



SEASONED WITH LOVE

BAYOU BITES & BOOZE

thank you

Dear Family and Friends,

Thank you so much for opening this little book of love and flavor. Seasoned with Love is more than just recipes; it is a taste of home, of family gatherings, and the warm moments that fill our hearts and kitchens.

I am truly grateful to share these dishes and drinks with you, hoping they bring you comfort, joy, and perhaps a little spice of adventure. Whether you are a seasoned cook or just starting out, this collection is meant to remind you that good food is made better with love and a dash of soul.

From my kitchen to yours, thank you for being here. May your meals be tasty, your days be bright, and your table always full.

With love and spice,

Alicia Cooper

Founder of Bayou
Bites & Booze

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. SMOTHERED CHICKEN & GRAVY
2. BAYOU-STYLE GUMBO (WITH CHICKEN & SAUSAGE)
3. HONEY BUTTER CORNBREAD
4. BRAISED GREENS WITH SMOKED TURKEY
5. CAJUN SHRIMP & GRITS
6. BOURBON PEACH SWEET TEA
7. VANILLA RUM BREAD PUDDING
8. BAYOU HOUSE SEASONING
9. CREOLE SMOTHERED OKRA & TOMATOES (WITH OR WITHOUT SHRIMP)
10. FRONT PORCH LEMONADE
11. BOUDIN-STUFFED BELL PEPPERS
12. CREOLE CHICKEN & DIRTY RICE BAKE
13. BLACKENED SALMON WITH CAJUN CREAM SAUCE
14. CREAMY BAKED MAC & CHEESE
15. FRIED GREEN TOMATOES WITH SPICY REMOULADE
16. SLOW-COOKED BUTTER BEANS WITH HAM HOCKS
17. SWEET POTATO PIE WITH PECAN CRUMBLE TOPPING
18. PRALINES (STOVETOP SOUTHERN CANDY)
19. STRAWBERRY-LIMEADE PUNCH
20. CAJUN GARLIC BUTTER (FOR SEAFOOD BOILS & MORE)

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKEN

4-6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (or a mix of thighs and drumsticks)

1 ½ tsp. salt

1 tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. onion powder

1 tsp. smoked paprika

½ tsp. black pepper

¼ tsp. cayenne (optional but encouraged)

2 tbsp. all-purpose flour (for dusting)

2-3 tbsp. oil (vegetable or a mix of oil+butter)

FOR THE GRAVY

1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced

3 cloves garlic, minced

3 tbsp. flour (you can use leftover seasoned flour)

2 cups chicken broth (warm)

½ cup heavy cream or whole milk (optional, for richness)

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

salt and pepper to taste

fresh thyme or parsley to finish (optional)

SMOTHERED CHICKEN + GRAVY

DIRECTIONS

1. Season & Sear the Chicken: Mix salt, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, black pepper, and cayenne in a small bowl. Pat chicken dry and rub seasoning all over. Lightly dust with flour. Heat oil in a skillet (cast iron if you got it) over medium heat. Sear chicken skin-side down until golden brown and crispy, about 5-7 minutes. Flip and sear the other side for 3-4 minutes. Remove and set aside (it'll finish cooking in the gravy)
2. Make That Gravy: In the same pan, reduce heat to medium-low. Add a touch more oil if needed. Sauté onions until soft and golden (8-10 minutes). Add garlic, stir 1-2 minutes. Sprinkle in flour and stir constantly, letting it brown slightly (you're building a light roux, don't rush it!). Slowly pour in warm broth while whisking. Add cream (if using) and Worcestershire. Bring to a simmer, it should thicken into silky gravy magic. Taste and adjust seasoning.
3. Smother & Simmer: Nestle chicken into the gravy, skin-side up. Cover and simmer on low for 25-30 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and fall-apart tender. Remove lid for the last 5 minutes if you want the gravy to thicken more.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKEN

4-6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (or a mix of thighs and drumsticks)

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

1 tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. onion powder

1 tsp. smoked paprika

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. black pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cayenne (optional but encouraged)

2 tbsp. all-purpose flour (for dusting)

2-3 tbsp. oil (vegetable or a mix of oil+butter)

FOR THE GRAVY

1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced

3 cloves garlic, minced

3 tbsp. flour (you can use leftover seasoned flour)

2 cups chicken broth (warm)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream or whole milk (optional, for richness)

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

salt and pepper to taste

fresh thyme or parsley to finish (optional)

BAYOU-STYLE GUMBO (WITH CHICKEN + SAUSAGE)

DIRECTIONS

1. Season & Sear the Chicken: Mix salt, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, black pepper, and cayenne in a small bowl. Pat chicken dry and rub seasoning all over. Lightly dust with flour. Heat oil in a skillet (cast iron if you got it) over medium heat. Sear chicken skin-side down until golden brown and crispy, about 5-7 minutes. Flip and sear the other side for 3-4 minutes. Remove and set aside (it'll finish cooking in the gravy)
2. Make That Gravy: In the same pan, reduce heat to medium-low. Add a touch more oil if needed. Sauté onions until soft and golden (8-10 minutes). Add garlic, stir 1-2 minutes. Sprinkle in flour and stir constantly, letting it brown slightly (you're building a light roux, don't rush it!). Slowly pour in warm broth while whisking. Add cream (if using) and Worcestershire. Bring to a simmer, it should thicken into silky gravy magic. Taste and adjust seasoning.
3. Smother & Simmer: Nestle chicken into the gravy, skin-side up. Cover and simmer on low for 25-30 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and fall-apart tender. Remove lid for the last 5 minutes if you want the gravy to thicken more.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CORNBREAD

1 cup yellow cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
⅓ cup honey (plus more for drizzling)
⅓ cup white sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup whole milk (or buttermilk for a little tang)
optional: a pinch of cinnamon for a warm twist

FOR THE HONEY BUTTER TOPPING

2 tbsp. butter
1 ½ tbsp. honey

HONEY BUTTER CORNBREAD

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat & prep: Preheat your oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease an 8x8 baking dish with butter or nonstick spray.
2. Mix dry ingredients: In a large bowl, whisk together cornmeal, flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar.
3. Mix wet ingredients: In another bowl whisk melted butter, honey, eggs, and milk until smooth.
4. Combine gently: Pour the wet mixture into the dry. Stir just until combined, don't overmix. The batter should be thick but pourable.
5. Bake: Pour the batter into your prepared pan. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the top is golden and a toothpick comes out clean in the center.
6. Make honey butter (optional but worth it): Melt 2 tbsp. butter and stir 1 ½ tbsp. honey. Brush over the warm cornbread right after it comes out of the oven.
7. Serve warm: Slice into thick squares or wedges. Serve with more butter, a drizzle of honey, or even alongside savory dishes like gumbo, greens, or beans.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE GREENS

1 large bunch collard greens (or mustard greens, turnip greens), washed well, tough stems removed, leaves chopped
1 lb. smoked turkey leg
1 large onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
4 cups chicken broth (or water with bouillon)
2 tbsp. olive oil or bacon drippings
1 tsp. red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
1 tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. salt (or to taste)
1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
optional: 1 smoked ham hock for extra flavor
optional: 1 tsp. sugar (balances bitterness)

BRAISED GREENS WITH SMOKED TURKEY

DIRECTIONS

1. Prep the greens: After washing, remove the tough stems and roughly chop the leaves. Set aside.
2. Sauté aromatics: In a large heavy pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil or bacon drippings over medium heat. Add chopped onion and cook until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté another minute.
3. Add smoked turkey: Place the smoked turkey leg (and ham hock if using) in the pot. Pour in chicken broth. Bring to a simmer.
4. Add greens: Add the chopped greens, stirring them into the broth. They will look bulky but will wilt down quickly.
5. Season and simmer: Add salt, pepper, red pepper flakes, and optional sugar. Cover partially and simmer gently for about 1-1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally. Greens should be tender and smoky. Add a little broth or water if it gets too dry.
6. Finish with vinegar: Stir in apple cider vinegar to brighten the flavor just before serving
7. To serve: Serve hot as a hearty side dish alongside your gumbo, cornbread, or any comfort meal. The smoky turkey adds rich depth that'll have everyone asking for seconds.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE GRITS

1 cup stone-ground grits
(not instant)
4 cups water (or 2 cups
water + 2 cups whole milk
for richness)
1 tsp. salt
3 tbsp. unsalted butter
½ to 1 cup sharp white
cheddar (optional but
recommended)
black pepper to taste

FOR THE CAJUN SHRIMP

1 lb. large shrimp, peeled
and deveined (leave tails
on for drama if you like)
1 tbsp. cajun seasoning
½ tsp. smoked paprika
1 tbsp. olive oil or butter
4 slices thick-cut bacon,
chopped
½ small onion, finely diced
½ small bell pepper (any
color), diced
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup chicken or seafood
stock
1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
2 green onions, sliced
Optional: a splash of heavy
cream or a pat of butter at
the end for sauce richness

CAJUN SHRIMP + GRITS

DIRECTIONS

1. Start your grits: Bring water (and milk, if using) to a boil. Stir in grits and salt, reduce to low, cover, and simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring often. Add more water if needed to keep them creamy. Once soft, stir in butter, pepper, and cheese (if using). Keep warm on low heat.
2. Prep and season the shrimp: Peel and devein the shrimp (you can leave the tails on if you want that classic Southern presentation). Pat them dry with paper towels, then toss with Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, and a little olive oil. Let them sit and marinate while you prep the rest.
3. Cook bacon: In a large skillet (cast iron is ideal), cook chopped bacon until crisp. Remove and set aside. Leave 1-2 tbsp. of bacon fat in the pan.
4. Sauté aromatics: Add onion and bell pepper to the bacon fat and cook until soft, about 3-5 minutes. Add garlic and cook one more minute.
5. Cook shrimp: Push the veggies to the side and add shrimp in a single layer. Cook about 2 minutes per side until just pink and curled. Add chicken stock and lemon juice, stir everything together, and let simmer for a few minutes to blend flavors. (Add a splash of cream or pat of butter here for a velvety finish if you want.)
6. Build the bowl: Spoon creamy grits into bowl. Top with shrimp and that beautiful pan sauce. Sprinkle on crispy bacon and green onions.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PEACH SYRUP

2 ripe peaches, sliced
(fresh or frozen)
¾ cup sugar
¾ cup water 1 tsp. lemon
juice (optional, to brighten
it)

FOR THE TEA

4-5 black tea bags
(Luzianne, Lipton, or your
fave)
4 cups boiling water
2 cups cold water
ice, for serving

FOR THE BOOZY FINISH

1 ½ to 2 cups good-quality
bourbon (start with 1 ½
and taste from there)
peach slices and fresh
mint, for garnish
optional: splash of ginger
beer or sparkling water for
a bubbly twist

BOURBON PEACH

SWEET TEA

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the peach syrup: In a small saucepan, combine the peaches, sugar, and water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook for about 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the peaches are soft and syrupy. Mash gently to release more flavor. Strain the syrup through a fine mesh sieve (pressing on the fruit to get all that peachy goodness). Stir in lemon juice if using. Let cool.
2. Brew the tea: Steep tea bags in 4 cups of just-boiled water for 5-7 minutes. Remove bags and discard. Stir in the peach syrup, then add 2 cups cold water. Let it chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.
3. Mix in the bourbon: Once the tea is chilled, stir in the bourbon. Taste and adjust; more tea for lighter, more bourbon for a little kick. You're the bartender here.
4. Serve it up: Fill glasses with ice. Pour in your peach bourbon tea. Garnish with a peach slice and fresh mint if you're feeling fancy.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BREAD PUDDING

1 (14-16 oz) loaf day-old French bread or brioche, cubed
4 large eggs
2 cups whole milk
1 cup heavy cream
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light brown sugar
2 tbsp. vanilla extract
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
2 tbsp. dark rum
4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
optional: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup golden raisins or chopped pecans.

FOR THE RUM SAUCE

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter (1 stick)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
1 egg yolk
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy whipping cream
2 tbsp. dark rum
1 tbsp. vanilla extract
pinch of salt

VANILLA RUM BREAD PUDDING

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven & prep: Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a 9x13 baking dish with butter or nonstick spray.
2. Cube the bread: Cut bread into 1-inch cubes and let it sit out to dry for a few hours or lightly toast in a 300 degree Fahrenheit oven for 10-15 minutes to dry it out.
3. Make the custard: In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, cream, both sugars, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and rum. Stir in melted butter.
4. Combine bread & custard: Add the bread cubes (and raisins or nuts if using) to the custard mixture. Gently stir to coat. Let sit for 20-30 minutes so bread soaks it all up.
5. Bake: Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes, then uncover and bake another 20-25 minutes, or until the top is golden and set but the center is still slightly soft.
6. Make the vanilla rum sauce: While the pudding bakes, melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in sugar and egg yolk. Cook gently until sugar dissolves and sauce thickens slightly, about 4-5 minutes (don't boil). Remove from heat, Stir in cream, rum, vanilla, and a pinch of salt. Keep warm.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SEASONING

3 tbsp. paprika (use smoked for depth, regular for classic)
2 tbsp. garlic powder
1 ½ tbsp. onion powder
1 tbsp. kosher salt
1 tbsp. black pepper
1tbsp. dried thyme
2 tsp. cayenne pepper
(adjust to your heat level)
2 tsp. dried oregano
1 ½ tsp. white pepper
(don't skip, it adds that signature Southern bite)
1 tsp. dried parsley
½ tsp. celery seed
(optional)
1 tsp. brown sugar
(optional, adds a subtle warmth)

BAYOU HOUSE SEASONING

DIRECTIONS

1. To make: Mix all ingredients together in a small bowl. Store in an airtight container or glass jar. Keeps for up to 6 months (but trust me, it won't last that long).
2. Use it on:
 - Chicken, pork, seafood, beef, anything you'd grill, fry, or bake
 - Roasted or sauteed veggies
 - Gumbos, jambalaya, red beans & rice
 - Eggs, fries, grits, and even popcorn
 - Make a compound butter or mix with mayo for a bangin' sandwich spread

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BASE

2 tbsp. vegetable oil or bacon drippings
1 small yellow onion, diced
1 bell pepper (green or red), diced
2 celery stalks, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 lb. fresh okra, sliced (or 1 bag frozen, thawed)
1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 tbsp. tomato paste
½ cup chicken or vegetable broth
1 tsp. sugar
1½ tsp. Creole or Cajun seasoning (plus more to taste)
Salt and black pepper, to taste

OPTIONAL (BUT DELICIOUS)

½ to 1 lb. raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
A dash of hot sauce, for heat
Cooked white rice, for serving
Fresh parsley or green onions, for garnish

CREOLE SMOTHERED OKRA + TOMATOES (WITH OR WITHOUT SHRIMP)

DIRECTIONS

1. Sauté the holy trinity: In a large skillet or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, bell pepper, and celery. Cook until soft and fragrant, about 5–7 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute more.
2. Add the okra: Toss in the sliced okra and stir well. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring often, until it softens and the sliminess starts to go. (This step makes all the difference).
3. Stir in the tomatoes: Add the diced tomatoes with their juices, the tomato paste, and broth. Stir in the sugar and seasoning. Mix it all together and let those flavors get to know each other.
4. Simmer low and slow: Bring to a gentle simmer. Let it cook uncovered for 20–25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens and the okra is tender. Taste and adjust seasoning.
5. Add shrimp (if using): If adding shrimp, stir them in during the last 5–7 minutes of cooking. They'll cook quickly and soak up all that flavor.
6. Serve it right: Spoon over fluffy white rice and garnish with fresh parsley or green onions if you're feelin' fancy.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE LEMONADE

1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 4–6 lemons)
¾ cup sugar (adjust to taste)
4 cups cold water
½ tsp vanilla extract or ¼ tsp almond extract
Lemon slices and ice, for serving

FRONT PORCH LEMONADE

DIRECTIONS

1. Make a simple syrup: In a small saucepan, mix the sugar with 1 cup of the water. Warm it over medium heat, stirring until the sugar disappears like gossip in a small town. Set it aside to cool (you don't want it rushing the party).
2. Mix it all together: Grab a pitcher big enough to hold some happiness. Pour in the lemon juice, the cups of cold water, and that now-cooled syrup.
3. Add that Southern twist: Stir in the vanilla (or almond) extract, just enough to make folks say, “What is that!?” in the best way. It's the secret ingredient your granny would've sworn not to tell.
4. Taste and adjust: Take a sip. Too tart? Add a splash more syrup. Too sweet? A squeeze more lemon.
5. Chill and serve: Pop it in the fridge until it's nice and cold. Pour over ice, add a lemon slice or two, and take it outside if you can. Sip slow. Breathe deep.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PEPPERS

4 large bell peppers (any color), tops sliced off and seeds removed
1–1½ lbs. boudin sausage (casings removed)
1 small onion, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp. butter or oil
½ cup cooked white rice (optional, for a little extra stretch)
½ tsp. Cajun seasoning (plus more to taste)
Salt and black pepper, to taste

FOR THE TOPPING

½ cup shredded cheddar or pepper jack cheese
¼ cup breadcrumbs (optional, for crunch)
Fresh parsley or green onions, for garnish

BOUDIN-STUFFED BELL PEPPERS

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven: Set your oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Place the hollowed bell peppers in a baking dish. If they wobble, slice a sliver off the bottom so they sit flat (nobody wants a tippy pepper).
2. Sauté the flavor base: In a skillet over medium heat, melt the butter (or heat oil). Add the diced onion and sauté until soft, about 4–5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute more.
3. Build the stuffing: Add the boudin to the skillet, breaking it up with a spatula as it heats through. Stir in the rice (if using), Cajun seasoning, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for 3–4 minutes until everything is hot and well combined.
4. Fill the peppers: Spoon that rich, savory boudin mixture into each pepper, packing it in like you mean it. Top each one with shredded cheese and a sprinkle of breadcrumbs, if using.
5. Bake until golden and bubbling: Pour about ½ inch of water into the bottom of the baking dish to help the peppers steam. Cover loosely with foil and bake for 25 minutes. Uncover and bake for 10–15 minutes more, or until the tops are golden and the peppers are tender.
6. Serve hot, and don't expect leftovers: Plate them up with a sprinkle of parsley or green onion.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKEN

6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (or drumsticks)
1 tbsp. Creole or Cajun seasoning
Salt and black pepper, to taste
1 tbsp. oil (for searing)

FOR THE DIRTY RICE

1 tbsp. butter or oil
½ lb. ground beef or pork sausage
1 small onion, diced
1 green bell pepper, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. Creole seasoning
1 cup long-grain white rice
2 cups chicken broth
2 green onions, chopped (optional, for garnish)

CREOLE CHICKEN + DIRTY RICE BAKE

DIRECTIONS

1. Season the chicken: Pat the chicken dry and season both sides with Creole seasoning, salt, and pepper. Don't be shy, the flavor starts here.
2. Brown the chicken: In a large, oven-safe skillet or Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sear the chicken, skin-side down first, until golden brown (about 4–5 minutes per side). Remove and set aside.
3. Build the dirty rice base: Lower the heat to medium. In the same pan, melt butter and add the ground meat. Cook until browned, breaking it up with a spoon. Add the onion, bell pepper, and celery. Cook for 5–7 minutes until veggies are soft. Stir in the garlic and Creole seasoning, cooking for 1 minute more.
4. Add the rice and broth: Stir in the uncooked rice, making sure it gets well-coated in all that flavor. Pour in the chicken broth and bring to a gentle simmer. Taste the liquid and adjust seasoning if needed.
5. Nestle in the chicken: Place the seared chicken pieces right on top of the rice mixture, skin-side up. The rice will soak up all that juicy goodness as it bakes.
6. Bake to perfection: Cover the pan tightly with foil and bake at 375°F for 35 minutes. Uncover and bake for 10–15 more minutes, or until the chicken is fully cooked (165 degrees Fahrenheit internal temp) and the rice is tender.
7. Garnish and serve: Sprinkle with chopped green onions and serve hot

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BLACKENED SALMON

4 salmon fillets (about 6 oz each), skin removed if desired
1½ tbsp. Cajun or Creole seasoning
1 tbsp. olive oil or butter
Lemon wedges, for serving

FOR THE CAJUN CREAM SAUCE

1 tbsp. butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup heavy cream
¼ cup chicken broth
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
½ tsp. Cajun seasoning
Salt and black pepper, to taste
1 tbsp. fresh parsley or green onion, chopped (optional)

BLACKENED SALMON WITH CAJUN CREAM SAUCE

DIRECTIONS

1. Season the salmon: Pat the salmon fillets dry with paper towels. Rub each piece generously with Cajun seasoning, pressing it in to form a good crust.
2. Sear the salmon: In a large skillet, heat the oil or butter over medium-high heat. When hot, add the salmon fillets and cook for 3–4 minutes per side, depending on thickness, until a dark crust forms and the salmon flakes easily with a fork. Remove from the pan and set aside.
3. Make the Cajun cream sauce: In the same pan (yes, leave those flavor bits!), melt the butter. Add the garlic and cook for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Stir in the cream and chicken broth, then sprinkle in the Parmesan and Cajun seasoning. Stir gently and let it simmer for 3–5 minutes, until the sauce thickens slightly.
4. Taste and adjust: Give the sauce a little taste. Add more Cajun seasoning, salt, or a crack of black pepper if needed.
5. Bring it all together: Return the salmon to the pan, spooning the sauce over the top. Let it simmer together for another minute or two so the flavors can get cozy.
6. Serve with style: Plate each salmon fillet with a spoonful of that luscious sauce. Serve with rice, mashed potatoes, or roasted veggies, and don't forget the lemon wedges!

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PASTA + SAUCE

1 lb. elbow macaroni (or cavatappi for a lil' drama)
4 tbsp. unsalted butter
4 tbsp. all-purpose flour
3 cups whole milk, warmed
1 cup heavy cream
1 tsp. Dijon mustard (trust —just a little depth)
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. smoked paprika
½ tsp. seasoned salt
Black pepper, to taste

THE CHEESE BLEND

2½ cups sharp cheddar, shredded
1 cup mozzarella or Monterey Jack, shredded
1 cup smoked gouda, shredded
½ cup Parmesan, grated

FOR THE TOPPING

1 cup sharp cheddar, shredded
½ cup buttery panko breadcrumbs (optional, for extra crunch)
1 tbsp. melted butter

CREAMY BAKED MAC + CHEESE

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven: Set your oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit and grease a 9x13-inch dish (or your favorite cast iron skillet).
2. Boil the pasta: Cook the macaroni in salted water until just al dente, don't overdo it, they'll finish in the oven. Drain and set aside.
3. Start the roux: In a large saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for 1–2 minutes until golden and smooth.
4. Add the liquid gold: Slowly whisk in warm milk and cream. Stir constantly until it thickens into a creamy base (about 4–5 minutes). Stir in the mustard, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, seasoned salt, and pepper.
5. Cheese it up: Turn off the heat and stir in the cheddar, gouda, mozzarella, and Parmesan, one handful at a time. Keep stirring until it's silky and luxurious.
6. Mix and pour: Fold the cooked pasta into the cheese sauce like its royalty. Pour it into your prepared baking dish and smooth the top.
7. Top like a boss: Sprinkle with the reserved cheddar. If using breadcrumbs, mix them with melted butter and scatter on top for that golden crunch.
8. Bake it until glorious: Bake uncovered for 25–30 minutes, or until it's bubbling around the edges and the top is beautifully browned. If you want that extra crispy top, broil for 1–2 minutes at the end, but watch it like a hawk.
9. Let it settle (if you can wait): Let rest for 5–10 minutes before digging in.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE TOMATOES

3-4 firm green tomatoes, sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick
Salt and black pepper, to taste
1 cup buttermilk
1 large egg
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup yellow cornmeal
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. paprika
Vegetable oil, for frying

FOR THE SPICY REMOULADE

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
1 tbsp. ketchup
1 tbsp. prepared horseradish
1 tsp. hot sauce (or more to taste)
1 tsp. smoked paprika
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. lemon juice
Salt and pepper, to taste

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES WITH SPICY REMOULADE

DIRECTIONS

1. Salt the tomatoes: Lay your tomato slices out on paper towels and sprinkle both sides with salt. Let them sit for about 15–20 minutes to draw out moisture. Pat dry before frying, this helps keep them crispy.
2. Prep your dredging station: In one shallow bowl, whisk together the buttermilk and egg. In another bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper.
3. Coat the tomatoes: Dip each tomato slice into the buttermilk mixture, then dredge in the cornmeal-flour blend. Press gently to make sure that coating sticks like it means it.
4. Fry until golden: Heat about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of oil in a cast iron skillet over medium heat. When hot (about 350 degrees Fahrenheit), fry the tomatoes in batches, 2–3 minutes per side, until golden and crispy. Don't crowd the pan. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate.
5. Make the remoulade: While the tomatoes cool slightly, whisk together all the remoulade ingredients in a bowl. Taste and adjust the seasoning, more hot sauce if you're feeling feisty.
6. Serve it up: Plate the tomatoes warm with a drizzle of remoulade or serve it on the side for dipping. Sprinkle with fresh parsley if you're feeling fancy.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BUTTER BEANS

1 lb. dried large lima beans (butter beans), rinsed and sorted
2 smoked ham hocks (or 1 large, meaty one)
1 small onion, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
1 bay leaf
1½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. dried thyme
Salt and black pepper, to taste
6–7 cups water or low-sodium chicken broth (enough to cover beans)
Hot sauce, for serving (optional)
Fresh parsley or green onions, for garnish (optional)

SLOW-COOKED BUTTER BEANS WITH HAM HOCKS

DIRECTIONS

1. Soak the beans (optional but helpful): For creamier beans and shorter cook time, soak them overnight in cold water. Drain and rinse before cooking. If you're in a hurry, you can skip this step, just know they'll need to cook longer.
2. Build your flavor base: Place the ham hocks in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, celery, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, and bay leaf. Pour in enough water or broth to fully cover the hocks. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour to build flavor.
3. Add the beans: Stir in the rinsed butter beans. Make sure there's enough liquid to keep everything just covered. Simmer gently over low heat, uncovered, for 1½ to 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Add more water or broth if needed.
4. Stir, taste, and adjust: As the beans soften and thicken, stir occasionally to prevent sticking. When the meat starts falling off the bone and the beans are buttery-tender, season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Finish and serve: Pull out the ham hocks, remove the bones and skin, and shred the meat back into the pot. Give everything a final stir. Serve hot with a splash of hot sauce and maybe a skillet of cornbread on the side.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PIE FILLING

1 (9-inch) unbaked pie crust (store-bought or homemade)
2 cups mashed cooked sweet potatoes (from about 2 large sweet potatoes)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup evaporated milk
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground ginger
Pinch of salt

FOR THE PECAN CRUMBLE TOPPING

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cinnamon
2 tbsp. melted butter

SWEET POTATO PIE WITH PECAN CRUMBLE TOPPING

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat and prep: Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Place the unbaked pie crust in a pie plate and crimp the edges if you're feeling fancy.
2. Mix the filling: In a large bowl, combine the mashed sweet potatoes, brown sugar, eggs, evaporated milk, melted butter, vanilla, spices, and salt. Mix until smooth and creamy.
3. Pour and bake (round one): Pour the filling into the pie crust and smooth the top. Bake for 35 minutes, just until the center is mostly set but still a little jiggly. While it's baking, make the topping.
4. Make the pecan crumble: In a small bowl, stir together pecans, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and melted butter until crumbly and combined.
5. Add the topping and finish baking: Carefully sprinkle the pecan crumble evenly over the pie. Return it to the oven and bake for another 20–25 minutes, until the topping is golden and the filling is fully set.
6. Cool and serve: Let the pie cool completely before slicing, this helps everything set up. Serve at room temp or chilled, with whipped cream.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PRALINES

1½ cups granulated sugar
1½ cups light brown sugar,
 packed
¾ cup evaporated milk
6 tbsp. unsalted butter
 1 tsp. vanilla extract
1½ cups pecan halves or
 pieces
Pinch of salt

PRALINES (STOVETOP SOUTHERN CANDY)

DIRECTIONS

1. Prep your surface: Line a baking sheet or your countertop with parchment paper or wax paper. Have a spoon and a small bowl of cold water nearby to test your candy if needed.
2. Combine the ingredients: In a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat, combine the granulated sugar, brown sugar, evaporated milk, butter, and salt. Stir constantly as the butter melts and everything blends into a rich, caramel-colored syrup.
3. Bring to a boil: Once everything is melted, bring the mixture to a rolling boil, stirring often. Let it boil for about 5–6 minutes, until it reaches soft ball stage (around 235–240 degrees Fahrenheit on a candy thermometer). If you don't have one, drop a little into cold water, it should form a soft ball you can squish between your fingers.
4. Stir in the magic: Remove the pot from heat. Add the vanilla and pecans and stir constantly for about 2–3 minutes until the mixture thickens slightly and starts to look cloudy or grainy.
5. Drop onto parchment: Working quickly, drop spoonfuls of the candy onto your lined surface. Let them cool and harden for at least 30 minutes.
6. Store and share (or not): Once cooled, store them in an airtight container at room temp.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PUNCH

1 (12 oz) can frozen limeade concentrate, thawed
3 cups cold water
2 cups lemon-lime soda (like Sprite or 7UP), chilled
1½ cups strawberry puree (see below)
Juice of 1 fresh lime
Ice, for serving
Lime slices, strawberries, and fresh mint, for garnish (optional)

FOR THE STRAWBERRY PUREE

1½ cups fresh strawberries, hulled
1–2 tbsp. sugar (optional, depending on sweetness)
1 tbsp. water

STRAWBERRY-LIMEADE PUNCH

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the strawberry puree: In a blender, combine strawberries, water, and sugar (if using). Blend until smooth. For a smoother punch, you can strain it, but it is just fine as is!
2. Mix the punch: In a large pitcher or punch bowl, stir together the limeade concentrate, water, strawberry puree, and fresh lime juice. Stir until everything is well combined.
3. Add the fizz: Right before serving, gently stir in the lemon-lime soda for some sparkle.
4. Serve it cold: Pour over ice and garnish with lime slices, strawberry halves, or a sprig of mint if you're feelin' fancy.

INGREDIENTS

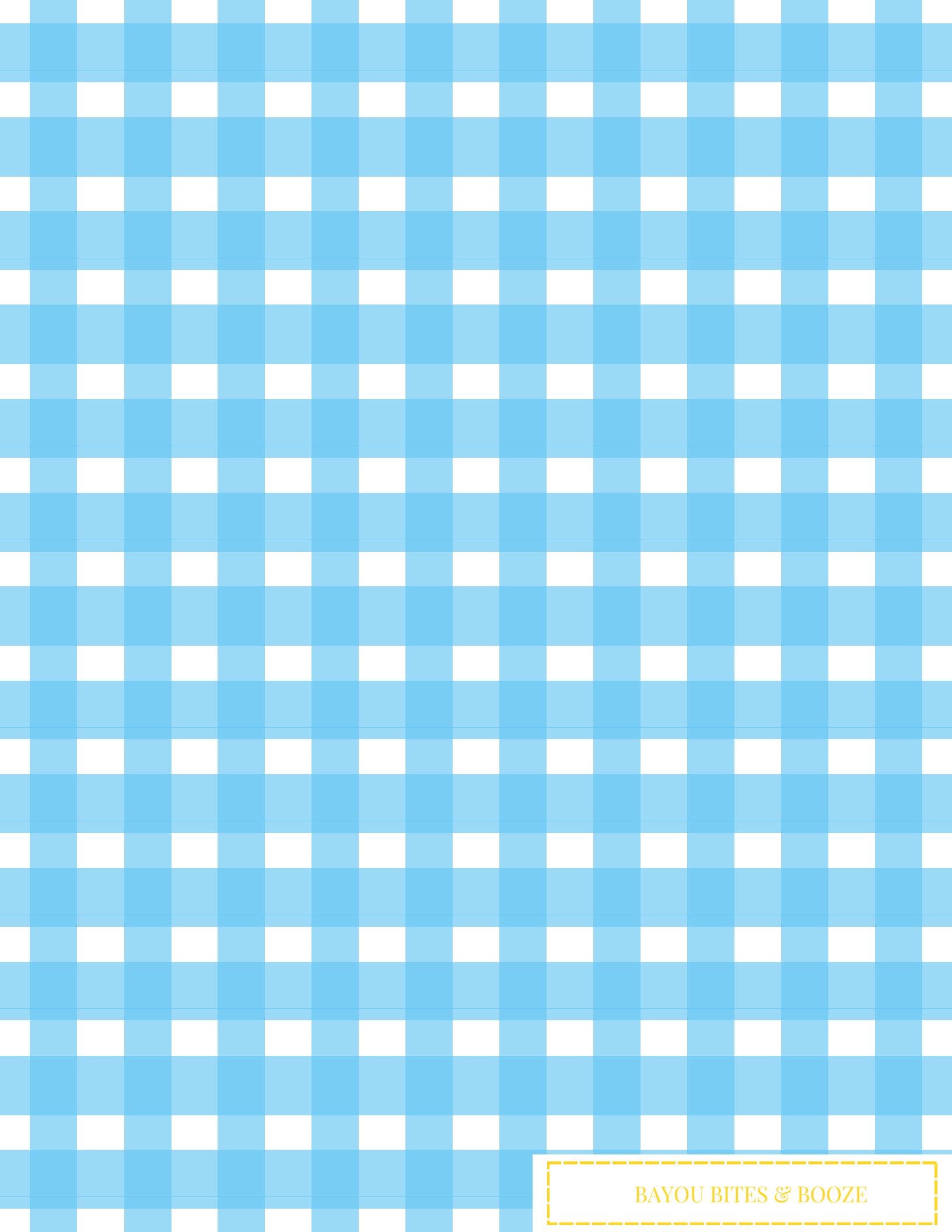
FOR THE GARLIC BUTTER

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
8–10 cloves garlic, finely minced or crushed
1 tbsp. Cajun or Creole seasoning
1 tsp. smoked paprika
½ tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. lemon pepper
1 tsp. hot sauce (optional)
Juice of ½ lemon (about 1 tbsp.)
1 tbsp. chopped parsley (fresh or dried)
Salt, to taste

CAJUN GARLIC BUTTER (FOR SEAFOOD BOILS + MORE)

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt the butter: In a saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter until completely smooth and just starting to bubble.
2. Add the flavor: Stir in the garlic and sauté for 1–2 minutes, just until fragrant. Don't let it brown, just wake it up.
3. Spice it up: Add the Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, onion powder, lemon pepper, and hot sauce (if using). Stir well and let it cook for another 1–2 minutes to let those spices bloom.
4. Brighten it: Squeeze in the lemon juice and stir in the parsley. Taste and adjust seasoning, add more salt or hot sauce if needed.
5. Serve hot: Pour immediately over hot seafood, corn, potatoes, or rice, or use as a dip for boiled shrimp, fried catfish, or French bread.



BAYOU BITES & BOOZE