



SICILIAN PORK ROAST
(RECIPE ON PAGE 48)

PHOTOGRAPHY TERRY BRENNAN
FOOD STYLING LARA MIKLASEVICS

BY SERENA BASS

OPENHOUSE

**A fancy holiday feast for the entire family?
It's not only possible, it's spectacular!**



WINTER SANGRIA

FOR THE KIDS >>

Very Fancy Apple Juice

Combine 64 ounces apple juice or cider with 1/3 cup green cardamom pods and cook over lowest possible heat 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Remove from heat, add 10 strips fresh lemon zest, let cool, and refrigerate overnight. Strain, discard pods and zest, and either reheat or serve chilled over ice.

One of the great puzzles of the holiday season is:

HOW DO YOU SENSIBLY ENTERTAIN A BIG FAMILY, ADULTS AND CHILDREN ALIKE?

When you have children, everything can seem an uphill battle, even—or especially—dinner. Here's one doting grandmother's solution. When I leave New York to visit my son's house in St. Paul, Minnesota, we invite all the kids, and I set up a kid-friendly table in the kitchen with pasta, a choice of sauces, fruit with chocolate or yogurt dipping sauce, and ice-cream sandwiches. The parents fortify themselves with mulled wine and help the little ones eat. Then once the kids are well-fed and settled in front of a movie, we all have a lovely adult party with dishes that were mostly prepped in advance. The adults get to have adult conversation, and the kids typically reappear just in time to find the grown-ups eating the last ice-cream sandwiches. It's definitely a win-win situation.

Take it from a grandma who knows: A family that celebrates together is a happy family indeed!

Winter Sangria

MAKES 16 SERVINGS

I love mulled wine, but it doesn't love me. I suspect it's the heat that does me in, because within 30 minutes my cheeks are aflame, my head is spinning, and I need to sit down. However, I love the taste, so this is my solution: a winter sangria infused with seasonal spices, using oranges instead of peaches and strawberries.

- 3 bottles red wine (full-bodied rather than dry)
- 1 cup El Presidente Spanish Brandy
- 1 cup sugar, or to taste
- 4 anise stars
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tablespoon whole allspice, cracked
- 12 strips orange peel, removed with a peeler
- 2 whole oranges, quartered and cut into small wedges

1. Combine all ingredients and stir well to melt sugar. Refrigerate overnight and serve over ice.

FOR THE KIDS

- Very Fancy Apple Juice
- Cheese Ravioli with Kids' Cheese or Tomato Sauce
- Ice-Cream Sandwiches with Dark Chocolate Shortbread Cookies

FOR THE ADULTS

- Winter Sangria
- Fennel Gratin
- Endive, Honey Crisp Apple, and Goat Cheese Salad with Toasted Walnuts and Apple Cider Vinaigrette
- Cheese Ravioli with Adult Cheese or Tomato Sauce
- Sicilian Pork Roast
- Simple Chicken Potpie

CHEESE RAVIOLI
WITH CHEESE SAUCE

KID-FRIENDLY ROASTED
TOMATO MARINARA

Cheese Ravioli for the Littles and the Bigs

MAKES AS MANY SERVINGS AS YOU LIKE!

Premade ravioli, whether frozen or fresh and refrigerated, is an ideal starting place when you're feeding a crowd of diverse ages. I like to provide two sauces, say cheese sauce for littles and a spicier version for bigs, or tomato marinara for littles and Arabiatta for their parents. I've provided all my recipes here, to help you throw family gatherings for years.

Basic ravioli instructions

You'll find ravioli vary wildly in size; some are as small as a tablespoon, others hold $\frac{1}{4}$ cup filling. I like to plan on 1 pound of ravioli for 2 adults or for 4 kids. If you prefer to count the cheese-stuffed bundles, count out 5 average-sized ravioli per child and 8 per adult. Feel free to make too many: Once they're cooked and tossed in oil, ravioli reheat well, as do these sauces. Cook ravioli according to package directions. For every pound of ravioli, reserve 1 to 2 teaspoons pasta cooking water. Return ravioli to the cooking pot and combine with reserved cooking water and 1 to 2 teaspoons olive oil. (So, for 1 pound ravioli, 1 to 2 teaspoons cooking water plus 1 to 2 teaspoons oil; for 5 pounds ravioli, 5 to 10 teaspoons cooking water plus 5 to 10 teaspoons olive oil.) Stir and set aside, covered with a tea towel, until ready to serve.

Cheese Sauce

MAKES 4 CUPS

- 4 cups whole milk
- 1 bay leaf, crumbled
- 6 tablespoons ($\frac{3}{4}$ stick) butter
- 6 tablespoons flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 8 ounces extra-sharp Cheddar cheese, grated

Optional adult additions

- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 ounces pepper jack cheese, grated
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon whole nutmeg, grated
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crushed garlic

1. Heat milk with bay leaf until simmering. Set aside 10 minutes.
2. Melt butter in a saucier (a pan with a rounded base), whisk in flour, and cook over low heat 2 minutes, without browning.
3. Strain milk into saucier and whisk briskly to incorporate flour and butter. Add salt. Increase heat to medium-low and cook 10 minutes, whisking occasionally and cleaning around edge of pan with a rubber spatula. Sauce will eventually thicken.

4. Add cheese and any (or all) optional ingredients (or divide sauce into two batches, and add adult ingredients to half). Stir until cheese is just melted. Remove from heat. (If making ahead of time, put a sheet of plastic cling film on the sauce's surface to prevent a skin from forming.)
5. Serve. To reheat sauce, use a very gentle flame, or, ideally, a double-boiler.

Kid-Friendly Roasted Tomato Marinara

MAKES 4 CUPS

- 4 pounds plum tomatoes, stem ends trimmed, halved or quartered
- 1 medium onion, peeled and quartered
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 4 sprigs fresh oregano (or 2 teaspoons dried)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper (optional)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil

1. Position rack in lower third of oven and preheat to 300°F.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl, toss together, and tip into a baking pan.
3. Roast 2 hours, stir to combine, and roast 1 more hour. Remove from oven and transfer to bowl. Set aside 10 minutes. Extract fresh thyme and oregano stalks, if used.
4. Pulse sauce in a food processor to a chunky or smooth texture. Sauce can be refrigerated up to 4 days or frozen up to 2 months.

Virtually Instant Arabiatta Sauce (For Adults and Bold Children)

MAKES 3 CUPS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon red-pepper flakes
- 1 28-ounce can crushed plum tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons lemon zest, removed with a peeler and finely chopped with a sharp knife (not grated)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon aged balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh basil, chopped or cut in thin strips

1. Heat oil and butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add garlic and pepper flakes and cook gently 1 minute.
2. Add tomatoes, lemon zest, salt, and pepper and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in vinegar and basil. Serve over ravioli.



ICE-CREAM SANDWICHES WITH
DARK CHOCOLATE SHORTBREAD

Ice-Cream Sandwiches

How many ice-cream sandwiches will you make? Well, how many do you need? This is a flexible recipe; make the cookies below or replace with store-bought ginger cookies or vanilla shortbread. Set up a “make your own ice-cream sandwich” bar, complete with your favorite varieties (I get Häagen Dazs chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla). The key is to have the ice cream soft enough that it will squish between the cookies but not so soft that it will run everywhere. If you like a little more control, make the sandwiches in advance and freeze on a parchment-lined sheet pan.

As many pints of ice cream as you like, per your group, in various flavors

Cookies, either Dark Chocolate Shortbread (below) or store bought

1. To soften ice cream, transfer to refrigerator for ½ hour before using. Using a scoop or spoon, place a scoop of softened ice cream on a cookie and top with another cookie. Squish gently and enjoy, or freeze until needed.

Dark Chocolate Shortbread

MAKES 30 COOKIES

These are not very sweet but are perfect sandwiched with ice cream. If you want to serve them on their own, brush with egg white and dust heavily with sugar before baking.

16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, very soft
 ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1½ cups flour
 ½ cup high-quality cocoa
 ¼ teaspoon kosher salt or fleur de sel (optional)
 sugar (or sanding sugar, or pearl sugar)
 for finishing cookies (optional)

1. Position a rack in middle of oven and preheat to 375°F.
2. Whisk together butter, sugar, and vanilla.
3. Sift together flour and cocoa. Using a fork, stir flour mixture into butter mixture just until flour is no longer evident.
4. Scrape dough into a large plastic bag and tap into lower half. Fold bag over and press dough across bag from seam to seam into a flat, 4-inch-wide block. Refrigerate 30 to 45 minutes, or until firm.
5. Break off one-third of dough, keeping flat. Dust a work surface with flour and roll dough to about ¼-inch thickness, pinching together any edges that crack. Repeat with remaining dough (or freeze up to a month).
6. Using a 2-inch cookie cutter (or a small glass), cut cookies, then, if desired, dust each cookie with sugar and /or optional salt. Using a metal spatula, transfer to an unlined cookie sheet, positioning cookies at least 1 inch apart.
7. Bake 10 minutes, remove from oven, and leave on sheet to cool. Store in pairs (underside facing underside) and layer between parchment paper in an airtight container.



ANOTHER EASY DESSERT IDEA
FOR THE KIDS >>

Fruit Skewers with Dipping Sauce

Allow kids to create their own desserts (with supervision, of course). Put cut fruit in small, separate bowls, as you never know which innocent fruit (usually pineapple) can wreck a bowl of mixed fruit for a child. Strawberries, medium-sized grapes, melon, pears, apples, bananas, blueberries, and pineapple all work well. Make a dipping sauce by combining Greek yogurt and a bit of honey, or serve with Quick Chocolate Sauce (below) or warmed store-bought chocolate fudge sauce. Set out bamboo skewers and let the kids thread fruits onto the sticks, dip, and eat.

Quick Chocolate Sauce

Combine ½ cup sugar, 2 tablespoons cocoa, and ⅛ teaspoon salt in a small pan. Add 2 tablespoons water, and stir, then add 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, and, stirring constantly, cook over medium heat until all ingredients have dissolved. Cook over high heat about 30 seconds. Remove from heat and add 3 tablespoons whole milk and 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract. If desired, add a tablespoon of rum or Grand Marnier for a grown-up chocolate sauce with pep!



FENNEL GRATIN

Fennel Gratin

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

This fennel gratin wins raves every time I serve it; even confirmed fennel haters fall for its sweet, roasted flavors.

- 4 bulbs fennel
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ⅓ cup fresh Parmesan cheese, roughly grated

1. Position rack in upper third of oven and preheat to 400°F.
2. Trim stalks and base from fennel. With a peeler, remove outer, stringy layer. Cut vertically into quarters, and pack, in one layer, into a large sauté pan with a lid.
3. Add milk, salt, and pepper and add water to bring level of liquid three-quarters way up fennel level in the sauté pan. Cover and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook 30 minutes or until fennel is tender but still crisp.
4. Using 2 tablespoons butter, grease an ovenproof 9-by-13-inch dish. Drain liquid from sauté pan into a bowl and pack fennel in 1 layer, rounded side upward, into dish.
5. Melt remaining butter in a medium saucepan, add flour, and mix into a thin paste. Whisk in fennel liquid and stir over medium heat to thicken.
6. Pour sauce over fennel and scatter with Parmesan. Bake 35 minutes, or until surface is golden and bubbling. If top doesn't brown well, the sides of the dish may be too high; simply put dish under a broiler for 5 minutes.

Endive, Apple, and Goat Cheese Salad with Toasted Walnuts and Cider Vinaigrette

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

This can also be made as an hors d'oeuvre: Just chop the apple and toasted walnuts together and mix with a little extra goat cheese. Pile a teaspoon on the end of a raw endive leaf, add a grind of black pepper, and you're ready to have a butler pass them about. The apples, endive, and walnuts can be prepared the day before.

Salad

- 6 large endives, unblemished
- 2 medium Honey Crisp or Braeburn apples, washed and dried
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¾ cup walnut halves, toasted at 325°F for 10 minutes
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 4-ounce log imported goat cheese, crumbled

Apple-Cider Vinaigrette

- ½ apple, cored and roughly minced
- 2 tablespoons apple-cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons honey
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup parsley leaves, chopped
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

1. For salad: Slice endive either in large, 1½-inch diagonal pieces or small ½-inch pieces (whichever you prefer), and put in a bowl of iced water 5 minutes.
2. Drain and spin endive, or air dry very well.
3. Quarter, core, and slice apples thinly. Toss with lemon juice to prevent browning as well as to enhance perfume and flavor.
4. For vinaigrette: Combine apple, apple-cider vinegar, mustard, honey, salt, pepper, and parsley in a blender and process 15 seconds. Slowly pour in oil while blender is running. (Vinaigrette can be made and refrigerated in a covered container for 8 hours. Bring to room temperature for more flavor.)
5. Whisk lemon juice into vinaigrette just before serving.
6. Toss endive, apples, walnuts, thyme, and goat cheese with 2 tablespoons vinaigrette per serving.

Sicilian Pork Roast

MAKES 10 SERVINGS

This is simple but so fantastic your guests will rise up as one and try to pin a medal on you. Don't substitute dried lemon zest for fresh; the fresh makes all the difference.



ENDIVE, APPLE, AND GOAT CHEESE SALAD WITH TOASTED WALNUTS AND CIDER VINAIGRETTE

- 2 tablespoons garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon zest, roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon hot red-pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 5 pounds bone-in pork rib roast
- 6 sprigs rosemary, washed and dried
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Position rack in middle of oven and preheat to 350°F.
2. Combine garlic, lemon zest, pepper flakes, and 1 teaspoon salt in a spice grinder and blend to a paste.
3. Using a small knife, make four ¾-inch cuts in meat. Stuff with some of spice paste; rub remaining paste over pork.
4. Using same knife, make 6 fairly large, horizontal surface cuts in meat (in, along, then out, with point of knife). Slip a sprig of rosemary through each cut, threading in one side and out the other.
5. Rub roast with oil, followed by black pepper and remaining salt.
6. Put meat on a roasting rack set on a sheet pan and cook for 2 to 2½ hours, or until internal temperature reaches 145°F.
7. Increase temperature to 400°F. Let meat rest at least 15 minutes and up to room temperature. Remove ribs, cut individually, arrange on a sheet pan, and return to oven to crisp 15 minutes.

Simple Chicken Potpie

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

This is not a pale, creamy chicken potpie. It has a great deal of flavor as the sauce is made with stock and wine rather than milk. It is simplified by using rotisserie-cooked chicken and is incredibly delicious, with little work.

Pastry

- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup cold Crisco or lard
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- ½ cup iced water
- 1 egg, beaten

Filling

- 2 large carrots, peeled
- 3 celery stalks
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter

- 2 large yellow onions, cut in ½-inch dice
- 4 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon herbes de Provence
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken stock, hot
- 1 cup white wine, such as sauvignon blanc
- 1 rotisserie chicken, skinned, deboned, and cut into 1-inch chunks
- ½ cup minced parsley

1. For pastry: Combine flour and salt in bowl of a food processor. Add Crisco or lard and chop through it roughly with a rounded-end knife, tossing together with flour. Add butter and give about 8 1-second pulses.
2. Add iced water through feed tube, pulsing 10 more times as you pour.
3. Let dough sit 10 minutes to allow it to absorb liquid. Tip into a plastic bag and, using your knuckles, press into a circle, rectangle, or oval, depending on shape of your pie dish, about ¾-inch thick. Ensure dough is fully compacted and not cracking apart. Refrigerate 1 hour; if dough is in refrigerator for much longer, wait until it is sufficiently pliable as you can't roll very cold dough.
4. For filling: Cut bottom half of each carrot in ¾-inch diagonal slices then cut top half down middle. Cut each half into same-width slices. Repeat with celery.
5. Melt butter in a large, heavy pan. Add onions, carrots, celery, mushrooms, bay leaves, herbes de Provence, salt, and pepper. Stir to coat, increase heat to high, and cook 10 minutes, or until vegetables start to caramelize.
6. Add flour and stir to incorporate. Add 1 cup stock, stirring well, and gradually add rest of stock and wine. Bring to a brisk simmer to thicken. Remove from heat and fold in chicken and parsley.
7. Add seasoning to taste; filling should be strongly flavored. Pour filling into an ovenproof dish. Set aside to cool.
8. Position a rack in middle of oven and preheat to 400°F.
9. On a well-floured work surface, roll out pastry to fit your pie dish. Brush edge of dish with beaten egg. Roll up pastry on a rolling pin and drape over cooled filling. Trim off excess pastry and use to create decorative leaves or initials, if desired. Brush surface with beaten egg, add any decoration, and brush decoration with egg. Dust lightly with salt.
10. Bake 45 minutes, or until golden brown and pie is bubbling up at edges. Let rest 5 minutes before serving. ■



SIMPLE CHICKEN POTPIE

<p>WINTER SANGRIA: PER SERVING: CALORIES 207 (0 from fat); FAT 0g (sat. 0g); CHOL 0mg; SODIUM 6mg; CARB 18g; FIBER 0g; PROTEIN 0g</p>	<p>½ CUP CHEESE SAUCE W. 5 RAVIOLI: PER SERVING: CALORIES 394 (208 from fat); FAT 24g (sat. 13g); CHOL 142mg; SODIUM 1226mg; CARB 26g; FIBER 1g; PROTEIN 19g</p>	<p>DARK CHOCOLATE SHORTBREAD COOKIE ONLY: PER SERVING: CALORIES 95 (56 from fat); FAT 6g (sat. 4g); CHOL 16mg; SODIUM 14mg; CARB 9g; FIBER 1g; PROTEIN 1g</p>	<p>FENNEL GRATIN: PER SERVING: CALORIES 225 (120 from fat); FAT 14g (sat. 8g); CHOL 37mg; SODIUM 627mg; CARB 20g; FIBER 5g; PROTEIN 8g</p>	<p>ENDIVE SALAD W. APPLE CIDER VINAIGRETTE: PER SERVING: CALORIES 316 (226 from fat); FAT 26g (sat. 5g); CHOL 9mg; SODIUM 274mg; CARB 17g; FIBER 6g; PROTEIN 7g</p>	<p>SICILIAN PORK ROAST: PER SERVING: CALORIES 269 (134 from fat); FAT 15g (sat. 4g); CHOL 89mg; SODIUM 522mg; CARB 1g; FIBER 0g; PROTEIN 31g</p>	<p>SIMPLE CHICKEN POTPIE: PER SERVING: CALORIES 601 (304 from fat); FAT 34g (sat. 14g); CHOL 123mg; SODIUM 872mg; CARB 39g; FIBER 3g; PROTEIN 29g</p>
--	---	--	---	--	---	--