



PECANS

RECIPES & HISTORY OF AN AMERICAN NUT

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RECIPES BY REBECCA LANG

WITH 60 RECIPES FROM SALADS & SAUCES TO SNACKS & SMOOTHIES

RIZZOLI
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GINGER-PECAN PANCAKES WITH PEAR COMPOTE

SERVES 8

Lazy Saturday mornings can still be relaxed when homemade pancakes are sizzling on the griddle. Make the batter up to 2 days in advance and store in the refrigerator. The flavors in the compote get better if you also make it ahead; reheat gently. When cooking pancakes for a crowd, keep each batch warm until serving time in a 175°F (80°C) oven.

COMPOTE

4 red pears, such as Red Anjou
1/2 cup (90 g) golden raisins
1/3 cup (80 ml) fresh orange juice
Juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
1/4 teaspoon salt

PANCAKES

2 cups (310 g) all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoons baking soda
3/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
2 large eggs
1 1/2 cups (375 ml) buttermilk
1/2 cup (125 ml) whole milk
4 tablespoons (60 g) unsalted butter, melted
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup (50 g) pecan halves, toasted and chopped, plus more for garnish (optional)

Unsalted butter, for greasing the pan, plus more at room temperature, for serving

To make the pear compote, halve and core the unpeeled pears and cut into 1/2-inch (12-mm) pieces. Transfer to a saucepan and add the raisins, orange juice, lemon juice, brown sugar, rosemary, and salt. Place over medium-low heat and cook, stirring every 5 minutes, for about 25 minutes, until pears are soft and liquid is slightly syrupy. Keep warm until serving.

While the compote is cooking, prepare the pancake batter. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, and allspice. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs until blended, then add the buttermilk, milk, butter, and vanilla and whisk until well mixed. Stir the egg mixture into the flour mixture until thoroughly combined. Fold in the pecans.

To cook the pancakes, preheat the oven to 175°F (80°C). Heat a large nonstick frying pan or griddle over medium-low heat and grease lightly with butter. For each pancake, ladle 1/4 cup (60 ml) of the batter onto the hot pan, being careful not to crowd the pancakes. Cook for about 2 minutes, until bubbles form on the surface and the edges look done. Flip and cook for about 3 minutes on the second side, until browned. Transfer to a large heatproof platter and keep warm in the oven. Repeat with the remaining batter.

Serve the pancakes immediately with butter and the compote and garnish with chopped pecans, if desired.



PARMESAN PECAN POPOVERS

SERVES 6

By using cold ingredients, these herb-flavored pecan popovers rise dramatically and hold their shape after baking. They demand a lot of headroom as they bake, so be sure to place them in the middle of the oven without a rack above the pan. The dough is rich and hearty with eggs and pecans, making them a filling accompaniment to roast chicken or beef. Carry them to the table immediately after removing them from the oven, as they are best served steaming hot.

4 tablespoons (60 g) unsalted butter, melted

1¼ cups (310 ml) cold whole milk

4 cold large eggs, lightly beaten

½ cup (75 g) chilled all-purpose flour

½ cup (50 g) pecan halves, toasted and finely chopped

½ cup (60 g) freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1½ teaspoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme

1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary

¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 375F (190C). Brush the cups of a 6-cup popover pan with 3 tablespoons of the butter.

In a bowl, preferably with a spout, whisk together the milk, the remaining 1 tablespoon butter, and the eggs, blending well. Whisk in the flour, pecans, cheese, parsley, thyme, rosemary, and salt until well mixed.

Place the buttered popover pan in the preheated oven to heat for 3 minutes. Remove the hot pan from the oven and immediately pour or ladle the batter into the popover cups, dividing it evenly and filling each cup about three-fourths full. Bake for about 30 minutes, until popovers are extremely puffed and browned.

Turn the popovers out of the pan, slipping a knife around the edge of any popover that needs loosening, and serve immediately.





ARUGULA AND PECAN PIZZETTE

MAKES 4 PIZZETTE

Pizzette are small, single-serving pizzas that make a nice first course or light lunch. Fresh refrigerated pizza dough is available in many grocery stores and requires just a little rolling before topping and baking, or you might ask your local pizzeria to sell you a small amount of dough. Piling frilly arugula on top of the warm pizzette just before serving adds color and a peppery bite that perfectly complements the rustic pecan topping.

1 pound (500 g) fresh pizza dough

All-purpose flour, for the work surface

2 tablespoons olive oil

9 ounces (270 g) Fontina cheese, shredded

1/4 pound (125 g) sliced prosciutto, torn into bite-size pieces

2 cups (200 g) pecan halves, toasted and roughly chopped

1/4 pound (125 g) baby arugula

Aged balsamic vinegar, for drizzling

Place two sheet pans in the oven and preheat the oven to 400° F (200° C).

Cut the pizza dough into four equal portions. Dust a work surface with flour and roll out each dough portion into a round about 5 inches (13 cm) in diameter. Prick each dough round several times with a fork.

Using a wide spatula, carefully transfer the dough rounds to the hot pans. Bake for 5 to 6 minutes, until just starting to brown. Remove from the oven and top each round evenly, in the following order, with one-fourth each of the oil, cheese, prosciutto, and pecans. Return to the oven and bake for about 15 minutes, until cheese is melted and edges of crust are browned.

Remove the pizzette from the oven and transfer them to individual plates or a large platter. Top each with one-fourth of the arugula, drizzle lightly with vinegar, and serve.



TEXAS COBB SALAD WITH CHIPOTLE PECANS

SERVES 6 TO 8

Cobb Salad has been an American signature salad since its creation in the late 1930s. First served at the Brown Derby restaurant in Hollywood, California, the salad was named for the owner, Robert Cobb. This Tex-Mex version is a combination of gorgeous colors and spices. The chipotle-spiced pecans can also be served on their own as a snack or as a nibble at your next party.

CHIPOTLE PECANS

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 teaspoons adobo sauce from canned chipotle chiles in adobo sauce

1 teaspoon chipotle chile powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 cups (200 g) pecan halves

DRESSING

3/4 cup (180 ml) mayonnaise

1/2 cup (125 ml) buttermilk

3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Finely grated zest of 2 limes

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 head green leaf lettuce, chopped or torn into bite-size pieces

1/2 large red onion, finely chopped

1 pint (280 g) cherry tomatoes, stemmed and halved

2 avocados, halved, pitted, peeled, and cut into cubes

6 ounces (185 g) pepper Jack cheese, shredded

3/4 pound (375 g) bacon, cooked until crisp, drained, and crumbled

To make the chipotle pecans, preheat the oven to 350° F (180C) . Line a large sheet pan with parchment paper.

In a saucepan, combine the butter, adobo sauce, chile powder, and salt and heat over low heat until melted, whisking to combine. Add the pecans and stir until evenly coated. Transfer the pecans to the prepared pan, spreading them in a single layer and using a rubber spatula to scrape all of the butter from the saucepan.

Roast the pecans, stirring once after 7 or 8 minutes, for about 15 minutes, until browned and fragrant. Pour onto a plate and let cool. (The pecans will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week, or in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.)

To make the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk together all of the ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. (The dressing can be made up to 2 days in advance.)

Make a bed of the lettuce on a large serving platter. Arrange the onion, tomatoes, avocados, cheese, and bacon in decorative stripes on top of the lettuce. Drizzle with the dressing, top with the pecans, and serve immediately.



ZUCCHINI, BROCCOLI, BELL PEPPER, AND PECAN STIR-FRY

SERVES 6

Nearly any vegetable can be used in this impressively fragrant stir-fry. The hoisin and chile sauces combine to make a balanced and refined dish. Use pecan halves instead of pieces, as they won't get lost in the rainbow of colors on the plate. Serve immediately with white or brown rice as a vegetarian main course. Any stir-fry moves quickly once you turn on the heat, so have all of the vegetables sliced and ingredients measured, including the broth mixture, before you begin to cook.

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 medium zucchini, trimmed and sliced

1 large red bell pepper, seeded and cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch strips

4 cloves garlic, sliced

1 pound (500 g) broccoli florets

4 tablespoons (60 ml) soy sauce

1 1/2 tablespoons Asian chile sauce

1 tablespoon hoisin sauce

2 cups (500 ml) chicken broth

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 cup (100 g) pecan halves, toasted

3 cups (470 g) freshly cooked rice, for serving

Heat a wok or large frying pan over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes, until very hot. Add the oil and swirl the pan to coat the bottom and sides with oil. Add the zucchini, bell pepper, garlic, and broccoli and cook, stirring frequently, for 2 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of the soy sauce and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add the chile and hoisin sauces and cook, stirring, for about 3 minutes, until the broccoli is tender.

In a bowl, whisk together the broth, cornstarch, and the remaining 2 tablespoons soy sauce. Slowly add the broth mixture to the pan while stirring constantly. Continue to cook, stirring, for about 3 minutes, until the sauce thickens. Stir in the pecans and remove from the heat.

Divide the rice among individual plates or bowls and spoon the stir-fry over the top. Serve immediately.



ROASTED COD WITH PECANS AND PANKO

SERVES 6

Firm, meaty cod can handle the weight of the coating of pecans and panko bound together with a little Dijon mustard. The crumb mixture seals the moisture into the fillets and creates a robust, crisp crust. Roasting the fish on parchment paper makes the fillets easy to transfer when serving. Large pieces of fish work best here. If fresh cod is not available, grouper makes a fine substitute.

1 cup (45 g) panko bread crumbs

1/2 cup (60 g) freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1/4 cup (25 g) pecan halves, toasted and chopped

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped

Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

2 1/4 pounds (1.1 kg) fresh cod fillets, cut into 6 equal pieces

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

Lemon wedges, for serving

Preheat the oven to 400F (200C) . Line a large sheet pan with parchment paper.

In a bowl, stir together the panko, cheese, pecans, mayonnaise, mustard, thyme, and lemon zest.

Arrange the fish fillets in a single layer on the prepared pan. Lightly brush the tops of the fillets with the oil. Sprinkle evenly with the salt and pepper. Divide the panko mixture evenly among the fillets, pressing it firmly on the top of each fillet. Dot the panko mixture evenly with the butter.

Bake for 12 to 14 minutes, until the fish flakes when tested with a fork. Serve immediately, with lemon wedges on the side.



PECAN-STUDDERED BLUE CRAB CAKES

SERVES 6 TO 8

Blue crabs are one of the benefits of living near salt marshes on the East Coast. The claw meat is sweet and delicate. Adding pecans to the crumb coating enhances the buttery flavor of the crabmeat. Dressed with a nutty rémoulade, these crab cakes make an impressive lunch or dinner main course, served with a simple salad on the side. If you don't live in an area where blue crabs are available, choose the best crabmeat your seafood market offers. The grades of fresh crabmeat are lump, backfin, jumbo, and claw. Any of these will work, but claw meat comes in smaller pieces so it's the easiest to work into crab cakes.

PECAN RÉMOULADE

1 cup (250 ml) mayonnaise
1/4 cup (28 g) chopped pecans, toasted
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
Juice of 1 lemon

CRAB CAKES

1 pound (500 g) fresh crabmeat, preferably from blue crabs
1 red chile, seeded and diced
2 green onions, white and light green parts, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup (40 g) panko bread crumbs
1/2 cup (60 g) chopped pecans, toasted

4 tablespoons (60 g) unsalted butter

To make the rémoulade, combine all of the ingredients in a bowl and mix well. You should have just over 1 cup (250 ml). Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

To make the crab cakes, spread the crabmeat on a sheet pan. Run your fingers through the meat to find and remove any shell or cartilage fragments. Transfer the crabmeat to a bowl. Add the red chile, green onions, garlic, chives, mayonnaise, mustard, lemon zest, salt, pepper, and eggs and mix well. Fold in the panko and pecans.

To shape the crab cakes, use a 1/3-cup (80-ml) measuring cup to scoop out portions of the crabmeat mixture, flattening each scoop slightly into a cake about 2 1/2 inches (6 cm) in diameter and 1 1/4 inches (3 cm) thick. You should have 16 crab cakes. (You can wrap the uncooked cakes securely and freeze them for up to 1 month, then thaw and cook them as directed.)

Line a large plate with paper towels. In a large nonstick frying pan, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. Add half of the crab cakes and cook, turning once, for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until browned. Use a small offset spatula and turn them carefully to avoid breaking them up.

Transfer the cakes to the towel-lined plate to drain. Cook the remaining cakes the same way, using the remaining 2 tablespoons butter.

Serve the crab cakes immediately, with the rémoulade on the side.