

A BAKED PASTA PRIMER

melting pots

BAKED PASTA IS KITCHEN ALCHEMY.
A TURN IN THE OVEN TAKES IT TO
A MELTY, RICH, TRANSCENDENT LEVEL.
HERE ARE FIVE HOT PICKS.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY **Hans Gissinger**



LASAGNA WITH TURKEY SAUSAGE BOLOGNESE

PREP 45 minutes TOTAL 1 hour 30 minutes

8 TO 10 SERVINGS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups chopped onions
- ½ cup diced carrot
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds, crushed in spice mill or in mortar with pestle
- 1 pound spicy Italian turkey sausages, casings removed
- 3 large garlic cloves, pressed
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 5 cups crushed tomatoes with added puree (from two 28-ounce cans)
- 1 cup chopped fresh basil, divided
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
- 1 15-ounce container whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 3 cups (packed) coarsely grated whole-milk mozzarella cheese (12 ounces)
- 1¼ cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 16 6½x3¼-inch no-boil lasagna noodles

Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions, carrot, and fennel seeds; sauté 5 minutes. Add sausage and garlic; sauté until sausage is cooked through, breaking into pieces, 8 to 10 minutes. Add wine; boil 1 minute. Add tomatoes, ½ cup basil, and oregano. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer until sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Combine ricotta, mozzarella, 1 cup Parmesan, and ½ cup basil in medium bowl; stir to blend. Season with pepper.

DO AHEAD Sauce and cheese mixture can be made 1 day ahead. Cover separately; chill.

Place noodles in large bowl; cover with hot water. Soak until pliable, separating occasionally, about 30 minutes. Drain well.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Spread 1 cup sauce over bottom of 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. Cover with 4 noodles, arranging crosswise. Drop ¼ of cheese mixture over by tablespoonfuls; spread out. Top with 1 cup sauce, then 4 noodles and ½ of remaining cheese mixture. Repeat 2 more times with 1 cup sauce, 4 noodles, and ½ of cheese mixture. Spread any remaining sauce over. Sprinkle with ¼ cup Parmesan.

Bake lasagna uncovered until heated through and puffed, about 50 minutes. Let stand 10 to 15 minutes and serve.

RIGATONI WITH EGGPLANT AND PINE NUT CRUNCH

PREP 40 minutes TOTAL 1 hour 50 minutes

8 SERVINGS

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1 unpeeled large eggplant (1½ to 1¾ pounds), cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 medium yellow bell peppers, cut into ½-inch squares
- 2 cups grape tomatoes
- 3 large garlic cloves, divided
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 cups (firmly packed) fresh basil leaves, divided
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- ¼ cup pine nuts
- 1 28-ounce can whole tomatoes in juice
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 pound rigatoni
- 1 pound whole-milk mozzarella cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes

Preheat oven to 425°F. Spray large rimmed baking sheet with nonstick spray; add eggplant and peppers. Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise; add to sheet. Using garlic press, squeeze 1 garlic clove onto vegetables. Drizzle vegetables with oil; toss. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast vegetables until tender, stirring often, 35 to 45 minutes.

Combine ½ cup basil, ½ cup Parmesan, pine nuts, and 1 garlic clove in mini processor. Blend until crumbly. Season topping with salt.

Blend tomatoes with juice, cream, 1½ cups basil, and 1 garlic clove in processor until smooth. Season sauce with salt and pepper.

Cook pasta in pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally; drain. Return to pot. Toss with vegetables, sauce, and ½ cup Parmesan. Transfer to 13x9x2-inch baking dish. Sprinkle with mozzarella and pine nut topping.

Bake pasta until heated through, 25 to 35 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes and serve.

TORTELLINI GRATINATA WITH MUSHROOMS AND PARSNIP "BÉCHAMEL"

PREP 45 minutes TOTAL 1 hour 35 minutes

10 SERVINGS In this recipe, a creamy parsnip puree stands in for a traditional béchamel.

- 12 ounces parsnips (about 2 large), peeled, cut into ½-inch-thick rounds

2½ cups whole milk, divided

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Large pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

4½ tablespoons butter, divided

1¼ pounds baby portobello mushrooms (portobellini), thinly sliced

2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary

3 8- to 9-ounce packages cheese-filled tortellini or tortelloni

6 ounces imported creamy Gorgonzola dolce cheese, cut into small pieces (about 1½ cups)

INGREDIENT INFO Gorgonzola dolce is milder and softer than regular Gorgonzola.

Cook parsnips in medium saucepan of boiling salted water until very tender, about 20 minutes. Drain; reserve saucepan. Transfer parsnips to processor. Add 1½ cups milk. Blend until smooth. With machine running, gradually add remaining 1 cup milk through feed tube. Add ¾ cup Parmesan cheese and nutmeg; blend well. Return sauce to reserved pan. Simmer over low heat until reduced to 3 cups, whisking often, about 5 minutes. Season béchamel sauce to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Melt 2½ tablespoons butter in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, garlic, and rosemary. Sauté until mushrooms are brown and tender, 6 to 7 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Béchamel sauce and mushrooms can be made 1 day ahead. Cool, cover separately, and chill. Rewarm béchamel sauce before using.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Butter 12-cup-capacity baking dish. Cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain pasta; return to pot. Add remaining 2 tablespoons butter and toss to coat. Stir in mushroom mixture. Transfer pasta to prepared baking dish. Spread béchamel sauce over; sprinkle with Gorgonzola, then remaining ¼ cup Parmesan.

Bake pasta until heated through and sauce is bubbling, 18 to 20 minutes. If desired, broil until top is golden, about 2 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes and serve.

PEACH COOLER

MAKES 4 This is Paltrow's American spin on a Pimm's Cup, a cocktail from her adopted hometown of London. The key to success? Use ripe, fragrant peaches.

- 2 very ripe peaches, peeled, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ " wedges
- 6 Tbsp. peach liqueur
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vodka
- 1 English hothouse cucumber
- 2 cups chilled Prosecco
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chilled soda water
- 12 fresh mint leaves

Using a muddler or wooden spoon, mash peaches with liqueur and lemon juice in a large pitcher. Stir in vodka. **DO AHEAD:** Can be made 4 hours ahead. Cover and chill.

Cut $\frac{1}{2}$ of cucumber lengthwise into 4 spears for garnish. Thinly slice remaining cucumber. Stir Prosecco, soda water, mint, and sliced cucumber into pitcher. Fill glasses with ice. Pour cooler into glasses; garnish with cucumber spear.

CORN VICHYSSOISE

4 SERVINGS Just as you toss chicken bones into the pot to make a more flavorful stock, Paltrow uses the stripped corn cobs to fortify the base of this cold, creamy soup. And then she lets the sweet corn do the talking: "The trick is to not put too many things in that will diminish the taste of summer."

- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium leeks, white and light-green parts only, coarsely chopped (about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- 5 ears shucked corn, kernels cut from cobs, cobs reserved
- 1 cup coarsely chopped peeled potato (about 1 medium)
- 4 cups good-quality vegetable stock
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup crème fraîche or sour cream
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh chives

Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add corn kernels, reserved cobs, potato, and stock. Season lightly with salt

and pepper. Increase heat to high and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer, cover with lid slightly ajar, and cook until the vegetables are very soft, about 35 minutes.

Discard corn cobs; let soup cool slightly. Working in batches, purée soup in a blender until very smooth. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a large bowl; strain, discarding solids. Chill soup until cold. If too thick, thin with water by $\frac{1}{4}$ -cupfuls. Stir in lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper. Spoon a dollop of crème fraîche atop each serving and sprinkle with chives.

GRILLED HALIBUT WITH MANGO-AVOCADO SALSA

4 SERVINGS "I like ingredients to kind of stay the way they are," Paltrow says, referring to the what-you-see-is-what-you-get nature of this lush salsa. See *Prep School*, page 122, for avocado tips.

- 1 medium ripe avocado, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " dice
- 1 medium ripe mango, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " dice
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 4 large fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for brushing
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lime juice, divided
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 6-oz. halibut or mahi-mahi fillets
- 4 lime wedges

Prepare a grill to medium-high heat. Gently combine the avocado, mango, tomatoes, basil, 1 Tbsp. oil, and 1 Tbsp. lime juice in a large mixing bowl. Season salsa to taste with salt and pepper and set aside at room temperature, gently tossing occasionally.

Place fish fillets in a 13x9x2" glass baking dish. Drizzle remaining 2 Tbsp. oil and 2 Tbsp. lime juice over. Season fish with salt and pepper. Let marinate at room temperature for 10 minutes, turning fish occasionally.

Brush grill rack with oil. Grill fish until just opaque in center, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer to plates. Spoon mango-avocado salsa over fish. Squeeze a lime wedge over each and serve.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE SLIDERS

4 SERVINGS Paltrow loves strawberry shortcake. "But I'm always telling my kids not to

eat so much white flour. So for this version I made the biscuits with white spelt flour instead. Spelt is a type of wheat that is said to be more digestible and doesn't turn into sugar as easily."

BUCKWHEAT BISCUITS

- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups white spelt flour plus more
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup organic vegetable shortening (or butter)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup buttermilk plus more for brushing
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 3 Tbsp. agave syrup (nectar)

FILLING

- 2 cups fresh strawberries, hulled, halved
- 2 Tbsp. agave syrup (nectar)
- Balsamic vinegar
- Whipped cream

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2"-diameter biscuit cutter

INGREDIENT INFO: Agave syrup (nectar) and white spelt flour are available at better supermarkets and at natural foods stores.

BISCUITS Preheat oven to 475°. Whisk 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups spelt flour and next 3 ingredients in a large bowl. Using fingertips, blend in the shortening; form a well in center of mixture. Whisk $\frac{1}{2}$ cup buttermilk, yogurt, and agave in a small bowl; pour into flour mixture; stir with a fork to blend. Transfer to a lightly floured work surface. Knead 2 or 3 times to bring dough together. Press dough into a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick round. Using biscuit cutter, cut the dough into rounds. Gather scraps; repeat cutting until all dough is used. Place the biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet; brush with buttermilk.

Bake until golden brown and a tester inserted comes out clean, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; let cool completely.

FILLING Mix strawberries and agave in a medium bowl. Drizzle vinegar over; toss.

Cut biscuits in half. Place 3 biscuit bottoms on each plate. Spoon whipped cream over each and top with strawberry mixture. Place biscuit tops over.

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