shy about mixing and matching these cookie flavors and fillings; the cookies are so lightly flavored to begin with that you could change only the filling and still get radically different results.

COOKIE

CHOCOLATE Sift $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocoa powder with the confectioners' sugar and almond flour.

COFFEE Sift $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons instant espresso powder with the confectioners' sugar and almond flour.

MOCHA Sift $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocoa powder and $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons instant espresso powder with the confectioners' sugar and almond flour.

CITRUS Fold 1 tablespoon grated lemon or lime zest into the finished batter.

PISTACHIO Decrease the almond flour to 1 cup and add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely ground unsalted pistachios.

PRALINE Decrease the almond flour to 1 cup and add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely ground toasted pecans.

CHOCOLATE-HAZELNUT Decrease the almond flour to 1 cup and add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely ground toasted hazelnuts.

VANILLA BEAN Beat the seeds scraped from one vanilla bean pod with the egg whites along with the granulated sugar.

SPICE Sift $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon each cinnamon and ginger and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg with the dry ingredients.

CARAMEL Follow the Vanilla Bean variation above or tint the batter with just a few drops of yellow food coloring.

MATCHA Sift $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons matcha powder with the confectioners' sugar and almond flour.

FILLING

Chocolate Ganache (page 557)

Espresso Buttercream (page 561) or Not-Too-Sweet Coffee Buttercream (page 562)

Chocolate Ganache (page 557), infused with coffee (see page 557)

Lemon Curd (page 579), Lime Curd (page 580), Fruit Jam (page 575), or Orange Marmalade (page 575)

Roasted Nut Butter (page 586) or Pistachio Buttercream (page 561)

Caramel Sauce (page 581) or Butterscotch Sauce (page 582)

Chocolate-Hazelnut Spread (page 586)

Vanilla Buttercream (page 561)

Spiced Caramel Sauce (page 582) or Cinnamon Buttercream (page 561)

Caramel Sauce (page 581) or Caramel Buttercream (page 561)

Vanilla Buttercream (page 561), flavored with 2 tablespoons matcha instead of vanilla

Decorating the Crust

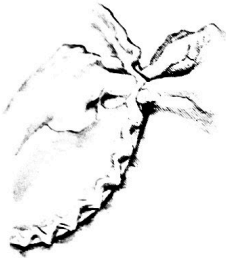
Once the dough is in the pan, you'll want to trim it, and you can also make the edge more attractive or add a top crust or other embellishments. One recipe of Flaky Piecrust (page 259) makes enough for a double crust; freeze half for another pie if you are making a single crust or roll it out as directed to make a top crust or decorations.

Crimping



PINCHING METHOD

Pinch the edges of the dough between the side of your forefinger and your thumb.



KNUCKLE METHOD

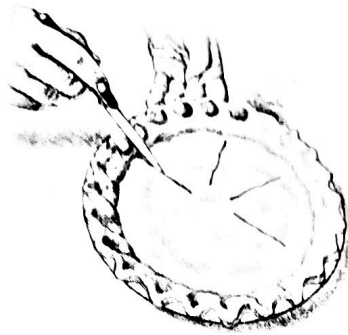
Use the thumb and forefinger of one hand to hold the dough in place. Press a knuckle from your other hand against the crust, pushing it into the space made by your thumb and forefinger.



FORK METHOD

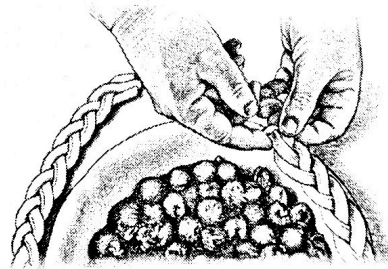
Alternatively, you can simply press down with the tines of a fork along the edges of the dough.

Simple Top Crust



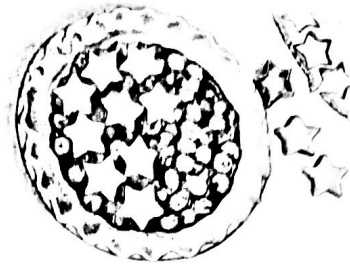
Use a paring knife or cookie cutter to trim simple shapes from the crust if you want. Place the crust over the filling, trim the edge, and crimp the top and bottom crust edges to seal. If you didn't cut out shapes, cut a few slits in the crust to let steam escape.

Braided Edge



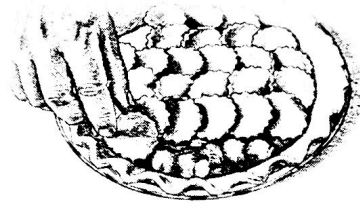
Cut the dough into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide strips and braid three strips snugly together. Repeat until you have four braids; set them on a plate to chill. Brush egg wash around the sides and "glue" the braids all along the perimeter, braiding the loose ends together so they make one continuous braid. Prebake or fill and bake as directed.

Garnish Crust



Cut the dough into letters or shapes and place directly over the filling so that some of the filling remains exposed; you can also overlay them around the border of the pie.

Tiled Crust



A tiled crust is a more precise version of a garnished one; time-consuming but stunning. Cut the crust into small shapes—circles or stars work well—and layer them over the filling so they overlap.

1. Use a food processor to pulse the nuts to a fine meal—but not so much that they turn to butter. Place in a large bowl and set aside.

2. Add the dried fruit to the food processor with a couple tablespoons of water and grind until a smooth paste forms. Mix the paste with the nuts until combined. Form the “dough” into a disk and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or wrap well and freeze until you’re ready to use it. Press the mixture evenly into a pie plate then add your filling.

NO-BAKE FRUIT AND COCONUT CRUST Substitute 1½ cups shredded unsweetened coconut for the nuts. You can skip processing the coconut, but processing it will produce a finer texture for the crust.

NO-BAKE FRUIT AND GRANOLA CRUST A crunchier take on the chewy crust: Substitute your favorite granola for the nuts. If your granola is super-clumpy, give it a whirl in the food processor.

Crumb Topping

MAKES: 2½ cups, enough for any size pie
TIME: 10 minutes, plus time to chill

The easiest pie topping there is and maybe the tastiest—use it for Cherry-Almond Pie (page 275) or in place of the top crust on any other fruit pie. It also takes the fuss out of fruit desserts (pages 297–301) and allows you to embrace imperfection. Prepare it by hand or in a food processor; adapt the mixture to your taste and to match your fillings.

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 stick butter, chilled and cut into pieces

1. Put the flour, sugars, cinnamon, and salt in a large bowl; whisk to combine. Add the butter and use your

hands to rub it into the dry ingredients until the mixture becomes clumpy and crumbly and the butter is well incorporated. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes or up to a week before using.

2. Sprinkle evenly over the top of the pie, crisp, or other dessert, covering the filling. Bake as directed in the recipe.

GLUTEN-FREE CRUMB TOPPING Rice flour makes this very delicate: In place of the all-purpose flour, use ¼ cup rice flour and ½ cup almond flour (see page 15 to make your own). Decrease the brown sugar to ¼ cup.

VEGAN CRUMB TOPPING Decrease the flour to ¼ cup and add ½ cup almond flour (see page 15 to make your own). Decrease the brown sugar to ¼ cup. Instead of butter, use ¼ cup chilled coconut oil and 2 tablespoons neutral oil (such as grapeseed or corn).

OAT CRUMB TOPPING Use this for something a little crisper and heartier: Substitute ½ cup rolled oats for half of the flour and, if you like, maple syrup for the brown sugar.

NUT CRUMB TOPPING A crumble nut topping is perfect for quick breads, muffins, tarts, and pies; apply this to any of the preceding variations too: Omit the granulated sugar and use 1 cup brown sugar. Add ½ cup chopped nuts—like pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts, or almonds, preferably blanched—to the dry ingredients and a tablespoon of fresh lemon juice with the butter. If you like, substitute nut flour for up to half of the all-purpose.

COCONUT CRUMB TOPPING Follow the same instructions for the Nut Crumb Topping, but swap in shredded unsweetened coconut for the nuts. Omit the cinnamon if you like.

12 Things to Add to Crumb Toppings

- 1 teaspoon ginger, ½ teaspoon cardamom, ¼ teaspoon ground cloves, ¼ teaspoon allspice, and/or ¼ teaspoon nutmeg

- Minced fresh herbs, like thyme, rosemary, or sage, up to 1 tablespoon
- Citrus zest, 1 tablespoon, rubbed into the sugar before adding the butter
- Seeds from 1 vanilla bean (see page 29)
- Brown butter, substituted for half of the softened butter
- Graham cracker crumbs, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Olive oil, substituted for half of the butter: good for a refined, slightly more savory twist
- Dried fruit, finely chopped, like raisins, dried cranberries, or dates, up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Chopped dark chocolate, up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Shredded unsweetened coconut, up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Cooked grains, like farro, quinoa, or barley, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Crumbled crunchy cookies, like gingersnaps or chocolate wafer cookies, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

the crust. Prepared filling before pouring it into

The Basics of Crisps and Cobblers

These are comforting, easy desserts that take advantage of the fruit harvest—whatever it might be locally—in a way that works on weeknights or even the spur-of-the-moment. In general, we're talking about a fruit mixture topped with a crumbly or cakey pastry, then baked.

For such a simple concept, there is an amazing array of wonderful names like crisp (fruit topped with crumbs), cobbler (topped with a moist biscuitlike dough), slump (like the cobbler but first cooked on the stovetop), betty (fruit layered with bread crumbs), pandowdy (topped with a patchwork pastry crust), and more.

Any of the fruit pie fillings from pages 266–275 can be used here, too, or improvise your own filling using the chart on page 270. You don't even need a topping: see pages 301–305 for desserts like broiled peaches, poached pears, and Bananas Foster—cooked fruit that stands on its own. The one commonality is that all of the recipes that follow are a cinch to put together, great to make with kids, and a perfect way to end a family meal, especially served warm with vanilla ice cream.

Apple Crisp

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings
TIME: About 1 hour

Use any fruit you like in place of apples—seasonal berries are fabulous—or a combination; see the variations for some ideas. It's easy to adapt this to your needs by switching in Gluten-Free Crumb Topping (page 265),

or use Vegan Crumb Topping (page 265) and coconut oil instead of butter.

- 5 tablespoons cold butter, plus more for greasing
- 6 cups peeled, cored, and sliced apples (2 to 3 pounds)
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ⅔ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup rolled oats (not instant)
- ½ cup flour
- Pinch of salt
- ¼ cup chopped nuts (optional)
- Vanilla ice cream (page 309 or 310) or Whipped Cream (optional, page 556) for serving

1. Heat the oven to 400°F. Cut the butter into ¼-inch bits and put in the fridge or freezer. Lightly butter a square baking pan. Toss the apples with the lemon juice and 1 tablespoon of the brown sugar in a large bowl and spread them out in the prepared pan.
2. Combine the chilled pieces of butter with the remaining brown sugar, the oats, flour, salt, and nuts if you're using them in a food processor and pulse a few times, then process for a few seconds more, until everything is combined but not too finely ground. (To mix by hand, mash the mixture together between your fingers.)
3. Crumble the topping over the apples and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until the topping is browned and the apples are tender and bubbling. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature, with ice cream or whipped cream if you like.

BLUEBERRY-LEMON CRISP Sweet, tart, and lovely: Substitute 6 cups blueberries for the apples. Toss the blueberries with 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest and the juice of 1 whole lemon, then toss with 2 tablespoons flour or cornstarch to help thicken the juices as they bake.

GINGER-PLUM CRISP Spicy and juicy: Substitute sliced pitted plums for the apples. Toss the plums with 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger along with the lemon juice.

Add 1 teaspoon ground ginger to the food processor with the other topping ingredients.

RASPBERRY-PEACH CRISP With ripe peaches and good raspberries, a real treat: Substitute 3 cups raspberries and 3 cups sliced pitted peaches for the apples. Toss the fruit with 2 tablespoons flour or cornstarch along with the lemon juice to help thicken the juices as they bake.

OATMEAL-ALMOND PEAR CRISP Almonds and pears are a classic and wonderful combo: Substitute cored and sliced pears for the apples. Omit the flour and use ¼ cup rolled oats and ½ cup chopped almonds for the topping.

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB CRISP Spring is calling: Use 3 cups hulled and halved strawberries and 3 cups chopped rhubarb instead of the apples. Increase the brown sugar to 1 cup, adding ¼ cup of it to the strawberry-rhubarb mixture. Toss the fruit with 2 tablespoons flour or cornstarch along with the lemon juice to help thicken the juices as they bake.

BANANA CRISP These bananas should not be too ripe. Substitute sliced bananas for the apples. Serve with Whipped Cream (page 556) and Rich Chocolate Sauce (page 580) if you like.

INDIVIDUAL FRUIT CRISPS All for you: Divide the fruit among individual ovenproof custard cups or ramekins (6- to 8-ounce) and sprinkle some topping on each.

Blueberry Cobbler

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings
TIME: About 1 hour

A humble, homey dessert, cobbler embodies everything we love about rustic, gooey, straight-out-of-the-oven treats. Eat with vanilla ice cream (page 309 or 310).

- 1 stick cold butter, plus more for greasing
- About 6 cups blueberries, rinsed and drained
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 cup flour

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a square baking pan with some butter. Toss the blueberries with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the sugar in a medium bowl and put them in the prepared pan.

2. Cut up the stick of butter into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch bits. Put the flour, baking powder, salt, and remaining cup sugar in a food processor and pulse once or twice. Add the butter and process until the mixture is just combined (you should still see bits of butter), just a few seconds. Beat in the eggs, vanilla, and lemon zest if you're using it, by hand with a fork (you can do this right in the food processor—remove the blade first—or transfer the mixture to a bowl if you like).

3. Drop this mixture onto the blueberries, 1 heaping tablespoon at a time, until you use it all up (space the mounds of dough as evenly as you can, but don't spread them out). Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, until the topping is just starting to brown and the blueberries are tender and bubbling. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

PEACH COBBLER Another classic cobbler: Instead of the blueberries, slice and pit 2 pounds of peaches (peeled, if you like—see page 33).

APRICOT COBBLER If you're lucky enough to have good apricots—and haven't eaten them all raw—make this: Use 2 pounds sliced and pitted apricots for the blueberries.

PEAR-BOURBON COBBLER Southern spirit: Substitute 2 pounds pears for the blueberries. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bourbon evenly over the pears in the prepared pan before adding the topping.

CHERRY-ALMOND COBBLER Among the best-tasting cobblers you can make: Instead of the blueberries, remove the pits from 6 cups sweet cherries. Toss the

- Whipped Cream (page 556) or Vegan Whipped Cream (page 556)
- Ice cream (pages 309–311) or Frozen Yogurt (page 312)
- Greek yogurt, crème fraîche, or mascarpone
- Jam Glaze (page 568) or Lemon Glaze (page 567)
- Hard Sauce (page 584)
- Rich Chocolate Sauce (page 580)
- Caramel Sauce (page 581), Butterscotch Sauce (page 582), or Dulce de Leche (page 583)
- Balsamic Syrup (page 585)
- Orange Butter Sauce (page 585)
- Lemon Curd (page 579)
- Zabaglione (page 580)
- Peanut Butter Sauce (page 588)

cherries with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped almonds. Substitute almond flour (to make your own, see page 15) for $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the all-purpose flour.

BALSAMIC-BERRY COBBLER Different, in a good way: Swap in mixed berries of your choice for the blueberries; hull and halve the strawberries if using them. Drizzle $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Balsamic Syrup (page 585) over the berries in the prepared pan before adding the topping.

BLUEBERRY-CORN COBBLER The ultimate backyard barbecue dessert: Substitute 2 cups fresh corn kernels for 2 cups of the blueberries.

APPLE COBBLER Simple: Instead of the blueberries, core and slice 2 pounds apples (don't bother peeling them).

7 Easy Additions to Cobbler Toppings

The thicker, biscuitlike dough can handle more substantial additions than crumb topping, so you can use it as a springboard for new flavors and textures:

- 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cardamom, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon all-spice, and/or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg

POACHED PEARS IN GINGER SYRUP The spice is warm and lovely here: Omit the sugar and replace 2 cups of the poaching water with ginger-infused Simple Syrup (page 570; strain the simple syrup before poaching).

POACHED PEARS WITH ASIAN SPICES Exotic, but easy: Add 3 star anise, 5 slices fresh ginger, and 2 cloves to the poaching mix.

Bananas Foster

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

Bananas Foster is as showy as the city of its birth, New Orleans. Remember to use a pan without any coating for this or other flambéed desserts. For a new take on Banana Cream Pie (page 277), use these bananas as a layer underneath the vanilla or chocolate cream.

- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter**
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 4 ripe but not mushy bananas, peeled, halved lengthwise, then halved crosswise**
- ¼ cup dark rum, whisky, or bourbon**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Vanilla ice cream (page 309 or 310)**

1. In a large sauté pan, heat the butter, brown sugar, and cinnamon over medium heat. Cook, stirring, until the butter is melted and the sugar dissolved, about 5 minutes. Add the banana slices and cook until they're just turning tender and brown, a couple of minutes per side.

2. Mix together the rum and vanilla in a small bowl. Remove the bananas from the heat and add the rum mixture. Use a long lighter or match to flambé the bananas by placing the flame inside the outer edge of the pan (see illustration). Keep your face and hands as far away from the pan as possible while lighting; the flame should extinguish within 10 seconds. Toss the bananas in the sauce to coat.

Flambéing Bananas Foster



Use a long lighter or match to ignite the rum, placing the flame inside the outer edge of the pan.

3. Scoop vanilla ice cream into bowls, then spoon the bananas and sauce over it. Serve immediately.

APPLES AND PEARS FOSTER A nice combo: Substitute 1 apple and 1 pear, cored and cut into ½-inch slices. If you like, substitute bourbon for the rum and add ½ teaspoon ginger to the butter mixture.

Cherries Jubilee

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About 30 minutes

This is a classic dessert that's said to have been invented by Escoffier for one of Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations. Like Bananas Foster (at left), the fruit is flambéed just before serving. Apricots, cranberries, currants, grapes, blueberries, and peaches (see the next page) can be substituted with ease.

- 2 pounds cherries, preferably tart, pitted**
- Vanilla ice cream (page 309 or 310)**
- Sugar to taste**
- ¼ cup brandy**

1. Combine the cherries with 1 cup water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat and cook, stirring

Frozen Yogurt

MAKES: About 1 quart

TIME: 5 minutes, plus time to chill and churn

With just two ingredients and hardly any real prep work, this is one of the easiest desserts there is. Whole milk yogurt produces the creamiest results; Greek yogurt, which is much thicker, often becomes too hard in the freezer but is an excellent complement to fruit purees, as in the variation.

3½ cups yogurt

¾ cup granulated or superfine sugar

Whisk together the yogurt and sugar until combined. Chill for 30 minutes, then churn in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions.

HONEY FROZEN YOGURT Yes, this can pass as breakfast: Reduce the sugar to 3 tablespoons and add ⅔ cup honey.

FRUITY FROZEN YOGURT Any fruit is wonderful here, as is a combination: Replace the yogurt with 2 cups Greek yogurt and add 1½ cups fruit purée (see page 572).

COCONUT FROZEN YOGURT Replace 1 cup of the yogurt with 1 cup full-fat coconut milk. Add 1 cup shredded unsweetened coconut just before churning.

7 Mix-Ins for Frozen Yogurt

Add these to the yogurt before chilling and use as many as you like:

- Fresh or dried fruit, chopped, 1 cup
- Citrus zest, grated, 1 tablespoon
- Vanilla extract, 2 teaspoons
- Dark chocolate, chopped, 4 ounces
- Balsamic vinegar or Balsamic Syrup (page 585),
¼ cup
- Freshly grated ginger, 1 tablespoon
- Cardamom or cinnamon, 1 teaspoon

More Ice Cream Flavors

The base ratio always remains the same: 6 yolks—or 2 tablespoons cornstarch—with 3 cups total liquid; only the type of liquid, the flavorings (substituted for the vanilla), and the sweetener change.

VARIATION	FLAVORINGS	HOW TO ADD
Chocolate Ice Cream	5 ounces dark chocolate, chopped	Add to the ice cream base with the half-and-half and cream.
Strawberry (or Any Berry) Ice Cream	1 cup berry purée, strained (see page 572)	Stir into the ice cream base before chilling.
Coffee Ice Cream	2 to 3 shots freshly brewed espresso or ½ cup ground coffee	Swap liquid coffee for ½ cup of the half-and-half or steep ground coffee in the hot base (see The Three Stages of Ice Cream Flavoring, page 311, for more info)
Coconut Ice Cream	1 cup coconut milk; ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut, toasted in a dry skillet until lightly browned if you like (see page 57)	Replace the cream with the coconut milk and fold the coconut into the ice cream base before chilling.
Spice Ice Cream	½ teaspoon each cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, black pepper, and coriander, plus 2 vanilla beans; or use 1 tablespoon single spice, like cinnamon or cardamom	Split open the vanilla beans and steep in the hot ice cream base (see page 310); stir ground spices directly into the base before chilling.
Pumpkin Ice Cream	1 cup canned pumpkin purée; ½ teaspoon each cinnamon and ginger	Whisk 1 cup of the hot ice cream base with the pumpkin to thin it, then add it to the base with the spices before chilling.
Rum-Raisin Ice Cream	½ to ¾ cup raisins; ¼ cup dark rum; ½ cup packed light brown sugar	Soak the raisins in the rum at room temperature for an hour or so, or bring to a boil and set aside to cool. Use the brown sugar in place of granulated. Add the rum-raisin mixture to the ice cream base for the last minute or 2 of cooking, before chilling.
Maple-Nut Ice Cream	¾ cup maple syrup; 1 cup chopped lightly toasted nuts (see page 57), like pecans or walnuts	Swap the sugar for the maple syrup and add the nuts to the base before chilling.
Buttermilk Ice Cream	1 cup buttermilk	Use the buttermilk instead of cream.

VARIATION

Mascarpone Ice Cream

Banana Ice Cream

Ginger Ice Cream

Green Tea Ice Cream

Corn-Maple Ice Cream

Avocado Ice Cream

Miso-Peach Ice Cream

Bacon-Bourbon-Maple-Pecan Ice Cream

Olive Oil Ice Cream

Salted Caramel Ice Cream

FLAVORINGS

1 cup mascarpone cheese

2 ripe bananas

2 tablespoons chopped fresh ginger;
½ cup minced candied ginger

1 tablespoon matcha green tea or
2 tablespoons leaf green tea

½ cup maple syrup; 2 ears corn, plus
more if you like

1 large avocado puréed with the juice
of a lime

½ cup packed light brown sugar;
2 peaches (or nectarines), peeled and
puréed to make about 1 cup, whisked
with 1 tablespoon white miso

¾ cup maple syrup; 2 tablespoons
bourbon; 4 strips chopped cooked
bacon, the rendered bacon fat, and
¾ cup chopped toasted pecans

⅓ cup olive oil

2 cups Caramel Sauce (page 581)
and 1½ teaspoons coarse salt

HOW TO ADD

Use mascarpone instead of cream.

Peel and steep the bananas in the hot ice cream base (see page 311), then strain them out before chilling the base.

Steep the fresh ginger in the hot ice cream base (see page 311), then strain it out and stir in the candied ginger before chilling.

Stir the matcha into the base before chilling or infuse the hot ice cream base with leaf green tea (see page 311).

Use the maple syrup in place of sugar. Cut the kernels from the corn, purée, and strain, then add the liquid with the cobs to the ice cream base with the half-and-half and cream. Strain and discard the cobs from the finished ice cream base; if you like, stir in more whole corn kernels before chilling.

Whisk the avocado with a bit of the hot ice cream base until smooth, then stir it into the bowl before chilling.

Use brown sugar instead of white. Add the peach mixture to the ice cream base before chilling.

Use the maple syrup instead of sugar. Whisk the bourbon into the ice cream base in the last minute or 2 of cooking, then fold in the bacon, fat, and pecans before chilling.

Whisk the olive oil into the base before chilling.

Stir the caramel and salt into the base before chilling.

a hard ball that holds its shape if you pinch it out of the water.

- **Soft-crack stage** (270–290°F): The melted sugar forms flexible, solid threads.
- **Hard-crack stage** (300–310°F) (Toffee, page 352): The melted sugar makes hard, brittle threads that snap when you try to hold or bend them.

Chocolate Fudge

MAKES: About 1½ pounds
TIME: About 45 minutes, plus time to set

Homemade fudge is smooth, chewy, and intensely flavored, worlds away from the cloying and grainy kind you find at souvenir shops. Corn syrup helps minimize the formation of sugar crystals, which makes for an even smoother consistency, but you can leave it out if you want. The better the chocolate you start with, the better the fudge you make. See the list on page 348 for ways to customize it.

- 2 tablespoons butter, plus more for greasing**
- 2½ cups sugar**
- 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped**
- 1¼ cups heavy cream**
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup (optional)**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)**

1. Line an 8- or 9-inch square baking pan with parchment or foil (make sure there's lots of overhang on the sides) and grease with butter. Let the 2 tablespoons butter come to room temperature while you work.
2. Combine the sugar, chocolate, cream, corn syrup if you're using it, and salt in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently until the mixture comes to a boil. Cover the pan and cook for 2 minutes; this creates steam and washes the sugar crystals off the side of the pot.
3. Uncover the pot, reduce the heat to medium-low, and put a candy thermometer inside the pan, making sure the bottom of the thermometer isn't touching the bottom of

the pan. Let the mixture cook, without stirring, until it reaches 236°F (soft ball stage; see page 346).

4. Immediately remove from the heat. Add the softened butter, but do not stir yet. Let the mixture cool (don't disturb the pan) to 130°F, about 30 minutes. Once it's cooled, add the vanilla and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed just until the butter and vanilla are incorporated and the mixture is smooth, less than a minute. Mix in the nuts if you're using them.

5. Scrape into the prepared pan, smooth out the top with a rubber spatula, and let set at room temperature, at least 2 hours or overnight. When the mixture has hardened, lift the foil out of the pan, peel it off, and cut the fudge into squares. Wrap well and refrigerate; fudge keeps for weeks but is best eaten fresh.

PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE Substitute 1 cup peanut butter for the chocolate. Stir in 1 cup chopped roasted peanuts before transferring to the pan.

MILK CARAMEL FUDGE The "milk" here is sweetened condensed milk; substitute an equal amount of Dulce de Leche (page 583) for a stronger caramel flavor: Substitute one 14-ounce can (about 1½ cups) sweetened condensed milk for the cream and chocolate; decrease the sugar to 2 cups.

CANDY CANE FUDGE This makes a festive holiday gift: Substitute 1 teaspoon peppermint extract for the vanilla; instead of nuts, fold 1 cup crushed peppermints into the fudge before scraping into the pan.

CHOCOLATE CHERRY FUDGE You can use any dried fruit, but cherries' tart sweetness is especially good in such a rich candy: Proceed with the recipe, adding 1 cup chopped dried cherries at the end in place of the nuts.

Chocolate Truffles

MAKES: About 1½ dozen
TIME: 15 minutes, plus time to chill and roll

You'd be hard-pressed to find a more simple, elegant dessert. As with all simple recipes, the quality of the

2. Combine the soaked cherries in a food processor with the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cherries, the almonds, the honey, and the almond extract if you're using it. Pulse until the mixture is puréed and sticks together, scraping down the sides and adding 1 tablespoon at a time of the reserved liquid if necessary to keep the machine running. At this point, you can refrigerate for up to a day before proceeding.

3. Put the cocoa powder in a shallow bowl. Scoop $\frac{1}{2}$ -tablespoon-sized mounds of the mixture and use your hands to roll them into balls, then roll each one in the cocoa until fully coated and arrange on a plate or baking sheet. Covered, these will keep at room temperature for about a week or in the fridge for a little longer.

CRANBERRY-WALNUT TRUFFLES Omit the almond extract; use dried cranberries and walnuts for the fruit and nuts. Stir 1 teaspoon cinnamon into the cocoa powder.

FIG AND PINE NUT TRUFFLES Substitute chopped dried figs for the cherries and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract for the almond extract; soak only $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups figs. Purée the figs, honey, and vanilla. Add 1 cup pine nuts and pulse a couple times, until the nuts are just incorporated.

PB&J TRUFFLES An old-school flavor combination in a new recipe: Swap the cherries for raisins, the almonds for peanuts, and the almond extract for vanilla extract. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon to the cocoa powder before rolling the truffles.

Caramels

MAKES: 4 to 5 dozen

TIME: About 45 minutes, plus time to cool

Getting these right is just a matter of reading a thermometer. The result is a soft, creamy candy that's miles better than anything bought at a store.

- 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, plus some for greasing
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cream
- 2 cups sugar

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Line an 8- or 9-inch square baking pan with enough parchment or wax paper to hang over the sides, then lightly grease it with butter.

2. Clip a candy thermometer to the side of a medium saucepan, making sure it doesn't touch the bottom of the pan. Add the cream, warm it over medium-low heat, and cook until it just starts to steam, then add the sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt all at once. Continue to cook, stirring frequently, until the sugar dissolves and the mixture reaches 245°F (the firm-ball stage; see page 346).

3. Remove from the heat, stir in the vanilla, and pour the mixture into the prepared pan. Let cool to room temperature. Use the parchment to lift the caramel out of the pan and use a sharp knife to cut it into small squares. Wrap each square in parchment or wax paper (this is a good project to do with kids). These keep for weeks but are best eaten fresh.

CHOCOLATE CARAMELS A match made in heaven: Decrease the butter to 2 tablespoons; add 4 ounces chopped dark chocolate to the hot cream.

SALTED CARAMELS A fancy finishing salt with big crystals adds a wonderful crunch: Increase the salt in the caramel to 1 teaspoon, then sprinkle a teaspoon of flaky salt over the caramel once you've poured it into the pan.

CHEWY CARAMELS A little baking soda adds tiny air bubbles that lighten the candies: Decrease the cream to $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups. Add 1 teaspoon baking soda with the vanilla and mix until thoroughly incorporated.

COFFEE CARAMELS Stir in 1 tablespoon instant espresso powder along with the vanilla.

GINGERBREAD CARAMELS A perfect holiday treat: Decrease the corn syrup to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

molasses. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice along with the vanilla.

LIME CARAMELS Try this with any citrus; the tartness cuts the rich caramels perfectly: Add 1 tablespoon grated lime zest to the saucepan with the cream; when the mixture starts to steam, remove from the heat, cover, and let sit for 10 or 15 minutes. Strain the mixture, discarding the zest, and return the cream to the stove.

CARDAMOM CARAMELS Cardamom has a wonderfully complex flavor—somehow both warm and cool—that accentuates caramel's salty sweetness: Follow the preceding variation, using 4 crushed whole cardamom pods instead of zest.

PISTACHIO CARAMELS Addictively crunchy and chewy; of course, you can do this with any nut, for equally great results: Stir 1 cup chopped toasted pistachios into the caramel just before pouring it into the pan. Substitute $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract for the vanilla for a more intense nutty flavor.

Peanut Brittle

MAKES: About 1 pound

TIME: About 20 minutes, plus time to cool

You won't believe how easy brittles are; you can whip one up in no time, and there's no need for a thermometer. Vary as you like with different nuts; mix in seeds and/or spices; or make it over-the-top by dipping it in chocolate (see page 353).

Butter for greasing

2 cups sugar

2 cups roasted peanuts

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt if the peanuts are unsalted

1. Use the butter to grease a baking sheet, preferably one with a low rim.

2. Put the sugar and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water in a small saucepan over low heat. Cook until the sugar dissolves and

becomes a nutty caramel color but is not yet dark brown anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes. Resist the urge to stir, which can cause the sugar to crystallize and create lumps, but you can swirl the pan if the sugar is cooking unevenly. If there's a lot of sugar clinging to the sides of the pot, use a brush dipped in water to wash it back down. Watch carefully, as sugar has a tendency to burn the second you turn your back on it.

3. Stir in the peanuts and the salt if you're using it; stir until combined, then remove from the heat and immediately pour the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet. Let cool completely at room temperature, then break into pieces. (To make even squares, score the brittle with a sharp knife once it's solidified slightly but before it has hardened.) Store in a covered container indefinitely.

POPCORN BRITTLE Even crunchier—and more addictive—than caramel corn: Pop about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup popcorn kernels; you should have about 4 cups popcorn. Put the popcorn in a large heatproof bowl and pour the caramel over it. Toss to coat, working quickly so the sugar doesn't harden, and immediately spread the mixture on the prepared baking sheet, using a greased piece of parchment to press it into a thin and even layer if necessary.

MAPLE-WALNUT BRITTLE Tastes like autumn: Decrease the sugar to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups and the water to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup; substitute 2 cups chopped toasted walnuts (see page 57) for the peanuts. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pure maple syrup just before adding the nuts and salt.

ROSEMARY-PINE NUT BRITTLE An elegant, unusual treat, perfect for grown-ups: Swap the peanuts for pine nuts and add $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt along with 1 tablespoon minced rosemary leaves.

8 Things to Add to Brittle

Stir these into the hot caramel in addition to or in lieu of the peanuts, and mix and match as you like—sesame seeds with five-spice powder and macadamia with coconut nut are both good, for example—but keep it simple so

the flavors don't muddy, with no more than 2 to 2½ cups of mix-ins.

- Any other nuts (I like salted nuts in brittle, but you can go either way): almonds, pecans, hazelnuts, walnuts, macadamia, cashews, or pistachios
- Any seeds: white and/or black sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, or poppy seeds, up to 1 cup
- Shredded unsweetened coconut, up to 2 cups
- Chopped dried fruit: raisins, dates, cherries, blueberries, pineapple, and/or apricots, up to 2 cups
- Ground or crushed spices: cinnamon, ginger, five-spice, allspice, nutmeg, cardamom, cayenne, coriander, or black or pink peppercorns, 1 teaspoon
- Crushed espresso beans, up to ½ cup
- Minced fresh herbs, like thyme, rosemary, or sage leaves, 1 tablespoon
- Grated citrus zest (lime and peanut is a wonderful combination, underrated in the world of sweets), 2 teaspoons

Maple Candy

MAKES: About ¾ pound

TIME: About 20 minutes, plus time to cool

This candy has that wonderful sugary crunch, and (aside from a few drops of oil) requires only one ingredient, so make sure you're using good syrup. To make more candy, simply increase the amount of syrup; the only difference is that it will take a little longer to heat and cool.

Neutral oil (like grapeseed or corn)

2 cups maple syrup

1. Line a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan with aluminum foil and grease it. (Or if you have silicone candy molds, use those.)
2. Put the syrup in a small, heavy saucepan with high sides over medium-high heat and clip a candy thermometer to the side, making sure the bottom of the thermometer isn't touching the bottom of the pan. Cook without stirring; when the syrup starts to bubble up (as if it's going to overflow), add a few drops of oil and the

foam will subside. As soon as the temperature reaches 236°F, take the pot off the heat.

3. Let the syrup cool to 180°F, 8 to 10 minutes, then stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until the syrup lightens in color and becomes thick, creamy, and opaque, about 3 minutes. Pour the syrup into the prepared pan (or molds) and let cool at room temperature until set. Unmold and break into pieces; in an airtight container at room temperature, these will keep for about a month.

Peppermint Bark

MAKES: About 1 pound

TIME: 15 minutes, plus time to cool

During the holidays you can find this festive candy for upward of \$20 a pound. Making it at home means you can have it year-round, for a fraction of the cost—the hardest part is waiting for the individual layers to set. See the variations for other easy gift ideas.

- 8 ounces dark chocolate, chopped**
- 8 ounces white chocolate, chopped**
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract**
- 3 candy canes or 12 peppermint candies**

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil (or use a silicone mat). Melt the dark chocolate over a double boiler or in the microwave, checking and stirring frequently until it's completely smooth. Pour onto the prepared sheet and spread into an even layer about ⅛ inch thick (it won't fill the whole baking sheet). Refrigerate until set, at least 15 minutes.
2. Melt the white chocolate until completely smooth; add the peppermint extract and let cool until lukewarm, another 10 or 15 minutes. Meanwhile, put the candy canes or peppermints in a plastic bag and use a mallet, rolling pin, or heavy utensil to crush them into very small pieces.
3. Spread the white chocolate over the dark chocolate, working quickly so that the dark chocolate doesn't start to melt and streak. Sprinkle the peppermints evenly over the top and refrigerate until the bark is hard. Cut into pieces or break by hand. Refrigerate in an airtight

...sugar and cornstarch.

Candied Orange Peels

MAKES: About 2 cups

TIME: About 1½ hours, largely unattended, plus time to dry

This bittersweet candy has an incredibly simple ingredient list, and it turns what you'd probably throw away into an elegant dessert. If you like, coat the dried peels in tempered chocolate (see page 353).

The process of boiling and reboiling the rinds is tedious, but it's necessary to make them tender and sweet enough to eat, and you can multitask while you do it. I love the texture and flavor of the whole rind, but if that's too bitter for you, use a vegetable peeler to leave behind the white pith.

4 oranges

3 cups sugar

1. Fill a pot with several inches of water and put it over high heat. Meanwhile, use a sharp knife to cut the tops and bottoms off the oranges and make 4 scores down the length of each one, cutting through the whole rind; peel off the rind and cut it into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide pieces.
2. When the water is boiling, add the peels and cook for about 10 minutes. Drain and rinse the peels, then repeat.
3. In a medium saucepan, combine 2 cups of the sugar with 2 cups water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and add the peels. Reduce the heat to medium-low and let simmer until the peels are translucent and tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour; no need to stir. Drain and toss with the remaining cup of sugar, then spread out on a rack to dry completely, at least 4 hours. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. These freeze nicely; thaw completely before serving.

CANDIED GINGER Peel 1 pound fresh ginger and cut it into very thin slices—no thicker than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. Increase the total sugar to $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups, using $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups to simmer the ginger with the 2 cups water and using the remaining cup to coat the ginger after it cooks.

another minute or 2. Invert the pan so the injera falls onto a platter or cutting board (use a rubber spatula to help it out if necessary). Repeat with the remaining batter. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Flour Tortillas

MAKES: 8 to 12

TIME: About 1½ hours, partially unattended

There are plenty of halfway decent flour tortillas available at supermarkets these days, but eating a freshly rolled one right out of the skillet is a pleasure reserved for the home cook. Nothing about the process is difficult. You don't even need a tortilla press, although if you have one, here's a chance to use it.

- 1½ cups flour, plus more for dusting**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil (like grapeseed or corn), olive oil, softened butter, or lard**
- About ½ cup boiling water, or more as needed**

- 1.** In a bowl or food processor, mix together the flour and salt. Stir or pulse in the oil. Add the water slowly—a tablespoon or two at a time if you're mixing by hand or in a thin stream with the food processor running—until the dough holds together in a ball.
- 2.** Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until it becomes smooth and elastic: 4 to 5 minutes if you're mixing by hand and about 1 minute if you're using a food processor. Wrap the dough in plastic and let it rest at room temperature for at least 30 minutes or up to a couple hours (or in the fridge for up to a few days; bring it back to room temperature before proceeding).
- 3.** Divide the dough into 8 pieces if you're rolling by hand. On a lightly floured surface, slightly flatten each piece into a disk, then cover and let rest for a few minutes. When you're ready to cook the tortillas, use a heavy rolling pin to roll each disk as thin as possible into a circle at least 8 inches in diameter, stacking them between sheets of plastic wrap or wax paper as you

work. To save time, you can continue to roll out the dough while the first pieces cook.

4. If you're using a tortilla press, divide the dough into 12 pieces (you need less dough because it will get thinner). Shape each into a slightly flattened disk and let rest for a few minutes. Put a piece of plastic wrap or parchment paper on the inside of the press, add the dough, top with another piece of plastic, and close the press. Squeeze the clamp as hard as you can; if you'd like it thinner, rotate the dough and repeat.

5. Put a large skillet or griddle (preferably cast iron) over medium-high heat for 4 to 5 minutes. Cook the tortillas one at a time until brown spots begin to appear on the bottom, about a minute; turn and cook the other side for a minute. Wrap the finished tortillas in a towel to keep them warm while you cook the rest. Serve immediately or let them cool, wrap tightly, and store in the fridge for a few days or in the freezer for up to a few months.

MOSTLY WHOLE WHEAT TORTILLAS Substitute 1 cup whole wheat flour for 1 cup of the all-purpose flour.

SPINACH TORTILLAS Boil 8 ounces spinach until wilted, shock in ice water (or rinse in cold water) to stop the cooking, and squeeze dry. Chop the spinach as finely as you can (or purée it) and add it to the dough along with the oil. Start with less water here, adding only as much as you need for the dough to pull together.

DRIED TOMATO AND GARLIC TORTILLAS Cover ½ cup dried tomatoes with boiling water and set aside to rehydrate for 10 minutes or so. Drain and then mince (or purée) them with 1 tablespoon garlic. Add the mixture to the dough along with the oil; you'll need less than the full ½ cup additional boiling water.

TORTILLA BOWLS All you need is a baking sheet and some jam jars or cups that can go in the oven (of course; you can also make these with store-bought tortillas); fill with rice, black beans, salsa, and your other favorite taco additions: Space out the cups on a baking sheet so there

tially baked dough with 1 cup bread crumbs, preferably fresh, then spread with the onion mixture. Return to the oven and bake for 15 to 20 minutes more, until the bottom is dark golden but not burned and the top is a richly colored caramel. Remove and cool for a few minutes before cutting; best served hot or warm.

Calzones

MAKES: 2 calzones, enough for 4 main-dish servings
TIME: About 1¼ hours

Essentially a pizza folded over itself, calzone is like one big hand pie: filling neatly enclosed with dough, so you get browned crust in every bite. You can fill it with any pizza toppings (see 24 Ideas for Pizza Toppings, page 550) or the combinations from any of the previous pizza variations, it should be substantial and fairly dry so the dough doesn't leak or get soggy. Drained ricotta is an ideal base. Serve with tomato sauce on the side or don't bother.

- 2 cups ricotta cheese**
- 1 recipe Pizza Dough (page 546)**
- 1 cup finely chopped cooked spinach or other greens, such as chard or broccoli rabe**
- 1 cup chopped or grated fresh mozzarella cheese**
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese**
- Salt and pepper**
- Flour for dusting**

1. If the ricotta is very moist, drain it in a fine strainer for 10 minutes or so to remove excess moisture. Divide the dough in half and shape each piece into a ball; cover lightly with plastic wrap or a towel and set aside to rise until slightly puffed, about 20 minutes.

2. Combine the spinach, ricotta, mozzarella, and Parmesan in a bowl. Taste and add salt, if necessary, and pepper. Heat the oven to 350°F with a pizza stone on a lower rack if you have one.

3. Roll or lightly press each dough ball into a flat round, lightly flouring your work surface and the dough as necessary (do not use more flour than you need to). Let the rounds sit for a few minutes; this will relax the dough and make it easier to roll out. Roll or pat out each dough round into an 8- to 10-inch disk, not too thin, on a floured pizza peel or lightly oiled baking sheet.

4. Put half the filling into the middle of each dough round. Moisten the edges with a little water. Fold one edge over onto the other and press tightly closed with your fingertips. Use a fork to poke several air vents in the top.

5. Bake the calzones directly on a pizza stone or on a baking sheet for 30 to 40 minutes or until nicely browned. Serve hot or warm.

MEAT CALZONE Substitute 1 cup crumbled cooked Italian sausage, chopped prosciutto, or salami for the greens.

PESTO-CHICKEN CALZONE Substitute ½ cup pesto for ½ cup of the ricotta and 1 cup chopped cooked chicken for the greens.

HAM AND CHEDDAR CALZONE Substitute 1 cup chopped ham for the greens and grated cheddar for the mozzarella.

SPINACH-ARTICHOKE CALZONE Substitute ½ cup room-temperature cream cheese for 1 cup of the ricotta. Use ¾ cup chopped cooked spinach and add ¾ cup chopped cooked artichoke hearts and 1 minced garlic clove to the filling mixture in Step 2.

QUICK GANACHE FUDGE An irresistible candy; no need for a candy thermometer: Line a cake pan or square baking dish with parchment paper and lightly grease it with butter or oil. When the ganache is still warm but not hot, mix in up to ½ cup chopped nuts, toasted sesame seeds or pepitas, dried fruit, candied ginger, or more chopped chocolate. Pour the mix into the prepared pan, let it set up in the fridge, and use a sharp knife to cut it into pieces. Keep refrigerated until you're ready to eat.

CHOCOLATE GANACHE GLAZE As a midpoint between ganache and chocolate sauce, this is an especially lavish sauce for dipping fresh fruit or cookies; you can also use it to glaze cakes or top ice cream: Thin the still-warm ganache with additional cream, about 2 tablespoons at a time, until it's easily pourable and doesn't harden too much when cooled to room temperature. To test the consistency, spread a small spoonful on a plate; it should thicken but remain very soft. To serve this as fondue, gently rewarm it and use it for dipping fruit, Marshmallows (page 354), or cubed Pound Cake (page 214) or Angel Food Cake (page 219).

CHOCOLATE WHIPPED CREAM Lighter and fluffier than whipped ganache, perfect anywhere you'd dollop Whipped Cream (page 556): Decrease the chocolate to 4 ounces. After Step 1, cover and refrigerate for several hours and up to 3 days. Whip as you would whipped cream until it forms soft peaks.

Chocolate Buttercream

MAKES: Enough frosting and filling for one 9-inch layer cake or 2 dozen cupcakes
TIME: 10 minutes

The easiest buttercream you'll ever make—laced with rich, bittersweet chocolate. It can be paired with most cakes and adapted endlessly. You'd do well to use cream, but milk works too.

- 2 ounces dark chocolate
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar

- 6 tablespoons cream or milk, plus more if needed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

1. Melt the chocolate over low heat in a double boiler or microwave; set aside to cool.
2. Use an electric mixer or a fork to cream the butter. Gradually work in about half the sugar, then add the melted, cooled chocolate. Add the rest of the sugar ½ cup at a time, alternating with the cream and beating well after each addition, until it's as sweet as you like (you might not use all 4 cups).
3. Stir in the vanilla and salt. If the frosting is too thick to spread, add a little more cream, a teaspoon at a time. If it's too thin (unlikely but possible), refrigerate; it will thicken as the butter hardens.

VANILLA BUTTERCREAM A classic for White Cake (page 212) or Chocolate Cake (page 196): Omit the chocolate and use 2 teaspoons vanilla extract.

CARAMEL BUTTERCREAM Lightly sweet and wonderfully complex: Omit the chocolate and cream; decrease the confectioners' sugar to 2 cups. When the butter-sugar mixture is smooth, beat in 1 cup Caramel Sauce (page 581); make sure it's completely cooled or the frosting will melt. If you like salted caramel, increase the salt to 2 teaspoons.

ESPRESSO BUTTERCREAM There's no better pairing for this than Chocolate Cake (page 196) or Vanilla Latte Cake (page 212): Omit the chocolate; beat 1 tablespoon instant espresso powder with the butter until smooth.

GINGER BUTTERCREAM A spicy-sweet frosting for Pumpkin-Ginger Cake (page 234), Molasses-Spice Cake (page 235), or Carrot Cake (page 230): Omit the chocolate; beat 1 tablespoon ginger into the frosting with the vanilla and salt.

CINNAMON BUTTERCREAM Try it on Chocolate-Cinnamon Cake (page 199), in Gingerbread Whoopie Pies (page 211), or on Sweet Potato Coconut Cake (page

231): Omit the chocolate; beat 1 tablespoon cinnamon into the frosting with the vanilla and salt.

MAPLE BUTTERCREAM Thinner than typical butter cream; use this frosting for cakes like Pumpkin Spice Cake (page 232) or spread it on Pancakes (page 98), Waffles (page 112), and French Toast (page 117). Substitute ½ cup maple syrup for half of confectioners' sugar. Omit the vanilla and chocolate. Proceed with the recipe, then refrigerate the frosting to solidify it somewhat before using.

CITRUS BUTTERCREAM Try this using half butter and half cream cheese: Omit the cream and chocolate. Add 2 tablespoons fresh citrus juice and 1 tablespoon grated or minced zest or more to taste.

PISTACHIO BUTTERCREAM The perfect filling for Macarons (page 176) or topping for Pistachio-Saffron Cake (page 212): Omit the chocolate. Beat ½ cup pistachio paste with the butter until smooth before adding the sugar. (To make your own pistachio paste, blend 1½ cups—about 6 ounces—roasted unsalted pistachios and ¼ cup sugar in a food processor until finely ground, then add 1 tablespoon vegetable oil and process until smooth, 5 to 10 minutes. Add another tablespoon of oil if necessary to loosen it up.)

PEANUT BUTTERCREAM For Chocolate Cupcakes (page 196) or sandwiched between Oatmeal Cookies (page 146): Substitute ¼ cup smooth peanut butter for half the butter. Omit the chocolate (or don't, if you love peanut butter cups). Proceed with the recipe; this may require more cream to get it to the right consistency.

Not-Too-Sweet Vanilla Buttercream

MAKES: Enough for any cake
TIME: 10 minutes

More about the butter and less about the sweet; it's incredibly rich and creamy, so you may want to use a little less frosting than you usually would. Beyond cake, smear

Banana Bread

MAKES: 1 loaf

TIME: About 1 hour

Who doesn't love banana bread? This one is just sweet enough, with fabulous crunch if you add walnuts and coconut, as I always do. There's no better solution for over-the-hill bananas, and the batter comes together in less than 10 minutes. I've been making this recipe—created by my late dear friend Sherry—for almost fifty years; it's incredibly reliable.

- 1 stick butter, melted, plus softened butter for greasing**
- 2 cups flour**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 cup sugar**

- 3 very ripe bananas, mashed with a fork until smooth
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan with softened butter.
2. Whisk together the flour, salt, baking powder, and sugar in a large bowl.
3. Mix together the melted butter and mashed bananas in a separate bowl. Beat in the eggs and vanilla until well combined. Stir this mixture into the dry ingredients just enough to combine everything. Gently fold in the nuts and coconut if you're using them.
4. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until the bread is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center of the bread comes out almost entirely clean. Cool the pan on a rack for 15 minutes, then carefully turn it upside down to release the loaf. Serve warm or at room temperature or wrap in plastic and keep at room temperature for a couple days.

HONEY WHOLE GRAIN BANANA BREAD For a delicately sweet, nuttier bread: Substitute 1¼ cups whole wheat flour and ¾ cup oat bran for the all-purpose flour. Reduce the sugar to ¾ cup and whisk in 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Add ¼ cup honey to the melted butter.

7 Ways to Top Any Quick Bread, Muffin, or Scone

- Coconut Glaze (page 567)
- Cinnamon Glaze (page 567)
- Orange Glaze (page 567)
- Whipped Butter (page 583)
- Cream Cheese Frosting (page 562)
- Chocolate-Hazelnut Spread (page 586)
- A drizzle of honey

9 Additions to Any Quick Bread, Muffin, or Scone

- Toasted chopped nuts, up to 1 cup
- Chocolate chips, up to 1 cup
- Ground spices, like cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger, up to 2 teaspoons
- Bourbon, up to 1 tablespoon
- Pumpkin or sunflower seeds, up to ¼ cup
- Citrus zest, up to 2 tablespoons
- Chopped dried fruit, up to 1 cup
- Shredded carrots, up to 1 cup
- Yogurt or sour cream, ¼ cup

CHOCOLATE BANANA BREAD Reduce the flour to 1½ cups. Add ½ cup Dutch-process cocoa powder to the flour. Fold up to 1 cup chopped dark chocolate into the batter.

TROPICAL BANANA BREAD Brown sugar and a few choice add-ins transform basic banana bread into a tropical treat: Replace half the sugar with ½ cup packed dark brown sugar. Fold ½ cup chopped dried pineapple, ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut, and ⅓ cup chopped macadamia nuts into the batter.

ORANGE BANANA BREAD Whisk 2 tablespoons grated orange zest into the dry ingredients. Mix ¼ cup fresh orange juice into the melted butter and bananas.

PUMPKIN BREAD Substitute 1 cup pumpkin purée for the bananas. Whisk 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg, ¼ teaspoon ginger, and ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves into the dry ingredients.

PEANUT BUTTER BANANA BREAD Add ⅓ cup peanut butter to the bananas. Cut the butter down to 5 tablespoons.

APRICOT CREAM CHEESE BREAD The soft tang of cream cheese is a wonderful flavor and texture enhancer for quick breads: Replace the bananas with ½ cup apricot

Lemon-Poppy Bread

MAKES: 1 loaf

TIME: A little more than 1 hour

Lemon-Poppy Bread offers light, refreshing flavor in a rich cake. It's not too sweet, as the nutty seeds offset the lemon's tang. For dessert, top the loaf with a Lemon Glaze (page 567), pair it with a fruit sauce (page 573), or serve with macerated berries (page 575).

This recipe can serve as the foundation for a variety of citrus cakes (see the next page for ideas).

- 1 stick butter, melted and cooled, plus softened butter for greasing**
- 2 cups flour, plus more for dusting**
- 1 cup sugar**

- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1½ tablespoons grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup poppy seeds
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan with softened butter and dust with flour.
2. Whisk together the flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder in a large bowl. Stir in the lemon zest and poppy seeds until distributed evenly.
3. Whisk together the melted butter, lemon juice, milk, eggs, and vanilla in a separate bowl. Pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Do not overmix; it's okay if the batter is not perfectly smooth.
4. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until the bread is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out almost entirely clean. Cool the pan on a rack for 15 minutes, then carefully turn it upside down to release the loaf. Serve warm or at room temperature or wrap it in plastic and keep at room temperature for a couple days.

LEMON CORNMEAL BREAD For a more crumbly, cornbread-like texture: Replace ½ cup of the flour with ½ cup yellow cornmeal. Substitute brown sugar for granulated. Replace the milk with buttermilk.

OLIVE OIL TANGERINE BREAD The flavors of Sicily: Swap the lemon zest for tangerine zest. Replace the lemon juice with ¼ cup orange liqueur and ¼ cup tangerine juice. Use ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil instead of the melted butter.

LIME-POPPY BREAD Lime is so tart that the amount of zest and juice is cut back: Substitute 1 tablespoon lime zest for the lemon zest and ½ cup lime juice for the lemon juice. Increase the milk to ½ cup.