

spring into brunch

Brunch is perfect for Easter and Mother's Day gatherings—or simply as an excuse to get the whole family together! Here's a springtime feast with do-ahead elements, allowing you to cook, enjoy, and bask in the compliments.

The trick with brunch, because it is usually served early in the day, is getting as much ready the day before as humanly possible and choosing a couple items to make the morning of that can be whipped up without much trouble—while also filling the house with those heady smells everyone loves, like toasted cheese and caramelized apples.

BY SERENA BASS



BAKED GLAZED HAM AND
GINGER LIME MIMOSAS
(RECIPES PAGE 29)

Sour Cream Pancakes with Caramelized Apples

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

The batter for these scrumptious pancakes can easily be made the day before serving. The pancakes themselves can be made earlier the morning of and kept warm in the oven. Alternatively, they can be made into crepes by adding $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole milk to the batter and using the sautéed apples as filling.

2 cups sour cream
4 extra-large eggs
1 medium lemon, microplane zested
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 tablespoons sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour
 unsalted butter for pan
 confectioners' sugar for dusting

1. Put all ingredients in a deep bowl, and using a metal balloon whisk, stir through quickly until smooth but with a few little lumps. Batter can be refrigerated overnight.

2. Heat a griddle, brush with butter, and using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measure, drop batter onto griddle. These pancakes are dense, so adjust heat so they cook through without burning. I start with medium-high heat until they have good color, then flip them and reduce heat to medium.

3. Serve immediately or keep warm in short stacks on a wide platter in a 250°F oven.

4. Scatter pancakes with Caramelized Apples (recipe right) and a dusting of confectioners' sugar just before serving.



Caramelized Apples

MAKES ENOUGH TOPPING FOR 12 PANCAKES

These apples can be made the night before and reheated in the oven. If you have any left over (don't count on it!), they are delicious in a frisée salad or in oatmeal. When you cook these, if the heat isn't high enough or the apples are cold, they will start to sweat and steam, and will never get golden at the edges.

3 tablespoons salted butter

3 Gala apples, at room temperature, cored and cut into wedges
pinch salt

1. Preheat oven to 250°F.

2. Heat a wide, ovenproof pan over low heat 3 minutes and add butter. Pan should be wide enough so apples don't pile up as they will start steaming.

3. When butter has stopped sizzling, add apples and salt. Increase heat to medium-high, and sauté apples until they are translucent and caramelized, about 5 to 8 minutes.

4. Transfer pan to oven until ready to use.

Ginger Lime Mimosas

MAKES 6 SERVINGS PER BOTTLE OF PROSECCO

We've all had a mimosa but never one as seductive and eye-popping as this. Prosecco has finally met its mate! To make this drink less formal and to avoid spills, serve it in a rocks glass. The Ginger Lime Syrup works really well with tequila, too. Simply swap tequila for the Prosecco and serve on the rocks with a twisted stem of fresh mint.

Prosecco, chilled

Cointreau, chilled

Ginger Lime Syrup, (recipe below) chilled

lime, cut in thin, half slices for garnish

1. For each serving, fill a champagne or rocks glass $\frac{3}{4}$ full with Prosecco.

2. Add 1 tablespoon Cointreau and 2 tablespoons Ginger Lime Syrup.

3. Garnish with a lime slice and serve.

Ginger Lime Syrup

MAKES 2 CUPS (ENOUGH FOR 16 MIMOSAS)

1 cup fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced

1 cup sugar

1 cup fresh lime juice

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium pan and bring to a simmer.

2. Cool 2 minutes and blend. Strain, pressing solids to get every drop. Can be refrigerated up to 3 days.

Baked Glazed Ham

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

A bone-in ham is the perfect excuse to make your favorite soup or stew, whereas a boneless ham is much easier to carve. Either way, there is almost always leftover ham, which freezes perfectly and can be used for Ham and Parsley Risotto (recipe on page 30), chopped into macaroni and cheese, or added to minestrone to give it some main-course credibility.

4 pounds boneless ham or 6 pounds bone-in ham
Ham Glaze (recipe below)

1. Position a rack in lower third of oven and preheat to 325°F.

2. Shave off any dark, tough skin or surface fat. Crosshatch into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diamonds and put on a rack in a roasting pan. Add 1½ cups water and cover tightly with heavy-duty foil. Cook 15 minutes per pound.

3. Remove foil and brush with half of glaze, and cook 30 minutes. Brush with remaining glaze and cook 15 more minutes. Remove from oven and let rest 20 minutes before slicing.

Ham Glaze

Deep, sweet, and pungent flavors cut any fat and enhance the juicy ham wonderfully. This recipe can be multiplied successfully for larger hams.

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange marmalade
2 tablespoons fresh ginger, peeled and grated
 using large holes of a box grater
1 tablespoon dry mustard powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark brown sugar, packed
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Mix together all ingredients until well combined.



Lemony Spring Cider

For a fun nonalcoholic drink, peel thin strips off a lemon with a peeler or zester and add to apple cider, then refrigerate overnight. A wonderful flavor develops, turning the juice into something festive and special.

Ham and Parsley Risotto

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

This is my favorite use for leftover ham—and it's a great way to use any ham that goes on sale post-holiday!

6 to 7 cups chicken stock
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter,
 at room temperature
1 cup yellow onion, finely diced
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups Arborio rice
1/2 cup Sauvignon Blanc
8 ounces ham, cut in 2-by-1/4-inch strips
 (trim off any glaze)
1/3 cup flat-leaf parsley, minced and lightly packed,
 plus more for dusting
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/3 cup Parmesan, freshly grated, plus more for dusting
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Add stock to a deep saucepan and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat and keep very hot.
2. Melt 4 tablespoons butter in a heavy-based pan over medium heat. Add onion and salt. Cook without browning, stirring occasionally, until onion is translucent, about 8 minutes.
3. Add rice and stir 2 minutes. Add wine and 1 1/2 cups stock. Stir constantly until liquid is absorbed. Add stock in 1/2-cup increments and stir through rice firmly, only adding more when last addition has been absorbed. Continue stirring and adding stock until rice is cooked, 30 to 35 minutes. Check center of a grain for tenderness. If still hard, continue adding stock until rice is fully cooked.
4. Just as rice is done cooking, add ham, parsley, and lemon juice, and stir a little less vigorously so ham doesn't break up. Add remaining butter and Parmesan and stir through quickly.



AGED GOUDA BISCUITS
AND GREEN PEAS WITH MINT
(RECIPE PAGE 33)

Check density of risotto and, if needed, add 1/4 cup stock to create a more supple texture.

5. Serve within 5 minutes, dusted with pepper, parsley, and Parmesan.

Aged Gouda Biscuits

MAKES 15 SERVINGS

This recipe might seem laborious, but it really is quite quick. The dough is cut into squares or triangles, so there is no waste or boring rerolling of scraps—plus the biscuits are easier to pick up and hold. Be sure to brush the biscuits with egg before cutting or egg dribbling down the side will set and stop the biscuit from rising freely.

Looking for a delicious spread? Mix 8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter with 2 heaped tablespoons each minced parsley and chives and a good dusting salt and pepper.

2 cups flour, Hecker's or King Arthur (see note)
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon fresh black pepper
12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, very cold
 and cut in 1/2-inch cubes
4 ounces 2-year aged Gouda (any older will be too dry)
2 extra-large eggs
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 beaten egg for glazing
salt for dusting

1. Position a rack on top shelf of oven and preheat to 425°F.
2. Put flour, baking powder, salt, pepper, and butter in bowl of an electric mixer. Using balloon beater on medium-low, stir together 5 minutes. Increase speed to medium and beat 2 minutes, or until there remain some coarse, pea-size lumps.
3. With beater running, roughly chop Gouda into 1/4- to 1/2-inch pieces and set aside. Beat together eggs and cream and set aside.
4. Transfer flour mixture to a wide, shallow bowl, toss cheese throughout, and pour in egg mixture. With a large fork, quickly integrate wet and dry ingredients. Leave dough 5 minutes to allow liquid to settle into flour.
5. Quickly pat dough together in bowl and lightly knead a couple times. Tip out onto a well-floured work surface. Dust top of dough with flour, and roll into a 6-by-10-inch rectangle. Brush with beaten egg, dust with salt, and using a sharp knife, cut into 3-by-2-inch horizontal strips, then make 5-by-2-inch vertical cuts.
6. Place biscuits at least 1 inch apart on an unlined, heavy baking sheet and bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden brown.
7. Loosen biscuits from baking sheet using a metal spatula soon after removing from oven or crusty cheese will glue them to the tray.

Note: To eliminate sifting before measuring, fluff up flour with a metal balloon whisk before scooping. Level scoop using a knife, not by shaking.





SINGLE-COLOR FRUIT SALADS WITH YOGURT,
GINGER, ORANGE, AND HONEY TOPPING



Green Peas with Mint

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

Clearly there is no mystery here (well, perhaps a tiny one), but I have messed up even such a simple dish by overcooking the peas. They are like good dogs who you think need no attention, but when you turn your back—woops! How did that happen?

The secret mystery is a fine grating of lemon zest, which gives the peas a fabulous zing. And with the mint and crunchy Maldon salt, baby peas are very welcome at the adult table. These can be made ahead and held overnight.

- 2 10-ounce boxes frozen baby peas
- salted butter
- 1 teaspoon microplaned lemon zest
- 1 heaping tablespoon fresh mint leaves, minced
- Maldon salt, optional

1. Bring a pan of lightly salted water to a simmer (don't boil). Add peas and, stirring a couple times, return water to a simmer. Using a timer, simmer 2 minutes and drain immediately. Run cold water over peas to stop cooking, and drain well.
2. Add as much butter as you'd like to a clean pan. Lay 2 paper towels over butter in pan and tip in peas. Cover pan and leave out overnight.
3. The next day, discard paper towel. Set peas over a low heat, occasionally shaking pan so peas heat through. When hot, grate on lemon zest, stir in mint, and sprinkle with Maldon salt before serving.

A Million Fruit Salads

Everyone loves fruit salad, and I think what's better than a recipe is to be creative based on what your particular market has in stock. In early spring, I often just go tropical, because the mangoes and pineapples can be so good. A favorite trick of mine is to give the fruit salad unity by tossing it with a syrup, for instance, a juiced blood orange mixed with honey, or some of the syrup from a can of lychees. The lychee fruits themselves can be quartered and added to the salad. A final tip: To keep your apples or pears white and still do your work in advance, squeeze some fresh lemon juice and toss with the cut fruit. Drain the juice, and refrigerate in a plastic bag overnight. They will stay white and taste wonderfully perfumed.

A Fruit of a Different Color

Single-color fruit salads are always eye-popping.

ORANGE: Oranges, cantaloupe, mango, papaya

RED: Strawberries, raspberries, watermelon, red plums, red grapes, blood orange

DARK HUES:
Blueberries, blackberries, black grapes, red grapes

GREEN: Kiwi, honeydew, green grapes, unpeeled Granny Smith apples

PALE HUES: Asian pear, lychee, banana, Bartlett pears, peeled golden delicious apples

Yogurt, Ginger, Orange, and Honey Topping for Fruit

MAKES 3 CUPS

Serving a yogurt topping alongside a fruit salad makes the healthy dish seem more eventful. I'll add that this is a lovely dish to serve to yourself with a bowl of canteloupe chunks, for a quick (and delicious) breakfast. The longer you leave the yogurt draining, the thicker it will become, so one hour is perfect. If, when refrigerated, any liquid accumulates on the top, just stir it back in before serving. This amount of honey gives just the right balance without being too sweet; don't cut back, as the flavor will be lost.

- 1 quart nonfat yogurt
- pinch salt
- ¼ cup runny honey
- 1½ teaspoons peeled ginger
- microplane grated zest of 1 medium orange

1. Put a large sieve lined with a paper towel over a bowl. Add yogurt to sieve and stir in salt briefly. Set aside, unrefrigerated, 1 hour to drain. This should yield about 1 cup liquid in bowl.
2. Mix drained yogurt with remaining ingredients and refrigerate until serving, up to 3 days. ■

NUTRITION

SOUR CREAM PANCAKES W. APPLES:
PER SERVING: CALORIES 190 (104 from fat); FAT 12g (sat. 6g); CHOL 95mg; SODIUM 335mg; CARB 17g; FIBER 1g; PROTEIN 4g

GINGER LIME MIMOSAS:
PER SERVING: CALORIES 171 (1 from fat); FAT 0g (sat. 0g); CHOL 0mg; SODIUM 6mg; CARB 22g; FIBER 0g; PROTEIN 0g

BAKED GLAZED HAM:
PER SERVING: CALORIES 233 (94 from fat); FAT 10g (sat. 4g); CHOL 67mg; SODIUM 1704mg; CARB 7g; FIBER 0g; PROTEIN 26g

HAM & PARSLEY RISOTTO:
PER SERVING: CALORIES 209 (132 from fat); FAT 15g (sat. 9g); CHOL 28g (sat. 16g); CHOL 79mg; SODIUM 412mg; CARB 58g; FIBER 1g; PROTEIN 30g

AGED GOUDA BISCUITS:
PER SERVING: CALORIES 209 (14 from fat); FAT 15g (sat. 9g); CHOL 4mg; SODIUM 58mg; CARB 9g; FIBER 2g; PROTEIN 5g

GREEN PEAS W. MINT:
PER SERVING: CALORIES 62 (14 from fat); FAT 1g; CHOL 4mg; SODIUM 58mg; CARB 58g; FIBER 1g; PROTEIN 5g