



## Breads, Desserts & Beverages

Bread is Life! That sums up my entire philosophy on food. What is a meal without bread? Barely rations to my sensibility. Curse Doctor Atkins and all his desperate fanatics who have shunned bread and made it ‘bad’. Desserts are good, but I have never been one to indulge in sweets. Sure, I like candy and pie as much as the next person. Matt says I am deluding myself yet I actually don’t like sweets as much as the majority of people he knows. If you held up chocolate brownies or a fresh loaf of sourdough, I’d take the sourdough hands down. Included herein then, are my favorite bread recipes as well as the few cakes and pies that I am actually good at making. Additionally, I have included some tasty beverage ideas at the end of the section.

### Alison’s Basic Dough

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Rise Time: 10 – 20 minutes

Makes a large pan pizza size dough

1 cup warm – hot water  
1 package dried yeast (1 tablespoon)  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 large egg (2 small eggs)  
2 tablespoons melted butter

3 ½ cups flour  
8 teaspoon salt  
Any herbs and spices (optional)

In a large bowl, dissolve the sugar in the warm water. Sprinkle with the yeast and let stand 10 minutes or until foamy. Stir in butter. Stir in half the flour, salt and eggs into the yeast mixture. Gradually stir in enough of the remaining flour to make a slightly sticky ball. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface until smooth and elastic, about 4 minutes.

Once everything is combined you should have an elastic ball of dough. Wet a cloth towel and place it over the dough in a lightly greased bowl. Put the bowl in a warm place to let the dough rise. The fresher the yeast the faster the dough will rise. Depending on how fluffy you want it, let the dough rise anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes. I’ve gotten caught up in reading or watching a movie and let it go a hour before, it will only continue to rise, don’t worry.

Roll the dough onto a floured surface and knead, punching it down. Let rise another 15 minutes.

Use a rolling pin to roll into your desired shape. This dough is best for pizza, focaccia (although I do have a ‘true’ focaccia recipe), bread sticks, and garlic bread. If you use sweet spices, you can use this for sweet dessert bread as well.

Most pizza can be baked at 400° for 15 – 18 minutes; this dough will be done cooking at that temperature as a pizza.

### Alison's Focaccia

3 cups all-purpose flour  
 1 teaspoon active dry yeast  
 1 teaspoon sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup warm water  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil  
 3 cup Pesto (optional)

In a large mixing bowl stir together flour, yeast, sugar, and salt. Add about half of the warm water. Do not stir. Let stand until yeast foams (about 10 minutes). Add remaining water, the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil, and desired seasonings. Mix well.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead for 3 minutes. Shape dough into a ball. Place in a lightly greased large bowl; turn once to grease the surface. Cover and let rise til double (about 50 minutes).

Grease a 12 inch pizza pan; place dough on pan. Use the palms of your hands to pat the dough into an even round, just slightly smaller than the pan. Using your fingertips, poke the dough.

Spread 3 cup Pesto over dough, or add topping. Cover loosely; let rise for 30 minutes. Bake in a 400° oven for 25 to 30 minutes or till golden brown. Serve warm or cool, cut in wedges. Make 12 servings.

If not using Pesto, brush with 1 tablespoon of olive oil instead. Follow the remaining directions.

### Alison's Phyllo Dough

There are as many recipes for homemade phyllo in the world as there are people in

all of the Mediterranean countries. This is a very basic phyllo dough that I stumbled across when I wasn't satisfied with the store bought variety any more.

4 to 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups all-purpose flour, as needed  
 1 scant teaspoon salt  
 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup warm water, or more if needed  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil  
 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar or fresh lemon juice, as needed

Combine 4 cups of the flour and the salt in a large mixing bowl and make a well in the center. Add the water, the olive oil, and the vinegar or lemon juice. Work the flour into the liquid with a fork, until dough begins to form, and then knead it in the bowl, adding a little more flour or water if necessary, for about 10 minutes. The dough should be silky, pliant, and smooth. Cover and let rest at room temperature a t least one hour before using.

This can be rolled out to a thin sheet of dough for use in savory pies or other recipes calling for phyllo dough. All homemade phyllo may be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight bag for up to three days. Bring it to room temperature before using.

### Alison's Buttermilk Coffee Cake or Muffins Supreme

Preparation Time: 20 minutes  
 Bake: 35 minutes

2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups all-purpose flour  
 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups packed brown sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 1 cup butter  
 2 teaspoons baking powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
2 beaten eggs  
1 3 cups buttermilk\*  
½ cup chopped nuts

Grease bottom and ½ inch up sides of a 13 x 9 2 inch baking pan; set aside. Combine flour, brown sugar, and salt. Cut in butter till mixture resembles coarse crumbs; set aside ½ cup. Stir baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg into remaining crumb mixture.

Combine eggs and buttermilk. Add egg mixture all at once to dry mixture; mix well. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Stir together reserve crumb mixture and nuts. Sprinkle atop batter. Bake in a 350° oven for 35 to 40 minutes or till a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Serve warm. Makes 18 servings.



\*Buttermilk note: If you don't have buttermilk on hand, substitute sour milk in the same amount. For each cup of sour milk needed, place 1 tablespoon lemon juice in a glass measuring cup. Add enough milk to make 1 cup total liquid; stir. Let the mixture stand for 5 minutes before using it in a recipe.

I tend to use the sour milk, rather than the buttermilk because I like the lemony taste it adds to the finished product.

### Alison's Sugar & Spice Quick Rolls

This is not for people watching their cholesterol or weight!

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

2 packages Pillsbury buttermilk biscuits  
1 - 2 sticks butter, melted  
½ teaspoon vanilla or almond extract  
½ cup sugar  
½ cup brown sugar  
Cinnamon  
All spice  
Cardamom (optional)  
Pumpkin Pie spice (optional)  
Chocolate chips (optional)

Open the packages of buttermilk biscuits and cut each circle biscuit into quarters.

Combine spices and sugars in a bowl.

Coat a bread or cake pan with some of the melted butter.

After coating the pan with melted butter, add vanilla or almond extract in a bowl. Dip the quartered biscuits into the butter mixture.

Roll the buttered biscuit quarters in the spice mixture. Once each piece is fully coated, place in the bread or cake pan.

Repeat process until there is a single layer of biscuit quarters lining the bottom of the pan. Pick up some of the spice mixture with your fingertips and sprinkle it over the layer coating the layer thoroughly. This is when you would sprinkle a layer of chocolate chips if you desired to use them.

Repeat the butter dipping, spice rolling, and placement in the pan process until there are no more quartered biscuit pieces.

Pour remaining butter over the top of the pieces in the pan, sprinkle remaining sugar and spices over the now slick with butter biscuit pieces.

Bake at 400° – 425° for approximately 35 minutes. Check consistency after about 15 minutes. Don't let the sugar and spices burn. Cover with aluminum foil if necessary

Remove from oven and turn upside down on a platter. Serve warm with milk, coffee, or tea, or over vanilla ice cream.

## Alison's Light Popovers

A popover pan creates the classic tall shape with a puffed top. Custard cups work, but make popovers shorter and wider. I use muffin pans, and these turn out just fine.

Nonstick spray coating

1 egg

2 egg whites

1 cup skim milk

1 tablespoon cooking oil

1 cup all-purpose flour

Spray pan with coating. Beat eggs and egg whites; beat in milk and oil. Add flour and ¼ teaspoon salt; beat till blended but still lumpy.

Fill cups half full. Bake in a 400° oven till firm, allowing 35 to 40 minutes depending on the size of the cups. Turn off oven. Prick popovers with a fork. Leave in over for 5 to 10 minutes more or till crispy. Serve warm. Makes 6.

## Basic Savory Muffins

Muffins taste great for breakfast, but they belong at other meals, too. By adding cheese, herbs, and other flavorful ingredients, you can transform plain muffins into something flavorful for lunch, dinner, or parties. They're perfect hot from the oven, but you can also bake ahead and reheat them right before serving.

1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons sugar

2 teaspoons baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

1 beaten egg

¼ cup milk

¼ cup cooking oil

In a medium mixing bowl stir together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. In a small mixing bowl combine egg, milk, and oil; add all at once to flour mixture. Stir just till moistened. The batter should be lumpy. Lightly grease muffin cups; fill muffin cups 1/2 full. Bake in a 400° oven about 20 minutes or until golden. Remove the muffins from pans; serve warm.

Makes 10 to 12 muffins.

*Red Pepper-Mozzarella Muffins:* Prepare basic recipe, except fold 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, 3 cup chopped roasted red sweet pepper, and 1/4 teaspoon cracked black pepper into batter. Sprinkle the greased muffin cups generously with cornmeal. Fill muffin cups 1/2 full. Top the muffin batter with additional cracked black pepper before baking.

*Pesto Muffins:* Prepare regular-size muffins as directed, except add 2 tablespoons pesto to batter. Fill muffin cups 1/2 full, top each with a teaspoon cream cheese then top with enough batter to fill each muffin cup 1/2 full.

Try adding shredded cheddar cheese and sun dried tomatoes. Or, try jalapeño jack cheese and a tablespoon of salsa. Another option, add fresh herbs and garlic that are suitable to the meal you're serving.

### Deb's Beer Bread

Here's the easiest loaf of bread you'll ever make. The beer gives it a deep yeast

flavor. If you like, add your favorite herbs or seeds such as sesame, millet, etc., or even a bit of shredded cheese. Deb (my Mother pictured above on the right with her Aunt, my Great Aunt Mary Ann) said that she felt dark beer lent the best flavor for a hearty bread served with a thick stew.



3 cups self-rising flour\*  
3 tablespoons sugar  
1 (12-ounce) can of beer

Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly grease or spray a 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Combine all ingredients, mixing well.

Pour into prepared loaf pan and bake for 1 hour. Makes 1 loaf.

\*Alternatively, you may substitute with 3 cups all-purpose flour, 3 teaspoons baking powder and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt.

## Grammy Robbins' Crazy Crust



Matt's mother Debbie is a professional baker. Yes, a professional baker making donuts, bread, you name it. This is her recipe for an amazing crust. This crust recipe can be used as a part of many other recipes in this cookbook. Thank you Debbie for sharing this with me. Tuna braid isn't the same without it.

Lightly grease and flour bottom and sides of 9 inch metal or 10 inch glass pie pan.

½ cup unbleached or all-purpose flour  
 ½ tsp. salt  
 ½ tsp. baking powder  
 ¼ cup shortening  
 ½ cup sour cream  
 1 egg

Lightly spoon flour into measuring cup and level off.

Combine all ingredients in medium bowl  
 Stir until blended, about 60-70 strokes  
 (Batter will be slightly lumpy)  
 Spread batter thinly on bottom and thickly up sides to within ¼ inch of pan rim.

Fill and bake at 425 degrees according to individual recipes.

Cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Crust may be covered and refrigerated unfilled for up to 12 hours before use. Cover leftovers with foil and refrigerate or freeze.

## Zucchini Bread

3 cups all-purpose flour  
 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 ¼ teaspoon baking powder  
 ¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
 ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 2 cups granulated sugar  
 1 cup butter, softened  
 3 large eggs  
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
 2 medium (2 cups) zucchini, shredded  
 ½ cup chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350°. Combine flour, cinnamon, salt, baking soda, baking powder, cloves and nutmeg in large bowl; set aside.

Combine sugar, butter, eggs and vanilla in large mixer bowl. Beat at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until smooth (2 to 3 minutes). Reduce speed to low; add flour mixture. Continue beating until well mixed (1 to 2 minutes). (Mixture will be very thick.) Stir in zucchini and walnuts by hand.

Spread mixture into 2 greased (8x4-inch) loaf pans. Bake for 55 to 65 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pans. Cool completely; store refrigerated.

Makes 24 servings (**2 loaves**).

## Carrot Cake Deluxe



2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 cups sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
3 eggs  
1 1/2 cups vegetable oil  
2 cups finely grated carrots  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup well-drained crushed pineapple  
1 cup shredded coconut  
1 cup chopped nuts, divided

### *Cream Cheese Frosting:*

2 packages (3 ounces each) cream cheese, softened  
3 cups powdered sugar  
6 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan; set aside.

In a mixing bowl, combine dry ingredients.

Add eggs, oil, carrots, and vanilla; beat until well blended. Stir in pineapple, coconut and 1/2 cup nuts.

Pour into prepared baking pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until cake tests done when wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool.

Combine frosting ingredients in a small bowl; mix until well blended. Spread over cooled cake. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup nuts, if desired. Serves 12.

## Chocolate Know How

There are four types of chocolate that have become the 'most popular' to use in melting.

*Milk Chocolate* – made from mild solids, cocoa butter and sugar; milk chocolate is the most often eaten as a candy bar.

*Unsweetened* – made from a blend of fine cocoa beans that are roasted, crushed and ground between large heated rollers, unsweetened is the purest form of chocolate. It is satin smooth, rich in cocoa butter and best for baking.

*Semi-Sweet* – this is made using the same method as unsweetened chocolate, but with just a pinch of sugar, cocoa butter, and vanilla to give it a rich, sweet taste. Semi-sweet is perfect for garnishes and fondues.

*White* – white chocolate is made with cocoa butter, milk, and sugar but doesn't contain cocoa solids. As a result, it is creamy white in color, and mild and sweet in flavor. This is often used as a coating or decorative garnish.

### *Melting Chocolate for Recipes*

Place unwrapped chocolate squares in a microwaveable bowl. Microwave on

High for 1-2 minutes or until almost melted. For each additional square of chocolate, add 10 seconds. Stir after each minute.

Continue stirring until the chocolate has completely melted. To prevent chocolate from clumping, make sure your utensils and container are completely dry. If your chocolate develops a clumpy texture, add a teaspoon of solid shortening (not butter or margarine) for each square of melted chocolate.

Stir until mixture is smooth.

### Melting Chocolate for Decorations

A different technique is necessary for dipping, decorating and making chocolate bark. This method of melting helps chocolate reset properly and gives it a crisp, shiny coating.

Chop chocolate squares into small pieces. Place them in a heat-proof bowl and set over a pan of simmering, but not boiling, water. Be careful not to get water into the melting chocolate or it will become grainy.

Melt chocolate, stirring constantly, until about two-thirds is melted. Remove from heat and continue stirring until completely smooth.

Keep melted chocolate lukewarm while dipping or drizzling by placing bowl over a pan of warm water.

This is perfect for dipping strawberries, pretzels, or even Ritz crackers.

### Chocolate Peanut Butter Crackers

Ritz crackers (regular size)

Smooth peanut butter

Bowl of melted milk or semi-sweet chocolate

Spread peanut butter on a cracker and make a sandwich by placing the other cracker on top of it.

Dip sandwich into the bowl of chocolate, thoroughly coating it. Place on a marble or granite cutting board and let firm.

Enjoy with milk or chopped over ice cream.

### Alison's Almond Biscotti

Biscotti are crisp Italian twice-baked cookies, which are particularly good with coffee or tea. You can make this batch as is, or dip it in chocolate; thus, the proceeding information on chocolate.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Bake: 40 to 42 minutes

Makes 24 cookies

¾ cup blanched almonds

2 eggs

1-teaspoon almond extract

¾ cup sugar

1½ cups cake flour

1-teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350°. Spread almonds out on a small baking sheet. Place in oven and toast 6-8 minutes, or until golden. Remove and let cool; coarsely chop toasted almonds.

In a medium bowl, beat eggs with an electric mixer on high speed until fluffy. Gradually beat in almond extract and sugar until mixture is thick and lemon colored, scraping down side of bowl

with rubber spatula frequently. With that same spatula, fold in cake flour mixed with baking powder and salt just until thoroughly combined. Fold in chopped toasted almonds.

Grease a 10 x 4 inch strip down the center of two cookie sheets. Spoon half of the almond mixture down the center of each cookie sheet to make a 3 x 10 inch log. Bake 30 minutes. Remove from oven, but leave oven on.

Let cookies cool on sheets 3 to 5 minutes, or just until cool enough to handle. With a serrated knife, cut each log diagonally into 12 slices. Place slices flat sides down, on cookie sheets and return to oven for five minutes. Turn slices over and bake 5 to 7 minutes longer, or until golden on both sides. Remove to racks and let cool completely.

Dip in melted chocolate or cream cheese frosting.

### “Mrs. Field’s Cookies”

In 1986, this recipe was photocopied and distributed all over the country with the following message on the top:

“Dear Friends: A friend of a friend of a friend called the ‘Mrs. Fields Cookie’ office and requested the recipe for her cookies. They asked her for her credit card number- and she gave it to them thinking the cost would be \$15 to \$25. It turned out to be \$200. Therefore, she is giving the recipe to anyone and everyone she knows (and doesn’t know) so someone can get use of her \$200. Anyway...just keep passing it on.”

Weeks after receiving the recipe a spokesperson for Mrs. Fields appeared

on a national talk show to dispute the authenticity of the recipe. Even so, it’s the best chocolate chip cookie recipe I know, so who cares who it belongs to!

Preparation Time: 1 ½ hours  
36 cookies

¾ cup butter  
¾ cup sugar  
¾ cup brown sugar  
2 eggs  
¾ teaspoon vanilla  
1-½ cups flour  
1 ¾ cups oatmeal (measure, then grind in a blender)  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¾ teaspoon baking powder  
¾ teaspoon baking soda  
8 ounces chocolate chips  
3 ounces Hershey bar finely grated

Cream together butter, sugar, and brown sugar. Add eggs and vanilla. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, powdered oatmeal, salt, baking powder, and baking soda. Combine the butter-egg mixture with the dry ingredients and stir until creamy. Add the chips and chocolate shaving, and mix until thoroughly blended. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet at 400° about 2 inches apart in golf ball sized piles about 10-12 minutes. Do not over bake.

### Pie Baking Tips: Before You Start

Here are some wonderful tips I have picked up over the years. I owe some of these to the wonderful ladies of my choirs, who over the years, taught me a great deal about the art of making pies.

*Pastry:*

- ◇ Measure accurately. Too much flour makes pastry tough. Too

much shortening makes it greasy and crumbly, and too much water turns it tough and soggy. Sprinkle flour shortening mixtures with 1 tablespoon of water at a time.

- ◇ For a crust that will be baked, select a glass or dull metal pan. Use shiny metal pans, which keeps crusts from browning properly, only for unbaked crumb crusts.
- ◇ For a prettier double-crust pie, brush the unbaked top with milk, water, or melted margarine or butter, then sprinkle lightly with sugar. Or brush the unbaked top with a beater egg or milk and skip the sugar.
- ◇ If you aren't patient enough to make your own pie crust, there is no shame in buying a pre-made one, especially if it will save your sanity!

#### *Fruit Fillings:*

- ◇ To avoid messy spills in your oven, set the pie pan on a baking sheet.

#### *Cream Fillings:*

- ◇ Cool cream pies 4 to 6 hours before serving. For longer storage cover and refrigerate.
- ◇ When cutting cream pies, dip your knife into water between slices.



## Alison's Honey Apple Pie

There are many varieties of apples that work in apple pies. The two varieties that I favor for a honey apple pie are Rome Beauty and Granny Smith.

1/3-cup honey  
 2 tablespoons granulated sugar  
 2 tablespoons cornstarch  
 1-teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 dash salt  
 2 tablespoons sweetened butter, melted  
 6 to 8 medium cooking apples

1 recipe double piecrust  
 1 egg, beaten  
 1-tablespoon coarse sugar

For filling, in a large mixing bowl combine honey, sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, and salt. Stir in melted butter. Stir in apples. Apples should be peeled and cut into thin slices.

Wrap 1 circle of pastry around a rolling pin. Unroll onto 9-inch pie plate. Ease into pie plate, being careful not to stretch pastry. Trim pastry to ½ inch beyond edge of plate. Cut decorative shapes, like leaves or hearts, from trimmings. If desired, make decorative cutouts in remaining dough circle for top crust. Cover with plastic wrap.

Fill pastry-lined pie plate with apple filling. Place top crust on pie. Turn edge under the pastry; flute as desired. If not using cutouts, cut slits in top crust for steam to escape.

In a small bowl, combine beaten egg and 1 tablespoon of water. Brush pastry with egg mixture; add decorative shapes. Brush with egg; sprinkle with coarse

sugar. Cover edge with foil to prevent over browning.

Bake in a 350° oven for 30 minutes. Remove foil. Bake about 30 minutes more or until pastry is golden and filling is bubbly. Cool pie on a wire rack. Makes 8 servings.

*Rich Pastry for Double-Crust Pie:* In a medium mixing bowl stir together 2 cups all-purpose flour, 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon baking powder. Cut in ¾ cup shortening till pieces are the size of small peas. In a glass measure combine 1 beaten egg, 1 teaspoon vinegar, and enough water to make 3 cup liquid. Add liquid to flour mixture. If necessary, add more water, 1 teaspoon at a time, till dough clings together. Divide in half. Form each half into a ball.

On a lightly floured surface, flatten each ball of dough with your hands. Using a rolling pin, roll each ball of dough from the center to the edge forming 2 circles, each about 12 inches in diameter.

Make it a Mini-Magic Pie –



Cut the dough with a cookie cutter, grease a muffin pan and fill the cups with the apple pie filling – homemade or from a can. Bake for twenty minutes and poof – mini-apple pies.



### Alison's Famous Real Pumpkin Pie

The very first time I made this was for a special Thanksgiving in 1995 when my father and brother came to visit me in my shack of a house in Trinidad, CA. Ever since; I have made a 'real' pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving, with the exception of my first year in Kansas. I arrived too late in the season to get a pumpkin from any of the stores and was forced to use canned pumpkin! Utter sacrilege to me!

Danny and Michelle were very kind and ate the pie, smiling and saying it was good. It wasn't until the next year when I was able to make my 'real' pumpkin pie that they both changed their tune. Neither had ever had a real homemade pumpkin pie, settling for Mrs. Smith's or the like from the frozen food section of the grocery store. Well, I have converts now. It may seem like extra work on a particularly busy cooking holiday to begin with, but NOTHING can take the place of a truly homemade pumpkin pie made from real honest to God pumpkin, not that pseudo pumpkin in a can crapola.



If the pie cracks in baking, the temperature is too high. Pie puffs up near end of baking, but should not puff enough to crack.

#### Pastry for 9-inch Single Crust

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup home cooked pumpkin (see recipe in Vegetarian Entrée chapter)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ginger  
 2 eggs  
 1 cup half-and-half  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup whole milk

Adjust rack 5 or 6 inches above bottom of oven. Start oven 10 minutes before baking pie; set oven temperature to 400°. Make pastry and place in pie pan. Crimp edge with fork or flute edge. **DO NOT PRICK PASTRY.** Refrigerate pastry crust for 30 minutes.

Place fresh pumpkin in a 3 quart



saucepan. Cook and stir pumpkin until dried out and slightly caramelized.

Remove from heat, but keep hot. In a small bowl, mix sugar, salt and spices well, then stir into hot pumpkin thoroughly. In another small bowl, beat eggs slightly, add cream and milk, then add to the pumpkin mixture and stir until thoroughly blended. Pour immediately into chilled crust. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown and only an inch circle in the middle of filling remains soft. It will set later. Remove to wire rack to cool to lukewarm before cutting.

Note: Perfectly baked pumpkin pie has neither wrinkles nor cracks on surface. Baking a hot filling in a chilled pastry crust at 400° for 25-30 minutes produces a smooth, shiny, good textured filling and a well baked crust free from soaking.



#### Matt's Favorite French Silk Pie

When going through my card catalogue of recipes, I had to choose the ones I thought were the best, and provided the widest variety. I almost left this one out,

but Matt insisted that it wouldn't be a dessert section without it.

1 cup whipping cream  
1 6-ounce package semisweet chocolate chips  
3 cup butter  
3 cup sugar  
2 beaten egg yolks  
3 tablespoons whipping cream  
1 baked 9 inch pastry shell  
Whipped cream or pressurized whipped dessert topping (optional)  
Chocolate curls or miniature chocolate chips (optional)

In a heavy 2-quart saucepan combine the 1 cup whipping cream, chocolate chips, butter, and sugar. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, till chocolate is melted. This should take about 10 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat.

Gradually stir about half of the hot mixture into the beaten egg yolks. Return egg mixture to saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, till mixture is slightly thickened and nearly bubbly. This should take 3 to 5 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat. Mixture may appear to separate.

Stir in whipping cream. Place saucepan in a bowl of ice water; stir constantly till mixture stiffens and becomes hard to stir (20 minutes). Transfer chocolate mixture to a medium mixing bowl.

Beat the cooled chocolate mixture with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 2 to 3 minutes, or till light and fluffy. Spread filling in a baked pastry shell. Cover and chill pie about 5 hours or till set, or for up to 24 hours.

At serving time, tip each serving with shipped cram and sprinkle with chocolate curls or miniature chocolate chips. Makes 10 servings.

### Alison's Hawaiian Trifle



I am not a baker, but I do make desserts. Making your own coconut pudding for this dessert is very worth it. Buy premade pound cake or make some from a mix.

#### **pudding:**

8 cups milk (I recommend whole)  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup cornstarch  
½ teaspoon salt  
Coconut extract to taste

In a sauce pan mix together the cornstarch, sugar and salt. Whisk in the milk and coconut extract and simmer over low to medium heat. Stir constantly until the mixture is thoroughly cooked and thickens.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and strain through a mesh strainer; push through the strainer with a rubber spatula into a bowl to cool.

Yields 8 servings

2 – 3 bananas  
 2 pound cakes  
 Flaked coconut – lightly toasted

### **Whipped cream:**

1 cup heavy cream  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

Fill a large bowl with crushed ice, and place a metal mixing bowl into the crushed ice bowl. In the metal mixing bowl, whip cream until stiff peaks are about to form. Beat in vanilla and sugar until peaks form. Make sure not to over-beat, cream with then become lumpy and butter-like.

Cut the pound cake into cubes, and put down a two inch layer of cubed pound cake. Spoon pudding over the pound cake completely covering the cake. Slice bananas and put one banana's slices in a layer over the pudding. Place some of the slices facing out of the trifle bowl. Put down another layer of pound cake, and then another layer of pudding and bananas.

Continue layering until the trifle bowl is nearly filled, leaving about an inch from the top. Layer the whipped cream on the very top of the trifle. Cover whipped cream with toasted coconut.

### Nutella Pound Cake Dessert

It's just like it sounds and it came about after I read about it on Facebook of all places. This is my new and improved version with extra special touches

1 jar of Nutella  
 1 box of pound cake mix  
 Coffee ice cream (box preferred)  
 Raspberry syrup

Powdered cocoa

Make the pound cake mix according to the box instruction or make your own pound cake if you are a "from scratch" kind of person. Grease two bread pan with butter flavored Crisco. Pour a third of the batter between the two pans to form a bottom layer. Spoon in Nutella covering the bottom layer, then cover the Nutella with more batter. Layer like this until all batter is gone. Bake according to cake mix instructions. Remove to a cooling rack.



Preparing the plate:

Drizzle raspberry syrup across the plate in interesting and pleasing designs – dust with a flour sifter or a mesh shaker of cocoa. Slice the pound cake like you'd slice bread. Place one slice in the middle of the plate on top of the raspberry syrup. Cut coffee ice cream in a slice similar in size to the pound cake and place ice cream on top of the pound cake slice. Dollop whipped cream and serve

### Three Step Cheesecake

2 8-ounce packages cream cheese  
 ½ cup sugar  
 ½ teaspoon vanilla  
 2 eggs  
 1 pre-made graham cracker pie crust

Mix the softened cream cheese with sugar, and vanilla with an electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add the eggs and blend again until thoroughly mixed.

Pour the cream cheese mixture into the pie crust and bake at 325 for 40 minutes or until the center is almost set.

Cool. Refrigerate 3 hours or overnight. Top with your favorite canned pie filling if desired or shave chocolate flakes on top. OR, drizzle various types of toppings like butterscotch, caramel, or chocolate. My favorite is pulverizing a Score bar, and sprinkling the crushed toffee and chocolate on top, then drizzling a very small amount of caramel topping..

### Cranberry-Pineapple Punch

1 (48-ounce) bottle cranberry juice drink  
1 (48-ounce) can pineapple juice  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons almond extract  
1 (2-liter) bottle ginger ale, chilled

Stir together first 4 ingredients until sugar dissolves. Cover and chill 8 hours.

Stir in ginger ale just before serving.

Makes 6 1/2 quarts.

### Flaming Gorilla Tit's a la Los Guys

Follow this precisely or you'll get a mouthful of 151 at the end and it won't be pleasant. Use a double shot glass and

a plastic drinking straw cut to be about an inch or two taller than the glass

Use Kahlua - coffee liquor;  
Use Bailey's Irish cr me;  
Use Bacardi 151 Rum (this is a must due to the flammability)

Pour the Kaluha in the shot glass & fill it about 1/3 the way. Then nearly fill the rest of the shot glass with Bailey's. Leave a little bit of room at the top of the shot glass for the 151. Use about a cap full of 151 & carefully pour it on the top of the shot so it floats on top. This should be a layered shot w/ clear divisions between the liquor. Depending on your shot glass, the Kaluha can look somewhat like a nipple, thus the name of the drink. Light the drink on fire & let it burn until nearly all the 151 is gone and the top of the Bailey's begins to bubble & swirl. If you peer at the glass from the side it will have a clear layer above the Bailey's. This takes about 1 or 2 minutes.

Blow the flame out. (Do not touch the glass it will be HOT!)

Plunge in the straw & suck rapidly while swirling. Most people think it tastes like a hot chocolate chip cookie.

### Flirtini

As seen on the hit HBO series, *Sex in the City*, this is the recipe I came up with after many trials. Make it in a big batch or by the glass, it is very simple. Be sure to keep your vodka in the freezer so it is always as cold as possible. If need be, shake vodka with ice, then strain into glass, like a martini.

2 shot glasses of the best vodka you can afford

3 shot glasses of champagne  
5 shot glasses of pineapple juice  
1 tablespoon of maraschino cherry juice  
from jar  
1 maraschino cherry per glass

Mix and serve in ice cold glass.

Keeping the same proportions, you can mix larger batches.

### Frisky Whiskey

I learned about this drink at the Jack Daniel's factory in Lynchburg, Tennessee. Couldn't drink it there since that's a dry county, but I made it the first chance I could. Oh damn!

2/3 cup of Jack Daniel's Whiskey  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon crème de menthe liqueur  
Dash Curacao liqueur  
Ice

Combine all ingredients; shake in cocktail shaker. Strain into small stemmed glasses. Makes 3 servings.

### Hot Buttered Rum Punch

¾ cup packed brown sugar  
4 cups water  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground allspice  
¾ teaspoon ground cloves  
2 cans jellied cranberry sauce  
4 cups pineapple juice  
1 cup rum\*  
Cinnamon sticks  
Butter

\* Be sure to use a brown rum like Captain Morgan's, not a white rum.

In a crock-pot, combine brown sugar, water, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice and cloves. Break up cranberry sauce with a fork. Add cranberry sauce, pineapple juice and rum to crock-pot. Cover and heat on Low 3 to 4 hours. Serve hot in individual mugs with cinnamon sticks. Dot each mug with butter.

### Golden Dawn

2 measures of sweet cream  
1 measure of honey  
3 measures of whiskey  
Crushed ice

Shake well until velvety smooth. Serve immediately. Goes extremely well with very spicy food like Creole or Mexican.

### Mulled Cider

2 quarts apple cider  
¼ cup packed brown sugar  
8 teaspoon ground ginger  
1 orange (unpeeled), peeled  
2 cinnamon sticks  
1 teaspoon whole cloves

Combine cider, sugar, ginger and orange in a crock-pot. Tie cinnamon and cloves in a small cheesecloth bag; add to crock-pot. Cover and heat on Low 2 to 5 hours. Remove cheesecloth bag. Serve from crock-pot.

### Orange Tang Punch

1 large can pineapple juice  
3 cups sugar  
3 pints water  
8 ounces ReaLemon  
1 cup Tang  
1 quart 7-Up

Mix well in large serving bowl with crushed ice. Float orange slices on top of punch. Serves 30.



Alcoholic version:

For an added kick, add ½ a bottle of Parrot Bay Coconut Rum to the punch bowl.

For an additional added kick, add a shot of Crème de Cassis or Curacao. Warning, Curacao is blue and will make the punch an awkward color.

Rino's Celebration Punch



Rino J Passaniti is a college buddy of mine from my days marching with the Might Matador Marching Band of Cal State University Northridge aka CSUN.

He was very inventive and made great drinks at the parties held at a house he shared with some other male band members called Los Guys.

While I would love to include the famous or infamous drink called Tidy Bowl in my collection I do believe the recipe is lost along with our brain cells! Here's a celebration punch for you instead from the best White Rabbit around – Rino.

You'll need a lighted Champagne Fountain to make this puppy spectacular, otherwise a large clear punch bowl will do.

- 2 bottles of a Peach Champagne (Trader Joe's has a couple of good ones, cheap)
- 2 liter bottle of Sprite or 7Up
- 8oz can of frozen orange juice
- Rainbow sherbet

Chill liquids thoroughly before starting. Pour liquids into the punch bowl, stirring in the frozen orange juice in small chunks. Do not make the orange juice with the can directions, as the other liquids will serve as the water. Then add three or four average size scoops of sherbet. Don't go overboard on the sherbet or it will mask the peach champagne flavor.



*Variation:*

Omit the sherbet. Take two or three cans of sliced or diced peaches in water, fresh raspberries and sliced strawberries, and put into a Bundt cake pan. Be sure to pour in all the water from the canned peaches. Put the cake pan in the freeze and freeze solid. Float the frozen ring of fruit in the middle of the punch bowl. I do this because I don't have a champagne fountain...yet!