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# VORACIOUSLY

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## Baking for all

In good times and in bad, baking is a source of comfort. The need to slow down as you measure. The hypnotic mixing and kneading. The repetitive motion. The aromas. The taste. Biting into a baked good can transport you back in time or ground you in the present. You'll get satisfaction and a smile, not to mention wonderful food to share with family and friends.

Since we launched *Voraciously* more than two years ago, we've been providing a wide array of baking recipes well suited for beginning and intermediate bakers. We're confident, though, that even advanced cooks will enjoy the results and perhaps learn something new along the way. These recipes don't require much in the way of special equipment or obscure ingredients. Many require only one bowl. All are completely doable and utterly delicious.


Among the dozen options here, you'll find a nice mix of sweet and savory. The tempting desserts include a cake worth splurging on maple syrup for, fudgy (gluten-free!) brownies, nutty tahini blondies and a classic shortbread that's perfect with a cup of tea. Consider this booklet your own personal bread course, too. We've got no-knead recipes for focaccia, English muffins and a whole-wheat Dutch oven round. A nostalgic tray of pillowy dinner rolls will help you get your kneading fix and has quickly become a fixture on many of our staff's holiday tables.

Whether you dive into as many of them as possible now or hold onto this collection for future days, we hope you'll find a few new favorite recipes to return to again and again. Nothing for us could be sweeter than that.

– **Becky Krystal**, *lead writer, Voraciously*

P.S. We always appreciate your feedback. You can email us with recipe questions and more at [voraciously@washpost.com](mailto:voraciously@washpost.com) or email me directly at [becky.krystal@washpost.com](mailto:becky.krystal@washpost.com).

This *Voraciously* recipe collection was also brought to you by: Joe Yonan, Food and Dining editor; Matt Brooks, *Voraciously* editor; Ann Maloney, recipes editor; Amanda Soto, art director; Jennifer Beeson Gregory, photo editor; Kari Sonde, Food editorial aide; and Jim Webster, copy editor.

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# Pillowly Pull-Apart Dinner Rolls

**Makes 24 rolls**

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These soft, golden, buttery puffs are the rolls of your dreams. They bake beautifully into each other, which contributes both height and an attractive pull-apart appearance.

Even better, the dough comes together quickly and easily in a stand mixer, with only one relatively short rise after they've been shaped.

**Make Ahead:** The shaped dough needs 45 minutes to rise at room temperature. The rolls can be made 2 days in advance and stored in a plastic bag at room temperature. To serve, reheat the rolls, uncovered, in a 275-degree oven until warm, about 10 minutes.

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**4 tablespoons (63 grams/ ½ stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces, plus more for greasing the pan and melted for brushing**

**1 ½ cups (360 milliliters) whole milk**

**¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**

**4 ½ cups (643 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for shaping the rolls**

**2 ¼ teaspoons instant yeast (one 7.5-gram/0.25-ounce packet)**

**1 teaspoon kosher salt**

**2 large eggs**

## Step 1

Butter a 15-by-10-by-1-inch jellyroll pan, then line with parchment paper and butter the paper.

## Step 2

In a small saucepan over medium heat, heat the 4 tablespoons of butter, the milk and sugar to about 130 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.

## Step 3

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix together 2 cups (284 grams) of the flour, the yeast and salt on low speed just until combined. Add the hot milk mixture and mix until combined and smooth, then mix on low speed for about 2 minutes, until a smooth, loose dough has formed. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rest for 10 minutes.

## Step 4

With the mixer motor on low speed, add the eggs and mix until incorporated. Add the remaining 2 ½ cups (359 grams) of flour and continue to mix for about 6 minutes. At first, the dough will look ragged, but it will become smooth after several minutes of mixing. The dough will be soft and will pull away from the sides of the bowl.

## Step 5

Using about 2 ½ tablespoons (48 grams) dough for each roll, shape each portion (lightly flour your palms between each shaping, if necessary) into a smooth 1 ¾-inch ball. To encourage the best rise, try to form a "gluten cloak" by pulling the top of the dough down and around each ball before pinching and sealing around the bottom.



Place the rolls on the prepared pan, spacing them about ¾ inch apart in four rows of six. Cover with a clean kitchen towel and let rise for 45 minutes. The rolls will look puffy and will almost be touching, but most of the rising will take place during baking.



## Step 6

About halfway into the rise, preheat the oven to 375 degrees with a rack in the middle.

## Step 7

Bake the rolls for about 20 minutes, until the rolls are touching and fill the pan; they will turn golden brown. Brush with the melted butter. Using a spatula, slide them onto a wire rack or serve directly from the pan, warm or at room temperature.







# Fudgy Flourless Brownies

**16 servings**

makes one 8-inch slab

**8 tablespoons (113 grams/1 stick)  
unsalted butter**

**¼ cup (21 grams) unsweetened  
natural cocoa powder**

**½ cup (100 grams) packed light  
brown sugar**

**½ cup (113 grams) granulated  
sugar**

**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

**2 large eggs**

**¼ cup (35 grams) cornstarch**

**½ teaspoon salt**

**½ cup (113 grams) semisweet or  
bittersweet chocolate chips (may  
substitute chopped chocolate)**

These gluten-free brownies taste of rich, unadulterated chocolate. At the lower end of the baking-time range (25 minutes), they are gooey and reminiscent of a molten lava cake. A few minutes longer in the oven and their crumb is more like a chewy brownie.

Expect the chocolate chips to sink in the batter, which is why the foil sling is so important. We like that texture of crunchy chocolate at the bottom, but unless you line the pan, the slab of brownies will not release easily.

Nuts are not included here, but you could scatter them, finely chopped, on the surface before baking.

**Make Ahead:** The brownies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days, or in the refrigerator for up to a week. For long-term cold storage, wrap them in plastic wrap and freeze, for up to 6 months.

## Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Press a long piece of aluminum foil into an 8-inch square pan to create a sling, leaving several inches of overhang on two opposite sides so you can use it to pull the baked brownie slab out of the pan. Grease the foil with cooking oil spray.

## Step 2

Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Stir in the cocoa powder until thoroughly smooth and well incorporated.



## Step 3

Remove the pan from the heat; stir in the brown sugar, granulated sugar and vanilla extract, until smooth. Break the eggs into the saucepan, stirring until well

incorporated. Add the cornstarch and salt, stirring until smooth, then fold in the chocolate chips. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, spreading it evenly into the corners.



## Step 4

Bake (middle rack) for 25 to 30 minutes, until the edges of the brownies are firm, the top is shiny and the center is just set. Let cool (in the pan) on a wire rack for 1 hour.

## Step 5

For easier slicing, you may then chill the brownie slab in the freezer for up to 1 hour. Use the foil sling to lift out the brownie slab before cutting into 16 pieces.







# No-Knead English Muffins

**Makes 12 muffins**

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These no-knead English muffins are chock-full of the nooks and crannies so many of us adore in the breakfast staple. A fairly wet dough and a long overnight rise contribute to the signature texture as well. Whole-wheat flour and a little honey make for a tender, flavorful interior.

This recipe requires nothing in the way of special equipment. It is simply stirred together in a bowl, dropped onto a baking sheet and griddled on cast iron. There's no need for rings to cook the dough, as it holds its shape well.

**Make Ahead:** The dough needs to rise at room temperature for 4 to 5 hours. The shaped muffins then rise for 12 to 48 hours in the refrigerator. Store the cooked muffins in an airtight container for up to a week at room temperature, a month in the refrigerator or 3 months in the freezer.

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**2 cups (285 grams) bread flour**

**1 cup (142 grams) whole-wheat flour**

**2 ¾ teaspoons kosher salt, preferably Diamond Crystal (may substitute half as much table salt by volume)**

**1 ¼ teaspoons instant yeast (not rapid-rise)**

**1 ½ cups (355 milliliters) cold milk (any percentage)**

**¼ cup (100 grams) honey**

**1 large egg white, cold**

**1 cup (142 grams) fine cornmeal, for dusting**

**2 tablespoons (30 grams) unsalted butter, bacon fat or oil, plus more as needed**

## Step 1

In a large bowl, whisk together the bread flour, whole-wheat flour, kosher salt and yeast until well combined. Add the milk, honey and egg white, stirring with a flexible spatula until smooth, about 5 minutes. The dough will be fairly wet but elastic, and will start to come together into a ball. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a plate (or transfer to a lidded container) and set aside at room temperature (70 degrees) for 4 to 5 hours, until the dough is spongy, light and has more than doubled in size. (The timing is flexible depending on your schedule.)



## Step 2

Generously cover a large, rimmed baking sheet with an even layer of cornmeal (you may use about half to three-quarters of it). With a large spoon, dollop out a dozen 2 ⅔-ounce (75 grams) portions of dough; it's perfectly fine to do this by eye. If you'd like, pinch the irregular blobs with slightly dampened fingers to tidy their shape. Sprinkle with additional cornmeal, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 12 to 48 hours.

## Step 3

Heat a 12-inch cast-iron skillet or griddle over medium-low heat. (If you have an electric griddle, preheat it to 325 degrees.) When it's sizzling-hot (check by sprinkling a few small drops of water), add half the butter and melt. Griddle the muffins until their bottoms are golden brown, about 8 minutes, rotating each muffin 180 degrees halfway through so the outer edges are moved to the center for even browning. Flip with a square-end spatula and griddle until the other side is golden brown, as well. Depending on the size of your skillet or griddle, you may have to cook the muffins in batches, adding ½ to 1 tablespoon of butter to the skillet each time.



Transfer the muffins to a wire rack until cool enough to handle, then split the muffins by working your thumbs around the edges to pull them open a little at a time. Toast before serving.







# Proper British Shortbread

## 24 servings

makes one 9-by-13-inch slab

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**16 tablespoons (2 sticks/  
226 grams) unsalted butter,  
softened**

**½ cup (113 grams) granulated  
sugar**

**1 ⅔ cups (226 grams) all-purpose  
flour**

**½ cup (113 grams) semolina**

**2 tablespoons demerara sugar**

Shortbread is the perfect, delicate nibble to go along with a cup of tea (or coffee, if you must). We were completely entranced by this Mary Berry recipe, which boasts a sandy, melt-in-your-mouth quality. Another bonus: It requires only five ingredients, a single bowl and mere minutes to assemble.

Berry uses semolina for extra crunch, but for an even more meltaway mouthfeel, try cornstarch or rice flour. We liked the flavor and texture of the demerara sugar on top, although you can leave it off if you prefer.

**Make Ahead:** The shortbread will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

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### Step 1

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees with a rack in the middle position. Have ready a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.

### Step 2

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the butter and sugar on low speed just until combined. (You're only looking to incorporate them, not add a lot of air to the mixture.) Alternately, you can use a handheld mixer or even a wooden spoon in a large bowl. Stir in the flour and semolina on low speed until combined. The dough won't come together into a cohesive mass, so don't be surprised if it's crumbly. Clumps, however, should form when pressed together between your fingers. You can briefly knead the dough by hand, if needed.



### Step 3

Press the mixture into the pan, level and smooth the top using the bottom of a dry measuring cup or the back of a spoon. Sprinkle with the demerara sugar, and bake for about 30 to 35 minutes until pale golden brown.



### Step 4

Remove from the oven and let the pan cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. With the tip of a sharp knife, score the slab to form 24 triangles (we accomplished this with three rows of four squares that we then cut in half diagonally). Let the shortbread cool completely in the pan before lifting the pieces out.







# Fast Focaccia

## 6-8 servings

makes one 9-inch-round loaf, plus dough for one more

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If you've never baked bread before, you will especially love making this crisp on the outside, chewy on the inside riff on a traditional Italian focaccia — because it is simple and requires no kneading.

The recipe makes enough dough for two loaves, because for the same amount of work, why not? Bake them both at once, or chill half of it for a later second loaf. For the second loaf, you will need additional olive oil and rosemary.

You'll need one or two 9-inch round cake pans with sides at least 2 inches tall. If you don't have a baking stone, you can use a heavy-duty baking sheet instead, or just bake the bread directly on the oven rack.

**Make Ahead:** The dough needs to rest at room temperature for 2 hours. It will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, or in the freezer for a few months. The shaped loaves need to rest and rise at room temperature for 35 minutes before they are baked.

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**1 ½ cups plus 2 tablespoons (385 milliliters) lukewarm water**

**¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**1 ½ teaspoons (8 grams) dried instant yeast**

**2 ¼ teaspoons (16 grams) kosher salt**

**1 tablespoon (11 grams) granulated sugar**

**3 ¾ cups (18 ounces; 511 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**

**1 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary (from 1 to 2 stems)**

**Coarse or flaky salt, for sprinkling**

## Step 1

Use a wooden spoon or sturdy spatula to stir together the water, half the oil, the yeast, kosher salt, sugar and flour in a large (5- or 6-quart) bowl, forming a rough dough. Transfer to a container with a lid; partially cover and let it rest for about 2 hours on the counter. (Alternately, if you have a lidded container large enough for mixing, you can assemble the dough in there.) The dough can then be used right away, but it is much easier to handle once it has been thoroughly chilled. The dough can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

## Step 2

Place a baking stone on the middle oven rack; preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Pour the remaining oil into a 9-inch cake pan and evenly coat the bottom of the pan. Dust the surface of the refrigerated dough lightly with flour, then pull half of it off (it will be about a 1-pound portion; the dusting makes this task easier, as the dough is sticky). Dust the half you are using with more flour and quickly shape it into a ball by stretching the surface of the dough around to the bottom on all four sides, rotating the ball a quarter-turn as you go.



## Step 3

Use your hands to flatten it into a ½-inch-thick round 6 to 7 inches in diameter. Place the dough top side down in the cake pan, moving it around a bit to coat it with the oil. It will not reach the edges of the pan. Turn the dough over, cover the pan with plastic wrap, and let the dough rest for 10 to 15 minutes.

## Step 4

Use your hands to gently push the dough to the edges of the cake pan. Sprinkle with the rosemary and coarse or flaky salt, as desired.



Cover with plastic wrap, and allow the dough to rest and rise for 20 minutes.

## Step 5

Place the cake pan on the heated baking stone in the oven. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the focaccia crust is medium brown and feels dry and firm on the surface. The baking time will vary depending on the focaccia's thickness.

## Step 6

Use a rounded knife to loosen the loaf from the edges of the pan, then transfer the focaccia to a cutting board. Cut into wedges and serve warm, or allow to cool completely.







# Sour Cream Maple Cake With Maple Buttercream

**12-16 servings**

makes one 9-inch cake

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## FOR THE CAKE

**Unsalted butter, softened, for greasing the pan**

**2 ½ cups (344 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting the pan**

**1 teaspoon baking powder**

**½ teaspoon baking soda**

**½ teaspoon kosher salt**

**1 cup (240 milliliters) dark-grade pure maple syrup**

**½ cup (120 milliliters) canola oil**

**½ cup (120 milliliters) whole milk, at room temperature**

**2 large eggs, at room temperature and lightly beaten**

**¼ cup (50 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar**

**¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**

**¼ cup (60 grams) sour cream, at room temperature**

**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

## FOR THE FROSTING

**8 tablespoons (1 stick/113 grams) unsalted butter, softened**

**2 cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar**

**3 tablespoons sour cream, at room temperature**

**2 tablespoons dark-grade pure maple syrup, plus more for drizzling**

**½ teaspoon kosher salt**

If you like maple-syrup drenched pancakes, you're going to love this dessert. The sour cream in both the cake and frosting temper what could otherwise be a cloying confection. The cake comes together in minutes in a single bowl, which you can clean out and use to make an equally speedy frosting. The frosting is a nice touch (it's fairly rich, which is why we have suggested as many as 16 servings), but know that the cake on its own would make a great addition to a brunch spread.

Look for dark-grade maple syrup, such as Grade A dark color/robust flavor or Grade A very dark/strong flavor.

**Make Ahead:** The baked cake can be made a day in advance and stored, tightly wrapped, at room temperature.

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### Step 1

Make the cake: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees with the rack in the middle. Butter and flour a 9-inch square baking pan. Line the pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over the sides of the pan (the overhang will give you handles to lift the cake out after it's baked).

### Step 2

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add the maple syrup, oil, milk, eggs, brown sugar, granulated sugar, sour cream and vanilla, and stir with a rubber spatula just until combined and no streaks of flour remain. (There will be some lumps in the batter; this is okay.) Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Tap the pan on the counter eight times to release air bubbles.

### Step 3

Bake 30 to 35 minutes, until deep golden and a cake tester or toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, covering with foil after 20 minutes to prevent excessive browning. (It may dip in the middle, don't worry.) Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Using the parchment overhang as handles, remove the cake from the pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

### Step 4

Make the frosting: In the same (cleaned-out) bowl you used to make the cake, beat the butter with a handheld mixer on medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. (You can do this in a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, if you prefer.) Gradually add the confectioners' sugar, beating until combined. Add the sour cream, maple syrup and salt, and beat at medium-high speed until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. Do not overbeat.



### Step 5

Spread the frosting onto the cooled cake. Drizzle with additional maple syrup and serve.







# British Scones

**Makes 17-20 two-inch scones**

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These are the kind of scones you'll find gracing many an English table during afternoon tea: dainty, fluffy and light. They are chockablock with dried currants, but just as nice without them.

You'll need a 2-inch biscuit cutter. If you don't have a stand mixer, you can quickly work the butter into the flour mixture by hand or with a pastry cutter.

Serve with clotted cream and jam.

**Make Ahead:** The dough needs to rest at room temperature for 30 minutes. The scones are best eaten freshly baked, but the portions of dough can be refrigerated overnight, or individually wrapped (unbaked or baked) in plastic wrap and frozen in a zip-top bag for up to two months. Defrost before baking or reheating; for the latter, tent loosely with aluminum foil and warm through in a 350-degree oven.

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**About 4 cups (584 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more as needed**

**¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons (84 grams) granulated sugar**

**2 tablespoons (20 grams) baking powder**

**8 tablespoons (113 grams/1 stick) chilled, unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes**

**About 1 cup (143 grams) dried currants (optional)**

**About 1 cup (240 milliliters) whole milk, plus more for brushing**

**About ¾ cup (180 milliliters) heavy cream**

## Step 1

Combine the flour, sugar and baking powder in the bowl of a stand mixer or handheld electric mixer. Beat on low speed just to blend. Add the chilled butter; beat on low speed for 4 or 5 minutes, until the mixture starts to look crumbly with some large chunks. Stop to scrape down the bowl.

## Step 2

Add the currants, if using; beat on low speed until evenly distributed.



## Step 3

Pour in the milk and heavy cream; beat on low speed for several seconds, just until the liquids are incorporated, to form a soft dough.

## Step 4

Lightly flour a work surface. Transfer the dough there and pat it to an even thickness of about 1 inch. Cover loosely with a clean kitchen towel; let it rest for 30 minutes.



## Step 5

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone liner.

Flour the edges of your biscuit cutter, then use it to cut out 17 to 20 scones (straight down, without twisting), arranging them at least 1 inch apart on the baking sheet as you work and re-flouring the cutter each time. Try to reroll the scraps no more than once as the subsequent portions of dough may not rise as much in the oven.

## Step 6

Brush the tops of the scones with milk. Bake (middle rack) for about 16 minutes, turning the sheet from front to back halfway through, until lightly golden.



## Step 7

Transfer them to a wire rack to cool for a few minutes before serving, or cool completely before storing.







# No-Knead Whole-Wheat Bread

## 10-12 servings

makes one large boule-type loaf

With very little work, this recipe and method will yield a crusty, chewy and beautifully aerated loaf. The bread is baked in a Dutch oven, which helps produce a crunchy, flavorful crust.

Baker Jim Lahey calls for a ratio of 3 parts bread flour to 1 part whole-wheat flour. Feel free to experiment with the proportion of whole wheat, but keep in mind that too much might lead to a texture that is too gritty or dense.

**Make Ahead:** The dough needs to rest and rise twice; first for 12 to 18 hours, and after it's shaped, for 1 to 2 hours (all at room temperature).

**300 grams (2 ¼ cups) bread flour, plus more for the work surface**

**100 grams (¾ cup) whole-wheat flour**

**1 ¼ teaspoons table salt**

**½ teaspoon dried instant yeast**

**300 grams (1 ⅓ cups) cool water (55 to 65 degrees)**

**Wheat bran or cornmeal, for dusting (may use additional flour)**

## Step 1

Stir together the flours, salt and yeast in a medium bowl. Add the water; use a wooden spoon or your hands to mix until you have a wet, sticky dough, about 30 seconds. Cover the bowl and let the mixture sit at room temperature until its surface is dotted with bubbles and the dough has more than doubled in size, 12 to 18 hours.

## Step 2

Generously dust a work surface with flour. Use a rubber spatula or lightly floured hands to scrape the dough onto the surface in one piece. Use your lightly floured hands to lift the edges of the dough up and in toward the center. Gently pinch the pulled-up dough together, cupping the edges in your hands as needed to nudge it into a round (don't worry about making it a perfect circle).



## Step 3

Place a clean dish towel on your work surface; generously dust the towel with wheat bran, cornmeal or flour. Gently place the dough on the towel, seam side down. If the dough feels sticky, dust the top lightly with more wheat bran, cornmeal or flour. Fold the ends of the towel loosely over the dough to cover it. Place the dough in a warm, draft-free spot to rise for 1 to 2 hours. The dough is ready when it has almost doubled in

size. When you gently poke the dough with your finger, it should hold the impression. If it springs back, let it rise for an additional 15 minutes.



## Step 4

About half an hour before you think the second rise is complete, position a rack in the lower third of the oven and place a 4 1/2- to 5 1/2-quart heavy Dutch oven or pot with a lid in the center of the rack. Preheat to 475 degrees. Use pot holders to carefully remove the preheated pot from the oven, then lift off the lid. Uncover the dough. Quickly but gently invert it off the towel and into the pot, seam side up. (Use caution — the pot and lid will be very hot.) Cover with the lid; bake (lower rack) for 30 minutes.

## Step 5

Remove the lid; continue baking until the loaf is a deep chestnut color but not burnt, 15 to 30 minutes more. (If you like a more precise measure, the bread is done when an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the bread registers 200 to 210 degrees.) Use a heatproof spatula or pot holders to carefully lift the bread out of the pot and place it on a rack to cool thoroughly before serving or storing.







# Chocolate Chunk Tahini Blondies

**24 servings**

makes one 9-by-13-inch slab

**8 tablespoons (113 grams/1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled**

**1 ½ cups (297 grams) light brown sugar**

**2 large eggs**

**1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste (may substitute vanilla extract)**

**1 cup (256 grams) tahini, stirred well**

**1 ½ cups (212 grams) all-purpose flour**

**1 teaspoon fine sea salt**

**1 teaspoon baking powder**

**3 ½ ounces dark chocolate, finely chopped (some bigger pieces and wispy shavings are fine; see headnote)**

**Flaky sea salt, for sprinkling**

Tahini gives these blondies a nutty and faintly bitter flavor that counteracts what can otherwise be an overly sweet treat. It also contributes to a tender, slightly gooey center. The recipe comes together quickly in a single bowl.

We liked using chopped dark chocolate here, but you can use your choice of bars or chips. To double down on the sesame, you could even use pieces of halvah (plain, marble or chocolate-covered), or add a sprinkling of black and white sesame seeds to the surface of the batter before you bake.

**Make Ahead:** Tightly wrapped or in an airtight container, the blondies can be stored at room temperature for several days. For long-term cold storage, wrap the bars tightly in plastic wrap and freeze for up to several months.

## Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9-by-13-inch baking dish or pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the short sides to help lift out the baked slab. Grease the foil with cooking oil spray.

## Step 2

Whisk together the melted butter and brown sugar in a mixing bowl. Add the eggs, whisking until thoroughly incorporated, then whisk in the vanilla bean paste and tahini.



## Step 3

Use a flexible spatula to stir in the flour, salt and baking powder until just combined. Then fold in the chopped chocolate. Do not

overmix; the consistency should be like a soft dough. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, spreading it evenly into the corners and smoothing the surface. Sprinkle with the flaky sea salt.



## Step 4

Bake (middle rack) for 22 to 25 minutes, until the top is slightly puffed, firm and golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

## Step 5

Let cool slightly before lifting out the slab and transferring to a wire rack (discard the foil once cooled). When still slightly warm or completely cool, cut the slab into 24 pieces of equal size.







# Any-Fruit Cobbler

6-8 servings

**4 tablespoons (113 grams/ ½ stick) unsalted butter**

**4 cups fresh or defrosted fruit, such as blackberries, peaches, raspberries, blueberries, plums, cherries or apricots**

**1 cup (226 grams) granulated sugar, or more as needed**

**1 cup (142 grams) all-purpose flour**

**2 teaspoons baking powder**

**Pinch fine sea salt**

**1 cup (240 milliliters) whole milk**

**1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**

First published in The Post as Meme's Blackberry Cobbler, this is the dessert present at every holiday table in chef Virginia Willis's family. Meme was the family name for her grandmother, who made the cobbler with whatever fresh fruit was available when Willis and her sister would spend summer vacations on the road with their grandparents.

This is a batter cobbler; when poured into a hot cast-iron skillet, the batter immediately crisps and swells. Serve warm with whipped cream, creme fraiche or ice cream.

**Make Ahead:** Because this is served in the skillet in which it was made, it's better to make the cobbler the same day it will be served.

## Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

## Step 2

Place the butter in a large (10- to 12-inch) cast-iron skillet and place in the oven so the butter melts; this should take 5 to 7 minutes.

## Step 3

Meanwhile, place the fruit in a large mixing bowl. Use a potato masher to mash the fruit just enough so that it releases some of its juices. If the fruit is tart, sprinkle a little sugar on top.



## Step 4

Whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt in a separate medium bowl. Add the cup of sugar, milk and vanilla extract, stirring until well incorporated.

## Step 5

Remove the skillet from the oven. Carefully pour the melted butter from the skillet into the batter, stirring to combine, then pour the batter all at once into the skillet. Add the fruit and juices to the center of the batter. Bake (middle rack) for 35 to 40 minutes, until the top is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the tender crumb comes out mostly clean.



## Step 6

Serve warm, straight from the skillet.







# All-Purpose Muffins

**Makes 12 muffins**

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Made with melted butter instead of oil, these simple muffins have an incredibly tender crumb. The plain batter takes to a number of add-ins; see the **VARIATIONS**, below, for ideas.

The total volume of add-ins should be no more than 1 to 1 ½ cups for fresh fruit, and 1 cup for chocolate chips, dried fruit and/or nuts.

**Make Ahead:** The muffins are at their best when freshly made, but they can be tightly wrapped in plastic or stored in an airtight container for a day or two. Freeze, individually wrapped in plastic and sealed in a zip-top bag, for up to several months.

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**8 tablespoons (113 grams/1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled**

**1 large egg**

**1 cup (240 milliliters) milk (any kind)**

**½ cup (113 grams) granulated sugar**

**1 tablespoon baking powder**

**¼ teaspoon salt**

**2 cups (284 grams) all-purpose flour**

## Step 1

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line the wells (12) of a standard-size muffin pan with baking paper liners.

## Step 2

Pour the melted butter into a mixing bowl; whisk in the egg until thoroughly blended and then whisk in the milk. (At this point, you would also mix in additions such as lemon zest and/or vanilla or almond extract.) Whisk in the sugar.



## Step 3

Add the baking powder, salt and one-third of the flour, whisking until completely incorporated. Whisk in another third of the flour. Use a rubber spatula to fold in the last of the flour to form a thick, mostly smooth batter. Gently fold in any add-ins to the batter, if using, such as blueberries and chocolate chips.



## Step 4

Distribute the batter evenly among the wells. (A No. 16 disher makes quick work of this, or you can use a ¼-cup measure.) Bake (middle rack) for about 20 minutes, until the muffins have risen well and are golden; the tip of a sharp knife inserted into the center of one should come out clean. Transfer to a wire rack to cool (in the pan) briefly if serving right away, or cool completely if storing.

## VARIATIONS:

**For blueberry muffins**, add 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest to the liquids. After mixing the batter, fold in 1 ½ cups rinsed, dried and picked-over (or frozen) blueberries. Use 2 tablespoons of sugar mixed with ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon to sprinkle over the tops of the muffins before baking.

**For lemon-poppy seed muffins**, add 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest to the liquids. Mix in 2 tablespoons poppy seeds after the last addition of flour.

**For chocolate chip muffins**, add 2 teaspoons vanilla extract to the liquids. After mixing the batter, fold in 1 cup of your choice of chocolate chips. Sprinkle the tops of the muffins with sugar (2 tablespoons total) before baking.

**To make old-fashioned jam muffins**, add 2 teaspoons vanilla extract and 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest to the liquids. Fill the paper liners in the pan halfway with batter and dollop about a teaspoon of your favorite jam or preserves in the center. Add the rest of the batter, being careful to cover the jam completely.







# Creamy Orange Cookies

**Makes about 30 cookies**

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These cookies were inspired by Creamsicles, the classic frozen treat that features an orange popsicle layer encasing vanilla ice cream.

We found some variation in how much the cookies spread. So don't be surprised if a single batch features some thin and large with others taller and rounder. It didn't bother us, especially because some people prefer one or the other. Expect a relatively soft and chewy cookie either way.

**Make Ahead:** The cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for several days. Cookie dough portions can be frozen for up to 3 months; defrost overnight in the refrigerator or bake directly from frozen, adding baking time as needed

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**8 tablespoons (113 grams/1 stick) salted butter, at room temperature**

**1 ½ cups (340 grams) granulated sugar**

**½ cup (120 grams) sour cream**

**½ cup (120 milliliters) heavy whipping cream**

**1 tablespoon finely grated zest and 3 tablespoons juice from 1 large orange**

**2 ½ cups (355 grams) all-purpose flour**

**1 teaspoon baking soda**

**1 teaspoon baking powder**

**1 cup (227 grams) white chocolate chips**

## Step 1

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven; preheat to 350 degrees. Line three baking sheets with parchment paper. (If you have one or two baking sheets, bake in batches and allow each pan to cool for at least 10 minutes before the next use; also, line with fresh parchment paper.)

## Step 2

Combine the butter, sugar, sour cream, heavy whipping cream and orange juice in the bowl of a stand mixer or use a handheld electric mixer; beat on medium speed for about 2 minutes, until creamy and free of lumps. Add the orange zest and beat on low speed, just until evenly distributed. Stop to scrape down the bowl.



## Step 3

Add the flour, baking soda and baking powder; begin mixing on low speed and then increase to medium speed and beat just until incorporated, to form a soft, relatively sticky dough. Reduce the speed to low; add the white chocolate chips and beat until incorporated.

## Step 4

Use a disher (such as a No. 40) or two large tableware spoons to drop mounds of about 1 ½ tablespoons' worth of dough on the baking sheets, spacing the mounds at least 2 inches apart. (The spacing is important, as these cookies tend to spread.)



## Step 5

Bake (upper and lower racks for multiple baking sheets; re-position for middle rack when baking one sheet at a time) for 10 to 11 minutes, or until the cookies are golden brown around the bottom edges, rotating the baking sheets from top to bottom and front to back halfway through. Let cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely before serving.



# Credits

## **Pillowy Pull-Apart**

### **Dinner Rolls**

Adapted from "Fast Breads: 50 Recipes for Easy, Delicious Bread," by Elinor Klivans (Chronicle Books, 2010).

Photos by Tom McCorkle for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for The Washington Post

Calories: 140; Total Fat: 3 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 25 mg; Sodium: 60 mg; Carbohydrates: 23 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 3 g; Protein: 4 g.

## **Fudgy Flourless Brownies**

Adapted from "American Cookie," by Anne Byrn (Rodale Books, 2018).

Photos by Deb Lindsey for The Washington Post; food styling by Amanda Soto/The Washington Post

Calories: 160; Total Fat: 9 g; Saturated Fat: 5 g; Cholesterol: 40 mg; Sodium: 85 mg; Carbohydrates: 20 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 16 g; Protein: 1 g.

## **No-Knead English Muffins**

Adapted from a recipe by Stella Parks at Serious Eats.

Photos by Tom McCorkle for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for The Washington Post

Calories: 220; Total Fat: 3 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 5 mg; Sodium: 270 mg; Carbohydrates: 44 g; Dietary Fiber: 3 g; Sugars: 8 g; Protein: 7 g.

## **Proper British Shortbread**

Adapted from "Fast Cakes: Easy Bakes in Minutes," by Mary Berry (Quercus, 2019).

Photos by Tom McCorkle for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for The Washington Post

Calories: 140; Total Fat: 8 g; Saturated Fat: 5 g; Cholesterol: 20 mg; Sodium: 0 mg; Carbohydrates: 16 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 6 g; Protein: 2 g.

## **Fast Focaccia**

Adapted from "Artisan Pizza and Flatbread in Five Minutes a Day," by Zoë François and Jeff Hertzberg (Thomas Dunne Books, 2011), as posted on ArtisanBreadInFive.com.

Photos by Stacy Zarin Goldberg for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for The Washington Post

Calories: 160; Total Fat: 6 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 160 mg; Carbohydrates: 23 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 0 g; Protein: 3 g.

## **Sour Cream Maple Cake With Maple Buttercream**

Adapted from a recipe in the September-October issue of Bake From Scratch magazine.

Photos by Tom McCorkle for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky/The Washington Post

Calories (based on 16 servings): 340; Total Fat: 15 g; Saturated Fat: 6 g; Cholesterol: 45 mg; Sodium: 150 mg; Carbohydrates: 51 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 22 g; Protein: 3 g.

## **British Scones**

Adapted from pastry chef Shael Mead.

Photos by Tom McCorkle for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for The Washington Post

Calories (based on 20 servings): 200; Total Fat: 8 g; Saturated Fat: 5 g; Cholesterol: 25 mg; Sodium: 10 mg; Carbohydrates: 27 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 5 g; Protein: 4 g.

## **No-Knead Whole-Wheat Bread**

Adapted from "My Bread: The Revolutionary No-Work, No-Knead Method," by Jim Lahey (W.W. Norton, 2009), as posted on LeitesCulinaria.com.

Photos by Stacy Zarin Goldberg for The Washington Post; food styling by Bonnie Benwick/The Washington Post

Calories (based 12 servings): 120; Total Fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 240 mg; Carbohydrates: 24 g; Dietary Fiber: 2 g; Sugars: 0 g; Protein: 5 g.

## **Chocolate Chunk Tahini Blondies**

Adapted from a recipe by Danielle Oron at IWillNotEatOysters.com; loosely inspired by a recipe from Cook's Illustrated.

Photos by Tom McCorkle for The Washington Post; food styling by Amanda Soto/The Washington Post

Calories: 200; Total Fat: 10 g; Saturated Fat: 4 g; Cholesterol: 30 mg; Carbohydrates: 24 g; Dietary Fiber: 1 g; Sugars: 14 g; Protein: 4 g.

## **Any-Fruit Cobbler**

Adapted from Virginia Willis's "Bon Appetit, Y'all" (Ten Speed Press, 2008).

Photos by Stacy Zarin Goldberg for The Washington Post; food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for The Washington Post

Calories (based on 8 servings): 260; Total Fat: 7 g; Saturated Fat: 5 g; Cholesterol: 20 mg; Sodium: 50 mg; Carbohydrates: 47 g; Dietary Fiber: 2 g; Sugars: 33 g; Protein: 3 g.

## **All-Purpose Muffins**

Adapted from a recipe at NickMalgieri.com, based on an original recipe from Cara Tannenbaum.

Photos by Deb Lindsey for The Washington Post

Calories: 190; Total Fat: 9 g; Saturated Fat: 5 g; Cholesterol: 40 mg; Sodium: 65 mg; Carbohydrates: 25 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 9 g; Protein: 3 g.

## **Creamy Orange Cookies**

Adapted from "Cookie Remix: An Incredible Collection of Treats Inspired by Sodas, Candies, Ice Creams, Donuts and More," by Megan Porta (Page Street Publishing, 2018).

Photos by Stacy Zarin Goldberg for The Washington Post

Calories: 160; Total Fat: 7 g; Saturated Fat: 5 g; Cholesterol: 15 mg; Sodium: 65 mg; Carbohydrates: 23 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 14 g; Protein: 1 g.