

Thanksgiving 2024 Grocery List

Pantry

Always go through your existing pantry before doing a grocery store run—otherwise this is how you end up with three partially used bottles of fish sauce.

- ☐ 1 box Kosher salt
- ☐ 1 box light brown sugar
- ☐ 1 box granulated sugar
- ☐ 1 jar fennel seed
- ☐ 1 jar red pepper flakes
- ☐ 1 jar black peppercorns
- ☐ 1 bag walnuts
- ☐ 1 jar honey
- ☐ 1 bottle ground cinnamon
- ☐ Nutmeg
- ☐ Nonstick cooking spray
- ☐ 1 bottle fish sauce
- ☐ 1 very large bottle of olive oil
- ☐ 1 small bag all-purpose flour or 1 container cornstarch
- ☐ 1 bottle apple cider vinegar or sherry vinegar (you should have both!)
- ☐ 1 bottle soy sauce or tamari
- ☐ 1 container French's Onions
- ☐ 1 15-oz. can pumpkin puree
- ☐ 1 box gingersnap cookies
- ☐ 1 can cranberries, if you want to prove something - Ocean Spray, sponsor me

Produce

When it comes to items that last a while (i.e. onions, garlic, lemons), I err on the side of having more on hand than less since they'll almost certainly get used in the coming days/weeks.

- ☐ Garlic x 10
- ☐ Fennel bulb x 2
- ☐ 2 bunches thyme or oregano
- ☐ 1 bunch sage
- ☐ 1 bunch tarragon or mint
- ☐ 2 bags yellow onions (about 6 pounds)
- ☐ ½ pound carrots (about 3-4 medium carrots)
- ☐ 1 bunch celery
- ☐ 2 bunches leeks (about 4-6 medium leeks)
- ☐ 2 bunches parsley
- ☐ 2 bunches chives
- ☐ 5 pounds yukon gold or other creamy potatoes
- ☐ 1 ¼ pounds green beans
- ☐ 1 ¼ pound mushrooms, such as cremini, button, oyster, or maitake (or a combination)
- ☐ 5 pounds winter squash such as butternut, acorn, or kabocha
- ☐ 3 bunches lacinato kale
- ☐ 5 lemons
- ☐ 2 oranges, tangerines, or 1 grapefruit
- ☐ 1 12–16-oz. bag of cranberries (can be frozen)
- ☐ 1 small knob of ginger

Dairy

- ☐ 1 dozen large eggs
- ☐ 1 quart whole milk or buttermilk (almost all buttermilk is low-fat)
- ☐ 4 pints heavy cream
- ☐ 8 ounces sour cream
- ☐ 1 hunk parmesan
- ☐ 2 pounds unsalted butter

Specialty

These are the items not often found at your “regular” grocery store or even farmers market, items that might warrant a special trip to a specific store.

- ☐ 1 large loaf good, crusty bread, preferably sourdough or ciabatta
- ☐ 1–2 pounds sweet or hot Italian sausage (if making the Crispy Sausage Stuffing)
- ☐ 1 12–15 pound turkey
- ☐ 4–5 pounds turkey or chicken wings
- ☐ 1 bottle dry white wine

Household

Some things to add to your list while you're at the store/doing your ordering. You may already have most of these, but if not, a good time to re-up.

- ☐ Aluminum foil
- ☐ Plastic wrap
- ☐ To-go containers
- ☐ Sponges
- ☐ Dish soap
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Ziplock bags or resealable bags

Thanksgiving 2024 Equipment List

- ☐ 1 5.5 quart pot (or larger)
- ☐ 2 rimmed baking sheet trays
- ☐ 1 wire rack
- ☐ Cutting board and knives
- ☐ Wooden spoon
- ☐ Microplane
- ☐ 9-inch pie plate
- ☐ Glass bowls or stainless steel bowls of different sizes (I LOVE having one really large bowl)
- ☐ Tongs
- ☐ Peeler
- ☐ Scale
- ☐ Food processor (optional)
- ☐ Measuring cup
- ☐ Whisk
- ☐ Stainless steel skillet
- ☐ 4-quart stainless steel saucepan
- ☐ 2 3-quart baking dishes (or 9-by-13 pans)

Fennel Rubbed Sheet Pan Turkey with Cider Vinegar Gravy

Serves 10—12

This turkey is dry-brined and roasted on a sheet pan, per usual. No, the juices will not overflow, but yes, you do have to be careful removing the turkey from the oven. If you have a roasting pan, you can use it, but I think it's tough to beat how brown the skin gets and how evenly roasted the vegetables (leeks, fennel) get when you roast on a sheet pan. Don't let the word fennel scare you—it's mild (though there is an option to increase the amount here), but gives just enough to make this turkey feel special. If you really don't like turkey or are feeding less people and want to use this same rub on two chickens this year, you can. Instead of cranking the temperature up at the end, this turkey goes for a bit longer at the same low temperature (325°F/162°C) until it's not just perfectly cooked through, but tender in all the right places and deeply browned all over thanks to the brown sugar in the dry brine and occasional end-of-roast basting.

Ingredients

For the Turkey:

⅓ cup kosher salt

⅓ cup light brown sugar

2 tablespoons coarsely ground black pepper

2–4 tablespoons fennel seed, finely chopped or coarsely crushed

3–4 cloves garlic, finely grated, plus two heads garlic, halved crosswise

1 (12- to 15-pound) turkey, defrosted, neck and giblets removed

¼ cup finely chopped sage or thyme, plus 1 bunch thyme, oregano, sage (or a mix)

2 large fennel bulbs, quartered

2–4 leeks, roots and very dark green parts removed, quartered lengthwise

2 large onions, cut into large wedges

¼ cup olive oil

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

For the Gravy:

6 tablespoons/3 ounces unsalted butter

½ cup all-purpose flour or ⅓ cup cornstarch

2 ½ cups turkey stock (see recipe), or low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, plus more

2 tablespoons apple cider or sherry vinegar, plus more

1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce, tamari or worcestershire sauce, plus more

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2–2 ½ cups drippings from the turkey

Instructions

1. Prepare the turkey: Combine kosher salt, light brown sugar, black pepper, fennel seed, grated garlic and chopped sage in a small bowl; set aside.
2. Place the turkey on a rimmed baking sheet lined with a wire rack. (If you don't have one, place the turkey directly on the baking sheet.) Now's a good time to make sure the giblets (the bagged heart, kidneys and liver, and the neck) are removed from the cavity. Without patting the turkey dry, spread the turkey with the salt mixture (mixture will be a little wet from the garlic, but smear it on as evenly as possible), making sure to distribute the seasoning evenly to all the bits and parts. Gather any bits that fall away to the bottom and smear back onto the bird. Refrigerate turkey, uncovered, for 8 to 24 hours — the longer, the better.
3. Heat oven to 325°F/162°C (no fan).
4. Remove turkey from the fridge, and transfer it to another clean rimmed baking sheet (discarding any liquid). Stuff turkey with the quartered onions, half the bunch of herbs and half the garlic. Using kitchen twine, truss the legs if you like (you don't have to!). Scatter leeks and fennel around turkey, adding in remaining garlic and tucking in a few sprigs of herbs here and there.
5. Melt olive oil and butter in a small pot over medium heat, and pour half of the mixture over the turkey and vegetables. Toss vegetables lightly to evenly coat, and season everything with salt and pepper.
6. Place turkey on bottom third of your oven and roast, rotating the baking sheet every hour or so, until the turkey has reached 165°F/74°C when a thermometer is inserted in the deepest part of the thigh, 3 ½–4 hours*. The turkey will be cooked through and tender, and the skin should be nicely browned (if you find the skin is browning too quickly, especially on the top at the breast, feel free to place a sheet of foil over the top, but I think the browner the better.)

**What about basting? I like to baste turkeys and chickens for the last bit of cooking (for turkey, it's the last hour). This doesn't do much for "juiciness," but more for the skin to get evenly browned and redistribute the seasoning that inevitably drips off.*

7. Remove turkey from the oven and let rest on the baking sheet for at least 10–15 minutes, up to 60 minutes**). Tip the turkey, cavity-side down, making sure the aromatics stay inside the cavity and letting any juices run out onto the rimmed baking sheet (use to finish your gravy.)

***What if my turkey isn't hot? Turkey doesn't really need to be hot — but it also stays hot (sans carving) for about an hour after it comes out of the oven.*

8. Transfer the roasted leeks, fennel and garlic to another dish and set aside (quickly rewarm in the oven if needed before serving). Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and let it continue to rest while you finish the gravy.
9. To serve, carve the turkey and arrange on a large platter (or two of your largest plates) with the leeks, fennel and garlic. Arrange fennel fronds and parsley on top if you like to keep it leafy, spriggy and coarse. Serve with gravy alongside.

For the Cider Vinegar Gravy:

1. Melt butter in a medium pot over medium heat. Add flour and cook, whisking constantly, until flour is sizzling furiously and well toasted, about the color of a nice milky coffee, 4–6 minutes.
2. Slowly whisk in the stock, about ½ cup at a time, letting it bubble, thicken and incorporate completely between additions until all of it has been added (do this slowly to prevent lumpy gravy). Add cider vinegar and soy sauce and season to taste (you'll get an opportunity to season again once turkey drippings are added, but it should taste pretty good right now). This is your make-ahead portion of gravy. This can be done and chilled 3 days ahead. To proceed with the finished gravy, keep reading.
3. When you're ready to add the turkey drippings and serve (whether you're reheating or just making the gravy to serve now): Transfer gravy to a medium pot if it's not already in a pot (do not be alarmed if you made your gravy ahead and remove it from the fridge and discover a cement block inside a container. This is expected!)
4. Add your reserved turkey drippings and gently reheat over medium heat. Simmer until gravy is at your desired viscosity and the flavors have all melded together, 5–8 minutes (if it's feeling a little thick, add more turkey stock). Add more soy sauce if you feel like it needs more depth of flavor, vinegar if you want more acidity, and salt and pepper for seasoning. Remove from heat and set aside until ready to serve in your finest gravy boats, bowls or Pyrex measuring cups.

DO AHEAD: The turkey can be seasoned (dry-brined) 48 hours ahead, stored uncovered and refrigerated. The gravy can be made (sans turkey drippings) 3 days ahead, stored sealed and refrigerated.

LEFTOVERS: I don't need to tell you turkey is best eaten cold the next day, slice by slice out of the bag you've stored it in any time you need a snack. Other ideas include: adding to soup, making chili or pozole, crisping in a skillet for little tacos, putting in a pot pie. Sandwiches, I guess!

Golden Turkey Stock

Makes approximately 4 quarts / 16 cups

For those wondering if it's worth it to make your own stock, my suggestion is to taste the boxed stock out of the container and then taste this, side by side. If you don't want to do that, then trust me when I say: It does. But aside from flavor, it's always the first (and therefore, my favorite) thing I do when prepping for Thanksgiving. Putting the stock on is the start of something, the beginning of a ritual. It's a bit of extra work, but the sort of enjoyable, passive work that makes your house smell wonderful and all your food taste better. Also, I know it says turkey stock, but sure you can make this with chicken (and then, it does unfortunately, become chicken stock). But in the context of things like gravy or stuffing, all that matters is that you have a deeply flavorful stock for which to season things. I doubt you'll be able to tell the difference.

Ingredients

4–5 pounds turkey or chicken wings
2 tablespoons olive or neutral oil
Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper
2 large carrots (about ½ pound) carrots, unpeeled, chopped
2 heads garlic, halved crosswise
2 large (about 1 pound) yellow onions, unpeeled, roughly chopped
½ bunch celery (about ½ pound), chopped
A few sprigs whatever herbs you have: thyme, oregano, or marjoram, and/or a bay leaf

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F/230°C (no fan). Place turkey wings (and the neck if you have it) on a sheet pan, drizzle with oil, and season with salt and pepper. Roast the wings, flipping once or twice, until deeply golden brown, 40–50 minutes (closer to 35–40 for chicken).
2. Remove the turkey wings from the oven, and transfer them to your largest pot (at least 5.5 quart pot) along with carrots, onions, celery, and whatever herbs you have. Cover with water (at least 10 cups), season well with salt and bring to a simmer.
3. Meanwhile, pour another 1 cup of water onto the sheet pan, and, using a wooden spoon or spatula, scrape up any of the deeply browned bits, and add all those drippings to the pot as well.
4. Simmer stock until the wings are nearly falling apart and the liquid is wildly flavorful, so good you could drink it, 2½–3 hours.
5. Using tongs, remove the wings and set them aside in a bowl (I like to pick the meat and either snack on it or add to something like my next-day pot pie). Then strain the stock through a colander (no need to go finer than that) into a large bowl or other pot. Transfer to resealable containers of your choosing, then refrigerate or freeze.

DO AHEAD: Stock can be made one month ahead, stored sealed and frozen, but who's doing that? You can also make it 5 days ahead, stored sealed and refrigerated.

LEFTOVERS: Since this will keep well in the freezer, you can simply treat this like chicken broth or any other broth. Use it to start soups, stews, and braises. Grate ginger into it and drink out of a mug, etc..

Sour Cream and Chive Mashed Potatoes

Serves 6—8

This year I was hoping for a giant bowl of mashed potatoes that tasted like the inside of a twice-baked potato, which is to say very tangy and full of chives, and that's exactly correct here. If lumps upset you, use a ricer. If you don't want to peel the potatoes, don't. If you want to use a mix of Russet and Yukon, you can. These are MY mashed potatoes. It's up to you to make them YOURS. I will flag that there is NO butter in these potatoes. These potatoes are really about the tanginess of the sour cream and buttermilk and the herbiness of the chives — in my opinion there's plenty of butter elsewhere in this menu — though if you really want a few tablespoons of butter, please add it!

Ingredients

5 pounds yukon gold or other creamy potato, peeled and cut into large chunks

Kosher salt

1 cup whole milk or buttermilk, plus more if making ahead

1 cup heavy cream

Freshly ground black pepper

1 cup sour cream, divided

1 cup finely chopped chives, divided

A few tablespoons unsalted butter, optional

Instructions

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1. Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with about 2–3" of salted water (salted like you're making pasta). Bring them to a boil and cook until all the potatoes are completely softened and tender (test one with a fork, it should be easily smashed), about 40 minutes. For what it's worth, if you're picking between over cooking and undercooking, I say overcook (undercooked bits = lumps that never soften).
 2. Meanwhile, combine cream and buttermilk in a medium pot and season with salt and lots of black pepper. Bring to a gentle simmer, then remove from heat.
 3. Drain potatoes and return them to the pot in which they boiled. Using the back of a wooden spoon, spatula, potato crusher, whatever (even a ricer, if that's your speed)–, smash/crush the potatoes until they're mashed to your liking (I prefer more than a few lumps).
 4. Pour the hot cream mixture over the potatoes and mix until well blended, but not gloopy or gummy, and season well with salt and pepper. ***These are your make ahead potatoes. They can be made and chilled 2 days ahead. To proceed with the finished mashed potatoes, keep reading.***
 5. When you're ready to serve (whether you're reheating or just making them to serve now), add about ¾ of your sour cream and chives and mix well. This is also when I'd add the butter if I was going to add it. Transfer to a serving bowl and top with remaining sour cream and chives, pepper and flaky salt.

DO AHEAD: There are two ways to make these ahead. One, peel and cut the potatoes the night before and store them in the pot of salted water (don't even have to refrigerate). Two, make the potatoes up until step 4, then proceed with step 5. As a reminder, potatoes will become much stiffer when they sit overnight, so when reheating, you'll have to add at least ½ cup (sometimes more) of milk or buttermilk to loosen them up.

LEFTOVERS: Fried in oil in a nonstick skillet like a pancake. Cold out of the container.

Buttered Stuffing with Celery and Leeks

Serves 8—10

This recipe will probably never change. If you've made a stuffing recipe of mine before, it's probably this or a variation of this. It's perfect, what can I say. Torn, crusty bread (ciabatta or sourdough are great), lots of butter, so much celery, tons of leeks and garlic and plenty of herbs. It's light, fluffy and tender on the inside and golden brown and crisped on the outside. It's everything the box isn't and more. And no, it doesn't go inside the bird!

Ingredients

1 large loaf good, crusty bread, preferably sourdough or ciabatta (about 1 ¼ pounds)

¼ cup olive oil

8 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the top

6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

2 large leeks, white and light green parts, chopped

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

6–8 celery stalks, thinly sliced, leaves reserved for garnish if available

1 cup dry white wine (or one cup broth plus 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar)

2 tablespoons finely chopped sage, oregano or thyme

2 ½ cups turkey, chicken or vegetable broth

3 large eggs

½ cup finely chopped parsley, chives or

DO AHEAD: Stuffing can be made all the way until the final bake a day or two beforehand, but honestly will likely take up too much space in the fridge and you're better off doing it the day of.

LEFTOVERS: The perfect leftovers. I like to reheat mine in a cast iron (or non-stick) skillet in the oven until it gets crispier than I thought possible. Microwave is fine, but it won't crisp. It's also good cold, out of the container. Hot food is overrated.

Instructions

1. Using your hands, tear bread, crust and all, into 1½- to 2-inch pieces. Place on a rimmed baking sheet, and let sit uncovered at room temperature overnight (alternatively, toast the torn bread in a 300°F/150°C oven, tossing occasionally, until lightly crisped, but not browned, 20–30 minutes).
2. When it comes time to make your stuffing, preheat oven to 375°F/190°C (no fan). Heat olive oil and 8 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add celery and leeks. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are bright green and totally softened, 8–10 minutes. Add garlic and cook a minute or two just to soften. Add white wine, and cook until reduced by about three-quarters, about 4 minutes. Add sage and remove from heat.
3. In a large bowl, whisk broth and eggs together until well combined. Add sauteed vegetables, toss to combine. Add bread and toss again to combine, letting the egg mixture soak into the bread (try not to totally crush the bread). Let sit a minute or two, give another toss and repeat until all the liquid has been absorbed and evenly distributed.
4. Transfer mixture to a 2½- to 3-quart baking dish or 9-by-13 pan, making sure not to pack it too tightly. (You want to keep the bread in the stuffing as light as possible.) If you feel like it, dot the top with a little more butter, making sure to pay extra attention to the corners, where the stuffing will get the crispiest. Scatter some flaky salt, more pepper and parsley or celery leaves over top which get a little crispy (nice).
5. Cover with foil and bake until the stuffing is sizzling at the edges and completely cooked through, 25–30 minutes. If it's not yet time to serve, remove stuffing from oven and set aside. (If you are nearly ready to serve, proceed directly to the next step and continue without pausing.)
6. When ready to serve, remove foil and increase temperature to 425°F/230°C. Bake stuffing until crispy, crunchy and impossibly golden brown on top, about 20 minutes. Scatter with more celery leaves if you've got them before serving.

Crispy Sausage Stuffing with Kale

Serves 8—10

A slight amendment to the original, this is for the meat lovers in your life. For the sausage, you can use any sort you like, though would avoid anything overly spiced or spicy. For anyone raising an eyebrow about the kale, know that it's optional (though it is in the title since I like it so much), but really adds a nice bit of moisture to the stuffing in addition to a classic braised-greens flavor.

Ingredients

1 large loaf good, crusty bread, preferably sourdough or ciabatta (about 1¼ pounds)

¼ cup olive oil

2 pounds sweet or hot Italian sausage, casings removed

1 bunch lacinato kale, stems removed, leaves torn into bite-sized pieces

8 tablespoons unsalted butter

6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

2 large leeks

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

6 celery stalks, thinly sliced, plus leaves

1 cup dry white wine (or one cup broth plus 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar)

2 tablespoons finely chopped sage, oregano or thyme

2 ½ cups turkey, chicken or vegetable broth

3 large eggs

½ cup finely chopped parsley and/or chives

DO AHEAD: Stuffing can be made all the way until the final bake a day or two beforehand, but honestly will likely take up too much space in the fridge and you're better off doing it the day of.

LEFTOVERS: The perfect leftovers. I like to reheat mine in a cast iron (or non-stick) skillet in the oven until it gets crispier than I thought possible. Microwave is fine, but it won't crisp. It's also good cold, out of the container—hot food is overrated.

Instructions

1. Using your hands, tear bread, crust and all, into 1½- to 2-inch pieces. Place on a rimmed baking sheet, and let sit uncovered at room temperature overnight (or, toast the torn bread in a 300°F/150°C oven, tossing occasionally, until lightly crisped but not browned, 20–30 minutes).
2. When it comes time to make your stuffing, preheat oven to 375°F/190°C (no fan). Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage and using a wooden spoon or spatula, break it up into bite-sized pieces. Cook, stirring occasionally, breaking it up as it tends to want to clump together, and cook until browned and cooked through, 5–8 minutes. Add kale, if using, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing occasionally, until kale is nicely wilted. Transfer kale and sausage to a large bowl (you'll use this to mix your stuffing) and set aside.
3. Without wiping your skillet out, melt butter in the same skillet. Add celery and leeks. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are bright green and totally softened, 8–10 minutes. Add garlic and cook a minute or two just to soften. Add white wine, and cook until reduced by about three-quarters, about 4 minutes. Add sage and remove from heat.
4. In a large bowl, whisk broth and eggs together until well combined. Add sauteed vegetables, toss to combine. Add bread and sausage and kale mixture, and toss again to combine, letting the egg mixture soak into the bread (try not to totally crush the bread). Let sit a minute or two, give another toss and repeat until all the liquid has been absorbed.
5. Transfer mixture to a 2½- to 3-quart baking dish or 9-by-13 pan, making sure not to pack it too tightly. (You want to keep the bread in the stuffing as light as possible.) If you feel like it, dot the top with a little more butter, making sure to pay extra attention to the corners, where the stuffing will get the crispiest. Scatter some flaky salt, more pepper and parsley or celery leaves over top which get a little crispy (nice)..
6. Cover with foil and bake until the stuffing is sizzling at the edges and completely cooked through, 25–30 minutes. If it's not yet time to serve, remove stuffing from oven and set aside. (If you are nearly ready to serve, proceed directly to the next step and continue without pausing.)
7. When ready to serve, remove foil and increase temperature to 425°F/230°C. Bake stuffing until crispy, crunchy and impossibly golden brown on top, about 20 minutes. Scatter with celery leaves, if using, and serve.

A Classic Green Bean Casserole

Serves 6—8

I grew up with the original Campbell's Soup recipe and never quite cared for it. I think it lies within the over abundance of creamy mushroom soup that never seemed to have that many mushrooms. The word "gloopy" comes to mind, an adjective I try to avoid. That said, green beans: huge fan. Mushrooms: love them. Gravy: spill it all over me. French's Onions from the container? I'd die for them. So what I'm saying is that green bean casserole is inherently good, and it can be whatever you want it to be. This is what I want it to be: a skillet of sauteed just-cooked green beans, caramelized onions and beautifully browned mushrooms barely coated in a creamy gravy topped with French's Onions from the container.

This recipe was developed using an 8" cast iron skillet, but you can do it in whatever you want, and if at any point you feel like your skillet is too small and things get a little too full or you feel like your skillet is too large and the casserole will be lonely, you can always transfer to a baking dish to bake.

Ingredients

2–3 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

5 cloves garlic, 4 thinly sliced, 1 finely grated or chopped

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

1 ¼ pounds mushrooms, such as cremini, button, oyster or maitake, torn or cut into bite-sized pieces

1 ¼ pounds green beans, stems trimmed, cut in half or coarsely chopped, if you like

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons flour

1 ¾ cups whole milk

2 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari

An undetermined amount of French's Onions, from the container

Instructions

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet (at least 10"–12") or large, heavy bottomed pot (if you are nervous about spilling over, use a pot) over medium–high heat. Add onions and garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally (I use a wooden spoon this whole time), until they start to soften and brown, 10–12 minutes.
2. Reduce heat to medium, add mushrooms and season again with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until they shrink, soften, brown and concentrate their flavors, another 10–12 minutes (the onions will be very dark and caramelized at this point, too, which is what we want).
3. Add green beans (the skillet will be a little full now, but just give it time, the green beans will soften and shrink as they cook), season with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until they're bright green and totally tender, 8–10 minutes.
4. Add butter and let it melt in the skillet. Sprinkle flour over everything and stir for 2 or 3 minutes to toast in the fat and browned bits of the skillet. Slowly add milk, letting it thicken between stirs, until it's all added. Add soy sauce and grated garlic, stirring to blend. Let the gravy come to a simmer, thickening in the skillet around the vegetables, making sure everything is evenly dispersed and coated. Season again with salt and more pepper.
5. Preheat oven to 425°F/220°C (no fan). Top green beans and mushrooms with French's Onions from a container and bake until golden brown and bubbly around the edges, 20–25 minutes.

DO AHEAD: Green bean casserole can be made without the onion topping a day ahead or a few hours before (refrigerate if making a head more than a few hours).

LEFTOVERS: The only leftover idea I have here is to reheat the casserole in an oven or microwave and eat it again.

Peppered Squash Gratin

Serves 6—8

This gratin is my favorite thing on the table this year, a shock to everyone including me. The crushed garlic and salty parmesan really curb the sweetness of the squash while the cream, absorbing into it to completely tenderize while also caramelizing around the edges for texture, brings it back ever-so-slightly. It's a really magical combination. I've made it three times since I made it the first time and it's not even Thanksgiving yet. This is also just a really good side dish, holiday or not. I hope you print this one out and eat it all winter long. Please don't forget to add so much pepper — it's in the name!

The hardest part of this recipe is dealing with the squash — always a challenge no matter how skilled you are (you're not alone if you struggle! I struggle). But do your best. Peel the squash using a regular peeler and don't worry about bits of skin still attached (or don't peel and eat the skin). Use a sharp knife and cut it on a sturdy, stable work surface. Once you've broken through and sliced the squash, the rest is easy and impossible to mess up (layer with parmesan, garlic, salt and pepper. Cover with cream. Bake until tender and brown, eat).

Ingredients

5 lbs. squash such as butternut, acorn or kabocha, peeled, seeded, sliced 1/4" thick

4 ounces parmesan, grated (about 1 cup)

8 cloves garlic, very well smashed, coarsely chopped or thinly sliced

Kosher salt, so much freshly ground black pepper

Crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

4–6 sprigs sage or 2–3 tablespoons thyme, rosemary or oregano leaves

1 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons butter or olive oil, plus more olive oil

Instructions

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1. Preheat oven to 425°F/220°C (no fan). Layer squash, parmesan, garlic and sage leaves (or other herbs) in a 1.5–2 qt. baking dish, seasoning each layer with salt, LOTS of pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes, if you like.
 2. Cover with heavy cream and finish with another good sprinkle of parmesan, a good crack of black pepper and a few more leaves of herbs over top. Dot with a few knobs of butter or a drizzle of olive oil and cover with foil. Cover with foil and pop in the oven and bake until squash is totally tender and cooked through, 30–35 minutes.
 3. Remove foil and continue baking until top is nicely browned and cream is thickened and caramelized around the edges, another 30–35 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool slightly before eating (should be served warm, though).

DO AHEAD: You can make this ahead up until step 2 a few hours ahead. To serve, proceed at step 3. Alternatively, you can just make the recipe all the way through, and when it comes time to eat it, reheat at 425°F/220°C until warmed through.

LEFTOVERS: This is shockingly good cold. I could also see this warmed up in the oven or microwave with a fried (but runny) egg in the morning.

Kale Salad with Honey'd Walnuts

Serves 6—8

Kale salad, how 2013, I know. But it's undeniably a great candidate for a meal like this. It's sturdy, almost masquerading as a side instead of a salad, it's one of the only salad greens that get better with age (can be made ahead, really!) and can even be saved as a leftover with little to no consequences. I don't think any of that will convince you to make a salad for Thanksgiving if that's not your thing (I will still try to get you to make a salad every year for Thanksgiving), but maybe the tangy dressing with lots of garlic or salty-sweet walnuts will do it because trust me, your plate needs the tangy dressing with lots of garlic and salty-sweet walnuts in between bites of the heavy cream and potato.

Ingredients

1–1 ½ cup raw walnuts, coarsely chopped

3–4 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons honey

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup fresh lemon juice and 2 tablespoons finely grated lemon zest (from about 2 lemons), plus more

½ teaspoon fish sauce, plus more (optional)

1–2 cloves garlic, finely grated

2 bunches lacinato kale, stems removed, torn into bite-sized pieces

1 cup parsley, tender leaves and stems

1 bunch chives, finely chopped

½ bunch tarragon or mint, tender leaves and stems only

Instructions

1. Heat walnuts and olive oil in a small skillet over medium high heat. Toast, tossing occasionally, until the walnuts are nicely toasted, about two minutes. Add honey and give it a stir– it'll bubble up and start to caramelize a bit around the edges, this is good. Continue to cook as the honey reduces, evenly coating all the nuts, another two or so minutes. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper; set aside. These are your make ahead nuts. You can make them two days ahead, wrapped very well and stored at room temperature.
2. Combine lemon juice, lemon zest, ½ teaspoon fish sauce and grated garlic in a large bowl. Add kale and season with salt and pepper. Using your hands, massage well, evenly coating each leaf of gorgeous kale. Taste a leaf and adjust any seasoning (more lemon, fish sauce, salt or pepper). ***This is your make ahead salad. It can be made one day ahead, stored in a large resealable bag or glass container and refrigerated. To serve, keep reading.***
3. To serve your salad, place dressed kale in a large serving bowl. Add parsley, chives and any other herbs you're using, tossing to coat. Once again, taste a leaf and adjust any seasoning (more lemon, fish sauce, salt or pepper). Add honey'd walnuts, toss to coat (there should be a little honey'd walnut in each bite, they aren't just a topping) and serve.

DO AHEAD: You can make the nuts a few days ahead, stored wrapped tightly and stored at room temperature. You can season the salad (sans finishing herbs and nuts) a few hours ahead if you want (kind of marinates the kale, wilting it slightly but making it taste very good).

LEFTOVERS: A good bed for "Thanksgiving Salad" which is what it sounds like. A pile of leftover turkey, maybe some of those nuts, some stray green beans and a sliced apple or something. Would eat that.

“The Cranberries”

Serves 6—8

The Cranberries are a classic 90's alternative rock band most famous for their hit “Dreams,” among other wonderful songs. They're also a saucy condiment that we eat pretty much exclusively at Thanksgiving and no other time of year. I love a can of cranberries for its jellied texture and too-sweet flavor — it feels good to be bad, no? But I love a DIY sauce for the punch of acidity and undeniable, much needed hit of freshness. Cranberries in their raw state are extremely high in pectin, making them very easy to turn them into a perfectly textured sauce with little more than some sugar (or honey) and a brief boil on the stove. I make mine simply, with no additions of spice or ginger, no orange rind to simmer alongside. The sweet, acidic, lightly bitter cranberries themselves are providing all you need, and the nuance of a single pod of star anise is likely lost (or worse— clashes) with whatever else is on the table.

Ingredients

12–16 ounce bag of fresh or frozen cranberries

¾ cup granulated sugar or honey (or use some combination of the two to total ¾ cup sweetener)

2–4 tablespoons fresh tangerine, orange, grapefruit, lemon or lime juice

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

1. In a medium pot, combine half the cranberries, sugar and/or honey, citrus juice, and a splash of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally, until they start to break down and look a little jammy, about 3–5 minutes.
2. Add the rest of the cranberries and cook, just until they burst, another 3–5 minutes or so. Remove from heat, season with just the smallest pinch of salt and a crack of pepper. Transfer to a bowl or resealable container and chill completely.

DO AHEAD: Arguably better if made at least the night before but can be made up to 5 days ahead. Stored in a resealable container, refrigerated.

LEFTOVERS: No wrong answers, but I don't have a suggestion that will reinvent the wheel here. If I had cranberry sauce right now, I'd make biscuits to put them on.

Gingersnap Pumpkin Pie

Makes one 9" pie

The all-butter flaky pie crust never quite went with a pumpkin pie in my opinion— that's better suited for a pile of apples, served warm. But a cookie crust, a la key lime pie, makes sense to me. The custardy filling melting slightly into the spiced cookie crust, softening where the two meet, giving way to a crunchy bottom layer— three glorious textures in one spectacular pie. Plus, the gingersnap cookies give you permission to pump the breaks on the spices in the filling, allowing the pumpkin flavor to truly sing.

For most grocery store brand cookies, you could add an optional tablespoon of light brown sugar to taste (but likely won't need to!)

Ingredients

For the Crust:

8 ounces spiced cookies such as gingersnaps, graham crackers, biscoff

6 tablespoons/3 ounces/85g unsalted butter, melted

1 tablespoons light brown sugar (optional, depending on your cookies)

½–1 teaspoon kosher salt (depending on your cookies)

For the Filling:

1 15-ounce can pumpkin puree

⅓ cup granulated sugar

½ cup light brown sugar

1 ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger or ½ teaspoon ground ginger

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg

3 large eggs

¾ cup heavy cream

DO AHEAD: Pumpkin pie can be baked the day before, kept in the refrigerator and chilled.

LEFTOVERS: No fancy ideas, just eating it the next day will bring you so much delight.

Instructions

1. **Make the Crust:** Preheat the oven to 350°F/177°C (no fan).
2. Smash the graham crackers with your hands until you've got coarse crumbs (alternatively, use a food processor). You should end up with about 1 ½ cups crumbs.
3. Place crumbs in a medium bowl and add melted butter, brown sugar (if using) and salt. Using your hands or a spoon, mix well until you've got really moist crumbs, almost like wet sand.
4. Spray a 9-inch pie plate with nonstick cooking spray (or grease it with softened/melted butter). Add crust mixture in an even layer, first pressing up the sides, then onto the bottom (a measuring cup is helpful here to make sure it's evenly packed with nice edges).
5. Place pie plate onto a rimmed baking sheet and bake until the crust is baked through, set on the bottom, and starts to lightly brown around the edges, 12–15 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool (leave the oven on if continuing right away to the next step).
6. **Make the filling:** Reduce oven temperature to 325°F/162°C. In a medium bowl, combine pumpkin puree, both sugars, kosher salt, cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg, and whisk to combine. Add eggs and whisk until they're fully incorporated, then add cream and whisk until combined.
7. Pour the filling into the prebaked crust, return the pie to the oven and bake until filling is no longer jiggling and appears set and slightly matte on top, 35–45 minutes.
8. Remove from oven and let cool completely at room temperature before chilling. Top with lightly sweetened whipped cream, a bit of flaky salt and a crumble of a few extra gingersnaps (you can also serve from room temperature in a pinch, but will be much easier to slice if chilled).