

Compliments of Jodee Harris

# essential living

603

## The Art of Patio Living



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\$6.99 Issue #603



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This season invites new sights, renewed spaces, and simple pleasures that brighten our days.

Take a quick trip to New Orleans, where you'll find soulful food, live music and neighborhoods packed with charm. Whether it's your first visit or your fifth, New Orleans always has something new to share.

Closer to home, we turn our attention outdoors. A few thoughtful updates can turn even the smallest yard or balcony into your favorite spring destination. And if you'd rather bring the outdoors in, you're not alone. Trees are making their way into inside, bringing height, calm, and a bit of the wild. It's a simple way to breathe new life into your space.

Finally, we're celebrating the simple pleasure of sandwich cookies. Whether it's a nod to the classic ice cream variety or a crunchy citrus delight, these treats are all about comfort and a little bit of fun.

— From the Publisher



**What's your least favorite planet?**

Scan the QR code to cast your vote!



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## Flourless Chocolate Cake

- ½ c. salted butter
- ¾ c. sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 c. semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ c. unsweetened cocoa powder

1. Line a round 8" round cake pan with parchment paper and spray with non-stick spray. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 375° F.
2. Melt butter in a large glass bowl in the microwave. Add the chocolate chips and let sit for 3-4 minutes. Stir until chips melt. Let cool for 5 minutes.
3. Whisk the sugar and vanilla into the chocolate mixture. Whisk in eggs until blended. Stir in the cocoa powder.
4. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 25 minutes.
5. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then move to a cooling rack. Cool completely, then serve with fresh berries.

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# 48 HOURS IN NOLA



Welcome to New Orleans, a city celebrated for its mouthwatering cuisine, historic neighborhoods, lively nightlife, and the iconic Mardi Gras. Even if your visit doesn't coincide with this famed carnival, you'll still find endless ways to experience the magic of New Orleans.

Affectionately known as NOLA, this vibrant Louisiana gem offers surprises at every turn. **While the classic tourist spots are a draw, the city's true charm lies in its unique blend of history, culture, and spirit.**

# DAY 1

**Start your trip with a quintessential New Orleans breakfast.** Treat yourself to pillowy, powdered sugar-dusted beignets paired with a rich cup of coffee, the perfect fuel for exploring the French Quarter. This historic district is renowned for its Creole architecture, a striking blend of Spanish, French and Caribbean influences, characterized by brick exteriors, French doors and intricate wrought-iron balconies.

**Take a stroll down the Quarter's charming streets, stopping for unique finds at the French Market.** Continue to Jackson Square, a national landmark steeped in history as the site of the Louisiana Purchase. Admire the grandeur of the 18th-century St. Louis Cathedral, the oldest active cathedral in the United States and enjoy the vibrant display of local art and street performances scattered throughout the square.





**Hop aboard the oldest operating streetcar in the world, the St. Charles streetcar, for a ride that bridges history and scenery.** This route offers a glimpse of the city's diverse neighborhoods, from the buzz of Bourbon Street to the charm of Magazine Street.



Spend time exploring Magazine Street's six miles of locally owned shops, art galleries and inviting eateries throughout the Central Business District, Garden District and Uptown.

For dinner, dive into the rich flavors of French-Creole cuisine. Savor iconic dishes like gumbo, jambalaya or crawfish étouffée and, of course, save room for some bread pudding.



Cap off the evening with an unforgettable jazz performance at Preservation Hall. This legendary venue offers an intimate atmosphere where the city's rich musical heritage comes alive. Let the soulful melodies and timeless rhythms transport you straight to the heart of New Orleans' vibrant culture.



# DAY 2

**The next day begins in the festive Bywater neighborhood with brunch at Elizabeth's.**

This trendy spot offers down-home Southern Creole classics, like biscuits and gravy and their beloved Bananas Foster French Toast. After brunch, meander through the historic neighborhood and stop by community favorites like , offering breathtaking views of the Mississippi River, or explore the vibrant local art scene.

**Next, spend your afternoon immersing yourself in Louisiana's natural beauty with a bayou tour.**

These wetlands play an essential role in their city's history and share a deep connection with the Cajun and Creole cultures. These wetlands are a vital part of the region's history and are deeply connected to Cajun and Creole cultures. Stretching across nearly three million acres, the bayou of New Orleans are teeming with wildlife including river otters, wild pigs and the notorious alligators. Choose an airboat for an exhilarating adventure or a pontoon for a more laidback cruise.





**End your visit with a stop at Frenchmen Street in the Marigny district.** Known for its live music venues and local charm, this neighborhood offers all the allure of the French Quarter without the crowds. Enjoy the lively jazz scene or relax at one of the cozy bars before enjoying one last taste of New Orleans with dishes like shrimp po'boy, boudin and some classic bananas foster.

*In just two days, you'll discover why New Orleans captivates visitors with its rich history, irresistible cuisine and vibrant culture. The city's unique energy is sure to leave you with unforgettable memories and a longing to return.*



# SPRING SOUPS

Spring soups should be fresh, bright, and just right for the season's changing weather. From garden-inspired veggies to cozy classics, these recipes offer the perfect balance of lightness and comfort to enjoy any day. Get ready to savor flavors that bring warmth and joy, perfect for sharing as the season blooms.

## ZUPPA TOSCANA

This soup brings together sausage, potatoes, and kale in a cozy bowl of Tuscan-inspired goodness.

**PREP TIME:** 10 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME:** 30 MINUTES  
**YIELD:** 4 SERVINGS

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. spicy Italian ground sausage
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- ½ white onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 6 c. chicken broth
- 2 c. water
- 1 c. yellow potatoes, 1" pieces
- 3 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 2 c. heavy cream
- 4 c. kale, chopped
- Parmesan cheese, for serving

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the sausage to a large pot and cook over medium-high heat for six minutes until browned. Then, use a spatula to remove the sausage from the pot and transfer it to a paper towel lined plate.
2. Reduce the heat to medium and add the butter. Once the butter is melted, add the onion and sauté for three minutes before adding the garlic. Continue to cook for two minutes.
3. Next, add the chicken broth, water, potatoes, salt, pepper and paprika. Stir, then bring to a boil.
4. Boil until the potatoes are tender, then reduce the heat to medium-low and add the kale.
5. Allow to simmer until the kale has wilted, then stir in the heavy cream and add the sausage back to the pot. Allow to simmer for five more minutes before garnishing with parmesan cheese and serving warm.

# RED PEPPER AND CAULIFLOWER SOUP

This twist on the classic red bell pepper & tomato soup is not one you want to miss.

**PREP TIME:** 15 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME:** 50 MINUTES  
**YIELD:** 6 SERVINGS

## INGREDIENTS

### CAULIFLOWER

- 1 medium head of cauliflower
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- Pinch of salt

### CHICKPEAS

- 1-15 oz. can of garbanzo beans
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 tsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. cumin

### SOUP

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 shallot, diced
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 4 celery stalks, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 16 oz. jar roasted red peppers, drained and rinsed
- 1 tbsp. cumin
- 2 tsp. turmeric
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 2 tsp. pepper
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 3 c. vegetable broth
- 1-15 oz. can of coconut milk
- Freshly minced parsley, for garnish

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Break the head of cauliflower into florets and add to a bowl with the olive oil, lemon juice and seasonings. Toss to combine then spread out on half the baking sheet.
3. Add the garbanzo beans to another bowl and toss with the olive oil, lemon juice and seasonings. Mix, then transfer to the other side of the baking sheet. Then transfer the baking sheet to the middle rack and roast for 35 minutes until the cauliflower is tender and the chickpeas are crunchy.
4. While the cauliflower and chickpeas are in the oven, begin making the soup. Add the olive oil to a large pot or Dutch oven and heat over medium-high heat. Once warm, add the shallot, onion, carrots and celery. Sauté for seven minutes, then add the garlic and roasted bell peppers.
5. Reduce the heat to medium and add the cumin, turmeric, paprika, salt and pepper. Stir to combine before pouring in the vegetable broth and coconut milk. Then bring to a boil.
6. Allow to boil until the vegetables are tender. Then, reduce to a simmer and cover.
7. Once the cauliflower is done, reserve a few florets to go on top of the soup with the crunchy chickpeas and add the remaining cauliflower to the soup.
8. Allow to simmer for 5-10 minutes, then use an immersion blender to puree the soup (or transfer to a blender and pulse until smooth, then transfer back to the pot).
9. Continue to cook the soup for 3-5 minutes on low heat to incorporate all the flavors.
10. Finally, remove from heat and serve. Top with cauliflower, chickpeas and parsley.

# CREAM OF MUSHROOM SOUP

This underrated soup is finally getting the recognition it deserves!

**PREP TIME:** 10 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME:** 30 MINUTES  
**YIELD:** 6 SERVINGS

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 tbsp. butter
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 lbs. cremini mushrooms, washed and sliced
- 1 tbsp. fresh thyme, minced and more for garnish
- ½ c. white wine
- 6 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 4 c. chicken broth
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 bouillon cubes
- 1 c. heavy cream

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the butter to a large pot or Dutch oven and melt over medium heat. Add the onion and shallot and sauté for five minutes before adding the garlic. Cook for another two minutes.
2. Add in the mushrooms and two teaspoons of thyme. Sauté for five minutes, then add the white wine. Scrape the sides of the pot to loosen any burnt bits, but do not discard.
3. Continue cooking until the mushrooms are tender and brown. Remove ¼ cup of mushrooms to go on top of the soup.
4. Sprinkle the flour into the pot and stir to combine. Cook for another two minutes, then add the broth and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium-low and season with remaining thyme, salt, pepper and the bouillon cubes.
5. Cover with a lid and allow to simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until thick. Finally, reduce the heat to low and stir in the heavy cream. Allow to simmer, stirring to combine all the flavors.
6. Distribute in bowls, top with mushrooms and more thyme and enjoy!



# LEMON ORZO SOUP



This Lemon Orzo Soup is just the recipe you need for spring.

**PREP TIME:** 15 MINUTES  
**COOK TIME:** 45 MINUTES  
**YIELD:** 6 SERVINGS

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 2 c. celery, diced
- 3 c. of carrots, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 6 c. of chicken broth
- 6 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 4 sprigs of rosemary
- 1 c. of orzo pasta
- 2 c. of chicken breast, cooked and shredded
- Freshly minced parsley, for garnish

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the butter to a large pot or Dutch oven and melted over medium heat. Once melted, add the onion, celery and carrots. Sauté for seven minutes, then add the garlic and continue to cook for two minutes.
2. Season with salt, pepper, lemon juice and lemon zest. Stir, then reduce the heat to medium and stir for another five minutes.
3. Add the chicken broth, thyme, rosemary and bring the soup to a boil.
4. Once boiling, add the orzo pasta and reduce the heat to a simmer. Stir occasionally, until the orzo has doubled in size. Then, add the chicken.
5. Reduce the heat to low, cover and allow to simmer for 10 minutes. Finally, remove from heat and garnish with freshly chopped parsley.

# HOME GYM MADE EASY

Creating a home gym doesn't mean filling your space with bulky machines or spending thousands of dollars. It's about designing a setup that matches your workout style, fits your space and makes you want to exercise. Whether you have a full room or just a corner, here's how to build a gym that works for your life.





## START WITH YOUR WORKOUT STYLE

**The most effective gym is one that matches how you like to move. Think about the types of workouts you enjoy most and build around that.**

Strength training routines pair well with adjustable dumbbells, resistance bands and a sturdy bench

Yoga or Pilates sessions benefit from a quality mat, blocks and a calm atmosphere

Cardio fans might want a compact treadmill, stationary bike or even a mini trampoline

Start small and add as you go — your gym doesn't need to be fully stocked from day one.



## CHOOSE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

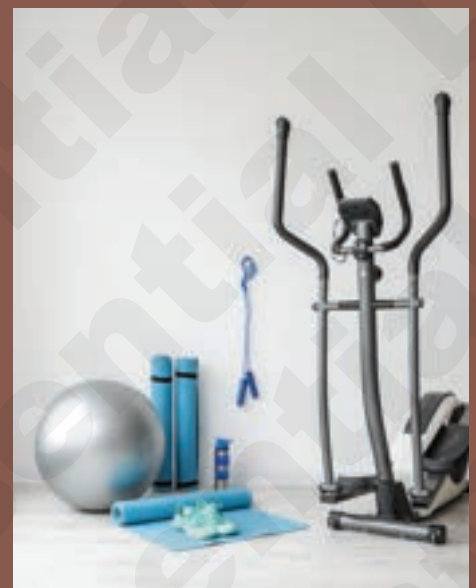
**Focus on versatility and value — not volume. A few well-chosen items can support a wide range of workouts.**

**Adjustable dumbbells or kettlebells:** Great for strength training, these compact tools let you scale weight as you get stronger. Use them for squats, lunges, presses and even core work — without needing a full rack of weights.

**Resistance bands in multiple tension levels:** Lightweight and easy to store, bands can be used for strength, mobility or injury prevention. Loop bands are ideal for glute work or dynamic warm-ups, while longer bands work well for rows, chest presses or assisted pull-ups.

**A durable mat:** Essential for everything from yoga and stretching to bodyweight training and recovery. Choose one with enough cushion to protect joints but enough grip to stay put during planks or balance work.

**A bench, step or stability ball:** Adds new angles and intensity to basic moves. Use a bench for elevated pushups or split squats, a step for cardio intervals or plyometrics and a stability ball to challenge your core during seated exercises or bridges.



# MAKE IT A SPACE YOU ENJOY

Your gym should feel like an invitation, not a chore. A few personal touches can make the space feel energizing and yours.

Add natural light or a mirror to open up the area.

Use calming or motivating colors based on your workout vibe.

Mount a speaker or tablet stand for music and on-demand workouts.

Include small touches like plants, art, or even a motivational quote.

**Comfort and atmosphere matter more than perfection.**



# KEEP IT FLEXIBLE

Your setup doesn't have to be permanent. The best home gyms are designed to fit your routine, not the other way around. Even a mat and a kettlebell in the living room can be enough. Start with what fits your lifestyle right now, and let your space grow along with your goals.



# PLAN YOUR PERFECT PATIO

Your patio should feel like a natural extension of your home and your personality. Whether you host weekend cookouts, unwind with a book, or dream of a garden retreat, the right design can transform a basic backyard into your favorite destination.



# YOUR PATIO STYLE

The first step is imagining what you want from your patio. Is it a cozy spot for morning coffee? An outdoor dining area for family dinners? Or maybe a space for entertaining friends with a fire pit and string lights? Knowing how you'll use the space helps guide your design and furniture choices.

## FOR THE ENTERTAINER

Think zones for dining, lounging, and conversation.

### MUST-HAVES:

- Large dining table or fire pit with plenty of seating
- String lights, lanterns, or pendant lighting for evening ambiance
- A Bluetooth speaker or sound system

**Smart tip** – Add a storage console to keep drinks, glassware and snacks on hand — no more trips back to the kitchen mid-party.



## FOR THE FAMILY HUB

Durability and flexibility are key when your patio sees action every day.

### MUST-HAVES:

- Multi-purpose storage benches that double as seating and toy organizers
- Durable outdoor rugs that can handle foot traffic and playtime
- Outdoor chalkboard wall or magnetic board for creative play

**Smart tip** – Use a utility cart as a rotating activity station to swap out favorites like bubbles, water toys, or art supplies.



## FOR THE RELAXER

Keep it simple, soft, and calming.

### MUST-HAVES:

- A hammock, chaise, or cushioned lounge chair
- Shade options like a pergola, umbrella, or retractable awning
- A small water feature for white noise

**Smart tip** – Opt for quick-dry, UV-resistant fabrics so you can relax right after it rains — no soggy cushions here.





## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SPACE

Whatever the size of your patio, thoughtful layout goes a long way. Measure your space and think about how people will move through it. Keep pathways clear, avoid overcrowding, and use elements like outdoor rugs to define zones. Built-in benches or foldable chairs can save room and add versatility.



## FLOORING MATTERS

Choose a surface that suits your climate, lifestyle, and the overall look you want to achieve.

- Natural stone or brick offers timeless charm and durability
- Concrete is versatile and can be customized with stains or stamping
- Wood decking brings warmth but requires regular maintenance



## LIGHTING LAYERS

Don't let sunset cut your patio time short. Thoughtful lighting can shift your space from functional to magical.

- String lights overhead bring instant charm
- Solar-powered path lights add safety
- LED candles offer soft, cozy ambiance



## ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

With the right mix of comfort, function, and personality, your patio can become more than just outdoor space; it can become your favorite room.

- Outdoor pillows and cushions add color and comfort
- Planters with seasonal flowers or herbs bring life and fragrance
- Decorative items like wind chimes or sculptures personalize your space





# Best Trees to grow Indoors

Indoor trees bring life to any room, adding natural texture and freshness that's hard to beat. Beyond their beauty, they improve air quality and create a calming atmosphere. Whether your room gets bright sun or not much at all, there's likely a tree that will work.

# Fiddle Leaf Fig

**LIGHT:** Bright, filtered light

**INDOOR HEIGHT:** 10 feet

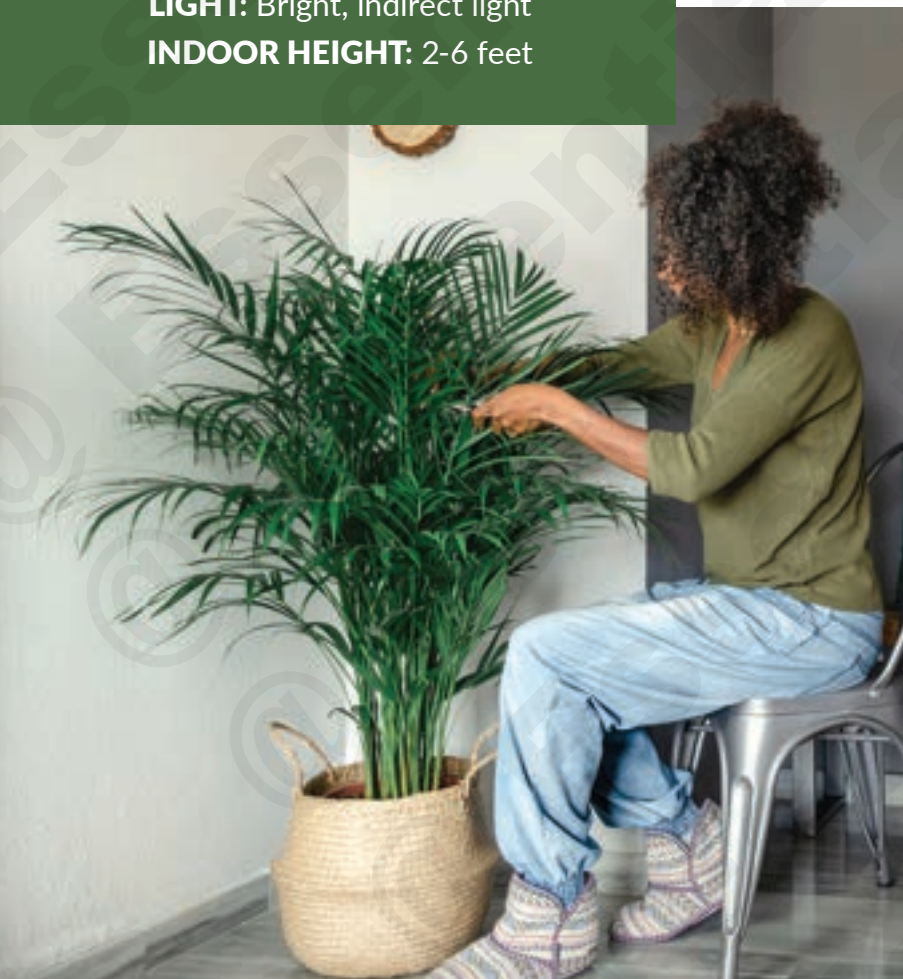
The fiddle leaf fig is a favorite for good reason. Its large, glossy leaves make an impact, but it can be sensitive to change. Place it in a bright, draft-free spot and try not to move it once it's settled. Avoid overwatering, as it's quick to drop leaves when stressed.



# Parlor Palm

**LIGHT:** Bright, indirect light

**INDOOR HEIGHT:** 2-6 feet



If you're new to indoor plants or just want something low maintenance, the parlor palm is a solid choice. It can handle lower light without much fuss. Keep the soil evenly moist, but avoid overwatering.

# Rubber Tree

**LIGHT:** Medium to bright, indirect light

**INDOOR HEIGHT:** 6-10 feet

Rubber trees thrive in warm, humid environments. They're sensitive to temperature shifts, so place them away from vents or drafty windows. Once settled, they grow quickly. Pruning the top of the main stem helps keep the tree from growing too tall and encourages fuller side branches. Wipe the leaves occasionally to keep them clean and healthy.



# Olive Tree

**LIGHT:** Needs direct sun for several hours a day

**INDOOR HEIGHT:** 6 feet

The olive tree loves the sun—no surprise there. Give it your brightest window and make sure the pot drains well. You may need to prune it occasionally to help it keep a manageable shape indoors.

# Weeping Fig

**LIGHT:** Bright, indirect light

**INDOOR HEIGHT:** 4 to 10 feet

Known for its rich green leaves and low-maintenance nature, the weeping fig does best in a bright, well-lit room. Use well-draining soil and let the top inch dry out before watering. Sudden changes or low light can lead to leaf drop.



## TIPS for Indoor Tree Care

### ROTATE REGULARLY

Your tree will lean toward the light, so turning it every couple of weeks helps it grow evenly and keeps it looking its best.

### FIND THE RIGHT SPOT

South- or west-facing windows are ideal for sun lovers like olive trees and fiddle leaf figs. Low-light options like parlor palms can handle shadier rooms.

### REPOT AS THEY GROW

If your tree seems crowded or growth slows down, it's time to check the roots. Moving to a slightly larger pot every year or two will help keep your tree comfortable and thriving.

### STICK TO A ROUTINE

Rather than watering on a fixed schedule, check the soil with your finger. Most trees prefer to dry out a bit between waterings.



## Double-Decker **Delights**

Just when you thought cookies couldn't get any better, along come sandwich cookies. A sweet, satisfying filling tucked between two perfectly baked cookies delivers double the flavor and a little surprise in every bite. Whether you love tart lemon curd or a nostalgic fluffernutter combo, these recipes take cookies to the next level.

# Chocolate Dipped **Fluffernutter Cookie Sandwiches**



Fluffy marshmallow spread sandwiched between salty peanut butter cookies then dipped in dark chocolate to yield the ultimate sweet treat!

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 12 minutes

Inactive Time:  
30 minutes

Yield: 12 cookie  
sandwiches

## **Ingredients**

- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
- ½ c. creamy peanut butter
- ¾ c. light brown sugar
- ¼ c. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1½ c. marshmallow fluff
- ¾ c. dark chocolate chips
- 1 tbsp. coconut oil

## **Instructions**

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add the butter, peanut butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar to a large bowl. Use an electric mixer to combine on medium speed for two minutes.
3. Next, add the egg and vanilla extract, then mix again to combine.
4. In another bowl, combine the flour, baking soda and salt. Then, slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, a quarter at a time. Mix well between each addition.
5. Once combined, use a cookie scoop to transfer the dough to the baking sheet. Place the sheet on the center rack of the preheated oven and bake for 12 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven and allow the cookies to cool for five minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.
7. Next, add a tablespoon of marshmallow fluff to the center of one cookie, then top with another. Lightly press down, then place back on the cooled baking sheet. Repeat with all the cookies.
8. Transfer the baking sheet to the freezer. Allow the cookies to freeze for 15 minutes. While the cookie sandwiches are in the freezer, combine the dark chocolate chips and coconut oil in a bowl. Place in the microwave for 30 seconds, then stir and repeat until the chocolate is melted.
9. After 15 minutes, remove the cookies from the freezer and dip the cookie sandwiches in the melted dark chocolate. Dip to coat the cookies halfway, then place back on the tray. Repeat with the remaining cookie sandwiches.
10. Freeze the cookies for another 15 minutes, then serve and enjoy!



## Lemon Curd **Linzer Cookies**

Prep Time: 45 minutes | Inactive Time: 45 minutes  
Cook Time: 8 minutes | Yield: 20 cookie sandwiches



The zesty homemade lemon curd paired with the sweet cookies makes an irresistible treat.

## Ingredients

For the cookies

- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$  c. granulated sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 1 tbsp. milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. vanilla extract
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  c. all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. almond flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. baking soda
- Powdered sugar

For the lemon curd

- 4 large egg yolks
- $\frac{2}{3}$  c. granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{3}$  c. lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. salt
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened and cubed

## Instructions

For the Lemon Curd

1. Fill the bottom of your pot with two inches of water, then heat on high. Once the water begins to boil, reduce the heat to a simmer.
2. Place the egg yolks, sugar, lemon zest, lemon juice and salt in the top pot of the double boiler. Whisk until blended, then continue to whisk as the ingredients cook to become a curd. Whisk for roughly 10 minutes, or until the mixture thickens.
3. Remove from heat. Then, add the sliced butter and whisk until melted. Pour the lemon curd into a jar and allow to cool before refrigerating.

For the Cookies

1. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add the butter and granulated sugar to a large mixing bowl. Use an electric mixer to cream together on medium-low speed for roughly two minutes, until creamy.
3. Next, add the egg, milk and vanilla. Mix again to combine.
4. Add the flour, almond flour, baking soda and salt to another bowl. Slowly sift in the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, add a third at a time and mix between.
5. Dust a work surface with flour, then transfer to the dough. Use a rolling pin to roll out the dough until roughly  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick.
6. Use a cookie cutter to cut out roughly 2" inch scalloped cookies. Then, carefully transfer to the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough, then use a small circle or heat shaped cut outs to make the signature indent on half the cookies.
7. Transfer the baking sheet to the fridge and chill the dough for 45 minutes.
8. Preheat the oven to 375° F. Transfer the cookies to the center rack and back for eight minutes.
9. Remove the cookies from the oven and allow them to cool slightly before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.
10. Once the cookies have cooled, start by separating all the cookies with a cut out and lightly dust with powdered sugar.
11. Then, take the cookies without the cut outs and spread roughly two teaspoons of lemon curd on the bottom before topping with a powdered sugar dusted cut out cookie.
12. Repeat with all the cookies, then serve and enjoy!

# Chocolate Chip Ice Cream Sandwiches

With the signature chocolate chip cookies, vanilla ice cream and mini chocolate chips, this recipe is even better than the store-bought version!



Prep Time: 30 minutes  
Cook Time: 12 minutes  
Inactive Time: 45 minutes  
Yield: 10 Sandwiches

## Ingredients

- 7 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- $\frac{2}{3}$  c. light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  c. granulated sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  c. all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- 2 c. mini chocolate chips, divided
- 4 c. vanilla ice cream

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add the butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar to a large mixing bowl. Use an electric mixer to cram together for three minutes at medium-low speed.
3. Next, add the egg and vanilla extract. Mix on medium speed to combine.
4. Add the flour, baking soda and salt to a medium-sized bowl and mix. Slowly, sift in a third of the dry ingredients at a time, mixing thoroughly in between.
5. Add one cup of mini chocolate chips, then use a spatula to fold into the dough.
6. Use a large cookie scoop to place the dough on the prepared baking sheet. Lightly press down with your hand to flatten the dough slightly. Repeat with the remaining dough, spacing the cookies roughly 2" apart.
7. Bake for 12 minutes on the center rack, then remove from the oven and allow to cool. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before placing in the freezer for 30 minutes.
8. Add the remaining chocolate chips to a shallow bowl.
9. After the allotted time, place two scoops (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) of vanilla ice cream on the bottom of the cookies. Top with another cookie and press down slightly. Roll the ice cream in the chocolate chips, then place back in the freezer.
10. Repeat with the rest of the cookies. Serve immediately or wrap in plastic wrap and freeze until needed.

# Oatmeal Cream Pie

This comfort recipe has all the warm, nostalgic flavors you love and tastes better than you remember.

## Ingredients

For the cookies

- $\frac{3}{4}$  c. unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  c. light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. granulated sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- $2\frac{1}{3}$  c. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda

• 1 tsp. cinnamon

- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- 2 c. quick oats

For the filling

- $2\frac{1}{2}$  c. powdered sugar
- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 tbsp. milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract



Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 12 minutes

Yield: 10-12 cookie sandwiches

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375° F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add the butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar to a large mixing bowl. Use an electric mixer to cream together for two minutes until creamy.
3. Next, add the eggs and vanilla extract. Mix again for 30 seconds.
4. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet, adding a third at a time and mixing between to combine.
5. Add the oats and use a spatula to fold in. Then, use a cookie scoop to transfer the dough to the baking sheet.
6. Place on the center rack of the oven and bake for 10-12 minutes. Then allow to cool for five minutes before transferring to a cooling rack to cool completely.
7. To make the frosting, sift in the powdered sugar into a small bowl. Then add the butter and use an electric mixer to cream together for one to two minutes until smooth.
8. Add the milk and vanilla extract and mix again, then refrigerate until the cookies have fully cooled.
9. Finally, add a tablespoon dollop to the center of a cookie before topping with another cookie and pressing down slightly. Repeat with all the cookies, then serve and enjoy!





VISUAL GUIDE TO

# THE NIGHT SKY

Embark on a cosmic adventure as we explore the wonders of our solar system. Each planet, moon and distant world offers unique features that make our corner of the universe truly remarkable.

## WHAT MAKES A PLANET

**A planet is a celestial body that meets three main criteria:**

It has enough mass for its gravity to pull it into a nearly **round shape**

It has **cleared its orbital path** of other debris

It **orbits the Sun** directly

## TYPES OF PLANETS

### **TERRESTRIAL PLANETS**

Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars have solid, rocky surfaces.

### **GAS GIANTS**

Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are gas giants, made mostly of hydrogen and helium.

## THE DWARF PLANETS

Unlike planets, dwarf planets share their orbits with other debris and small bodies.

- There are five recognized dwarf planets in our solar system. In order from the Sun, they are: Ceres, Pluto, Haumea, Makemake and Eris.
- Ceres is the only dwarf planet in the inner solar system.
- Far beyond Neptune lies the Kuiper Belt, a doughnut-shaped region. It is home to most of the known dwarf planets, including Pluto, along with some comets.

# THE PLANETS AT A GLANCE

## MERCURY

Moons: 0

1 year = 88 Earth days

The solar system's smallest planet.

Mercury has no atmosphere, resulting in extreme temperature swings.

## VENUS

Moons: 0

1 year = 225 Earth days

Venus is hotter than Mercury, even though it's farther from the Sun.

Its surface pressure is over 90 times that of Earth.

## EARTH

Moons: 1

1 year = 365 Earth days

It's the only known planet with tectonic plates and liquid water on the surface.

Earth's magnetic field protects it from solar radiation.

## MARS

Moons: 2

1 year = 687 Earth days

Mars is home to the solar system's largest volcano, Olympus Mons.

The sunset on Mars appears blue

## JUPITER

Moons: 95

1 year = 11.8 Earth years

Jupiter's moon, Ganymede, is the largest in our solar system.

It has more than double the mass of all the other planets combined.

## SATURN

Moons: 274

1 year = 29 Earth years

Saturn's rings are made mostly of ice and extend over 170,000 miles wide.

It is the least dense planet and could float in water.

## URANUS

Moons: 28

1 year: 84 Earth years

Uranus rotates almost completely sideways.

It is the coldest planet in the solar system, with temperatures below  $-370^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

## NEPTUNE

Moons: 16

1 year: 165 Earth years

Winds on Neptune can reach over 1,200 miles per hour.

It was the first planet discovered using math before being seen through a telescope.



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## BAKED BURRATA AND MARINARA SAUCE DIP

- 1 baguette, sliced into 1" pieces
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 c. marinara sauce
- 6 oz. fresh burrata cheese
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F.
2. Brush the bread with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.
3. In an oven-safe dish, add the marinara sauce. Place the burrata in the center of the dish and sprinkle with red pepper flakes.
4. Bake the bread and dip for 7-8 minutes, until the sauce is bubbling at the edges and the bread is golden brown.
5. Serve immediately and enjoy!

# HOMEMADE *Cranberry Sauce*



**PREP TIME:** 5 minutes  
**COOK TIME:** 15 minutes  
**YIELD:** 6 servings

You'll never buy canned cranberry sauce again after making this easy recipe!

## INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz. fresh cranberries, rinsed
- ¼ c. white sugar
- ¼ c. orange juice
- ¼ c. brown sugar
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium saucepan, bring sugar, water and orange juice to a boil.
2. Add in the cranberries and cinnamon. Bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally until cranberries start to pop and sauce thickens.
3. Remove from heat and it will thicken as it cools. Cover and refrigerate for at least two hours.



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PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES  
COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES  
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS



## Old-Fashioned Applesauce

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 lb. tart apples
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 c. water
- $\frac{3}{4}$  c. sugar

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Peel, core and quarter the apples.
2. Bring apples, water and cinnamon to a boil in a Dutch oven.
3. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes until apples are tender.
4. Remove from heat and add sugar, stirring until dissolved.
5. Mash apples until desired texture is reached.



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