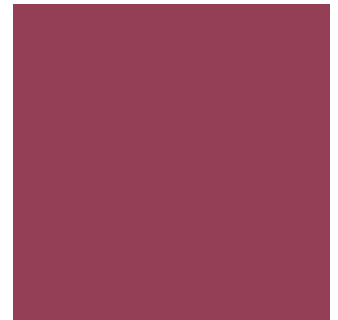




Pasta & Such
Family Favorites
Oodles of Noodles
Rice & Dumplings
Asian Fare



Pasta & Such

Comfort food is what fills this chapter: noodles of all kinds, dumplings & rice. Though there are noodle recipes elsewhere, this chapter has main dish recipes including pasta and pierogis from my parent's generation along with more recent favorites. From Alexia's Spaghetti Pie to Joe's Turkey Tetrazzini and two versions of chicken and rice, these pages include Cajun and Chinese dishes as well.

Ingredients

oo Flour is used for pasta and combined with bread flour to make pizza crust. It is very finely ground and tends to produce more chew than all-purpose flour. You can substitute all-purpose flour if you need to.

Achiote Seeds & Annatto Powder. This produces the red color and distinctive flavor found in Mexican rice dishes and some sauces. Ground Achiote seeds make Annatto powder, so if you have a grinder for spices, it's best to just buy the seeds and grind them as you need them.

Anchovies: Usually rinsed and patted dry to remove some of the oil, then chopped fine and mashed into a paste with some salt, anchovies just add a salty bit of richness to the dish.

Any "Broth" = Low- or No-Sodium Broth. If you use salted broth or stock, be sure to hold back on any salt called for in the recipe and then season to taste before serving.

Ben's Converted Rice. This was the only rice Mom & Dad used. This rice is par-cooked, which results in less sticky rice, and some recipes, like Mom & Dad's Chicken and Rice, are not the same without it.

"Butter" = Salted Butter. Unsalted butter is specified when needed.

"Flour" = Unbleached, All-Purpose Flour. Any other type of flour is specified.

Hunt's Sauce. Mom swore by it, so I keep it in her recipes. You can substitute other brands, if you like.

"Olive Oil" vs "Extra Virgin Olive Oil." Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVO) has a fruity taste and works well in dressings and other uncooked dishes. Regular olive oil is better for cooking.

White Pepper. This type of pepper has a distinctive flavor. Use it wherever it is called for; just keep a small grinder of it handy.

Family Favorites

Mom & Dad's Chicken and Rice
Aunt Helen's Stuffed Rigatoni
Aunt Jennie's Spaghetti and Meatballs
Grandma Virgo's Homemade Noodles

Ooodles of Noodles

Skillet Penne with Sausage & Spinach
Alexia's Beef Stroganoff
Alexia's Spaghetti Pie
Joe's Turkey Tetrazzini
IPenne all'Arrabbiata
Baked Pasta with Sausage
Pasta a la Norma

Pasta with Cream Sauce Four Ways:

Spicy Shrimp & Garlic Cream
Pasta with Mushrooms & Cream
Creamy Cajun Pasta
Pasta with Sausage & Cream
Rigatoni with Sausage and Fennel

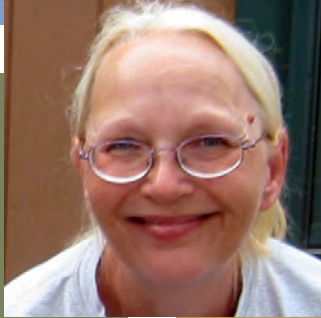
Rice & Dumplings

Amelia Yaros' Chicken Rice
Aunt Jo's Parsley Dumplings
Grandma Vernarsky's Pierogi
Virginia Gregorczyk's Pierogi
Helen Budgin's Pierogi
Jambalaya

Asian Fare

Char Siu Pork
Singapore Rice Noodles
Joe's Fried Rice
Beef & Broccoli

*Brought to you by Anna Virgo,
Amelia Yaros, Dorothy Vernarsky,
Helen Budgin, Virginia Gregorczyk,
and . . .*



Alexia Goodreau



Jennie Sposito



Toni & Nick Dorochoff



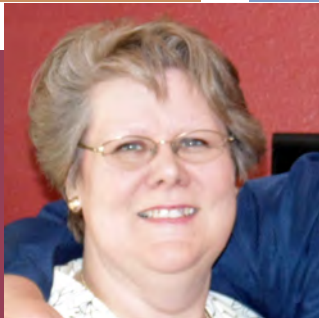
Joe Beason



Louie & Cheryl Willekens



Helen Herbach



Mary Thomas



Carol Baisden



Jody Buchanan



Josephine Purevich

Family Favorites

Mom & Dad's Chicken and Rice

Dad would save chicken backs, necks, and wings to make this rice dish. Sometimes he would include the gizzards and livers. When we were older, I remember Mom and Dad using legs sometimes as well. You can customize to your taste, though gizzards and livers are included as optional here. The recipe is also updated to use chicken thighs instead of backs and wings, but be sure to include the bones and skin to flavor the dish.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4 to 6.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 325°; have ready a 7-qt Dutch oven or roasting pan with lid.
- ☐ The recipe doubles easily.
- ☐ You can substitute 1 ½ lbs of chicken wings for the thighs, or use a mix of both.
- ☐ If using gizzards or livers, trim them to remove gristle or fat.



Ingredients

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 4 or 5 bone-in chicken thighs with skin | 2 medium onions, chopped |
| ½ lb chicken gizzards, livers, or a mix (optional) | 1 15 oz can Hunt's sauce |
| Salt | 3 cups Ben's converted rice |
| 2 TBS butter | 4 ½ cups water or chicken broth |

Method

1. Salt all chicken pieces and parts liberally.
2. Fry the onions in butter with a pinch of salt until brown. Place in the Dutch oven.
3. Add the chicken, broth or water and 1 TBS salt. Cover and bake for 2 hours.
4. Add Hunts sauce, a half cup of water & rice, spreading rice evenly.
5. Cover and return to the oven until rice is done, about 1 hour.
6. Remove bones & skin before serving. Mix well, as the gizzards tend to sink to the bottom of the pot.

Aunt Helen's Stuffed Rigatoni



I remember Mom and Aunt Helen drinking their Giacobazzi while stuffing these noodles in our kitchen. Aunt Helen would make sauce using pork neck bones, but Mom would use Ragù. Thanks to our cousin, Jody Buchanan for providing her grandmother's recipe.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4 to 6.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 350°; have ready a greased high-sided baking dish.
- ☐ If you can find Colavita "Large Rigatoni" or Seggiano "Paccheri," the stuffing will go more quickly because the noodles are larger.

Ingredients

- 1 lb rigatoni, under-cooked by a few minutes
- 1 lb ground beef
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced or put through a press
- Salt, pepper & oregano
- 1 egg, beaten
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- 1 cup (4 oz) Romano cheese
- 2 (24 oz) jars pasta sauce

Method

1. Drain and rinse the cooked pasta and cool.
2. Brown the ground beef with a large pinch of salt and pepper, breaking the pieces as small as possible, and drain. Place in a large bowl.
3. Cool the meat, then mix in garlic, pepper & oregano to taste, then add the breadcrumbs & cheese. Mix in the well-beaten egg.
4. Place a layer of sauce in the prepared baking dish. Stuff the noodles and lay them in the dish in a single layer.
5. Cover the noodles with pasta sauce, repeating layers until all stuffed noodles are used. (More sauce is better, but there may be sauce left.) Sprinkle any remaining meat mixture on top before adding the final layer of sauce.
6. Cover and bake for 1 hour.

Aunt Jennie's Spaghetti and Meatballs

Aunt Jennie and Grandma Josephine Sposito made sauce with all kinds of meat, including squirrel and rabbit. Alexia started cooking this version with meatballs for the family, but she didn't like frying so many little meatballs, so she made them much bigger. That is why I used to call this "Spaghetti and Baseballs."



Ingredients

2 TBS olive oil
1 large yellow onion, chopped medium
6 cloves garlic, minced
2 28 oz cans tomato purée
Water or red wine
½ cup dry bread crumbs
½ cup milk
1 ½ lbs ground beef
1 egg
About 1 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
Salt & pepper

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6 to 8.
- ☐ Have ready a 7-qt Dutch oven or stainless steel pot.
- ☐ Instead of browning meatballs on the stove, you can brown them in a 450° oven for 5 to 10 minutes.

Method

1. Heat the oil in the pot over medium-high heat until shimmering; add the onion and sauté until it begins to brown. Add the garlic, and stir for a minute or two.
2. Set aside about ⅓ of the onions and garlic.
3. Add the tomato purée to the Dutch oven. Rinse the cans with ½ can of water or wine into the pot.
4. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a simmer. Cook uncovered to reduce and thicken the sauce.
5. In a large bowl, combine the bread crumbs with milk until softened. Add the reserved onions & garlic, beef, egg, ½ cup cheese and salt and pepper to taste. Lightly form into meatballs.
6. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and cook meatballs on all sides, adding to the sauce as they brown.
7. Continue simmering sauce for a total of 2 hours. When ready to serve, add about ¼ cup of cheese, stirring to incorporate. Serve with your choice of pasta, passing additional cheese.

Grandma Virgo's Homemade Noodles

Aunt Jo would marshal the whole family after Christmas to make a huge batch of noodles to celebrate the New Year using her mother, Anna Virgo's, recipe. Angel hair is the general favorite, but these taste great regardless of the shape.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 15 to 20.
- ☐ A pasta roller makes things easier.

Ingredients

15 ¾ cups flour
14 eggs
1 ½ cup water
½ cup (olive?) oil

Method

1. This is my Dad's method for a much smaller batch of noodles. Carol, I need your help here!
2. Place the flour in a mound on a large wooden board or clean table.
3. Make a well in the middle and crack the eggs in. Add the water and oil.
4. Mix the eggs & liquid with a fork, picking up flour as you go until a dough is formed. Knead until smooth.
5. Roll out the dough between ⅛" and ¼" thick and cut into strands.
6. Spread noodles on newspaper and let dry for an hour or so before cooking them.

Oodles of Noodles



Skillet Penne with Sausage & Spinach

Cheryl and Louie visited Joe and me for a cooking weekend back in the early 2000s. That was the first time they made this dish, and it has been a staple of the Willekens family ever since. The recipe is from Cook's Illustrated (May/June 2007).

Before getting started:

☐ Serves 4.

☐ If you use pork sausage, drain the fat after browning.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 TBS olive oil | ½ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, rinsed and chopped fine |
| 1 lb hot or sweet Italian turkey or chicken sausage, casings removed | 1 bag (6 oz) baby spinach |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced | ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese |
| 2 ¼ cups chicken broth | ¼ cup pine nuts, toasted |
| 2 ¼ cups water | |
| 8 ounces penne or ziti (about 2 ½ cups) | |

Method

1. Heat oil in 12" non-stick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add sausage, break it up with a spoon, and cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
2. Stir in broth, water, pasta, tomatoes, and ½ tsp salt. Increase heat to high and cook, stirring often, until pasta is tender and sauce has thickened, 15 to 18 minutes.
3. Stir in spinach, a handful at time, and cook until wilted. Off heat, stir in nuts & Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Alexia's Beef Stroganoff

Another stand-by in the Goodreau family rotation, this recipe from the Betty Crocker recipe card set became a family favorite. An updated version is available on bettycrocker.com.

Before getting started:

☐ Serves 6 to 8.

☐ Try using pappardelle, wide Italian noodles, instead of regular egg noodles.

☐ You can use 1 cup minced fresh onion instead of dried. Just brown them in butter before adding mushrooms in step 2.



Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 lbs beef tenderloin or sirloin steak | ¼ cup ketchup |
| ¼ cup butter | 1 ½ tsp garlic salt |
| 1 6 oz can sliced mushrooms | ⅓ cup flour |
| 2 10.5 oz cans beef broth | 2 cups sour cream |
| ⅓ cup instant minced onion | 8 to 10 oz medium noodles, cooked and tossed with 3 TBS butter |

Method

1. Cut meat across grain into ¾" slices, then into 3" by ¼" strips.
2. Melt butter in a large skillet. Add mushrooms with some salt & pepper and cook 5 minutes.
3. Remove mushrooms and brown meat in two batches in same skillet, seasoning with salt & pepper.
4. Blend flour into ⅔ cup of broth until smooth and set aside.
5. Add remaining broth to the skillet with mushrooms, onion, ketchup, and garlic salt. Cover and simmer 15 minutes.
6. Add flour mixture and, stirring constantly, bring to a boil. Boil and stir 1 minute. Reduce heat, stir in sour cream and heat through.
7. Serve stroganoff over noodles.

Alexia's Spaghetti Pie

I gave Alexia this recipe many years ago, and she has been making this ever since. It was always a favorite with the Goodreaus.

Before getting started:

☐ Serves 4 to 6.

☐ Preheat oven to 350°; have a greased 9" deep dish pie pan ready.

Ingredients

8 oz spaghetti, cooked & drained	1 lb ground beef
1 TBS butter	Salt & pepper
1 egg, beaten well	1 jar pasta sauce
½ cup Parmesan cheese	8 oz (1 cup) grated mozzarella cheese

Method

1. Toss the warm pasta with the butter until melted and add the egg and cheese, mixing to combine well. Place mixture in the prepared pie pan, pressing noodles up around edge to form the "crust."
2. Brown ground beef, adding salt and pepper to taste. Drain fat and add spaghetti sauce.
3. Pour the beef mixture on the noodles, and top with mozzarella.
4. Bake for 20 minutes.



Joe's Turkey Tetrazzini

Joe really likes this creamy noodle recipe that is jazzed up with curry, and it has become a Thanksgiving leftover tradition at our place. He got the recipe from the New York Times Cooking website.

Before getting started:

☐ Serves 8 to 10.

☐ Preheat oven to 400°; have ready a greased 9" by 13" pan.

☐ Be sure to let the pasta rest before serving. It will be very creamy at first but will firm up as it cools.

Ingredients

1 lb spaghetti or linguine
4 TBS + 1 TBS unsalted butter
1 lb cremini mushrooms, sliced
8 cloves garlic, chopped
½ cup flour
1 TBS + 1 tsp curry powder
1 cup dry white wine
4 cups chicken or turkey broth
8 oz cream cheese, cut in pieces
3 cups shredded or chopped
leftover cooked turkey
1 cup frozen peas
1 heaping cup (4 oz) grated
Parmesan
1 cup (4 oz) grated fontina
Salt & black pepper
1 cup panko bread crumbs
½ cup slivered almonds

Method

1. Cook pasta in salted water about 2 minutes less than the package directs. Drain and rinse with cold water.
2. While pasta cooks, in a large Dutch oven, melt 4 TBS butter over medium-high heat and add the mushrooms and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until they have released their liquid and have started to brown, 8 to 11 minutes.
3. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute. Add the flour & curry powder & stir until everything is evenly combined, about 1 minute.
4. Add the wine and bring to a boil, whisking constantly, then simmer to reduce slightly, 2 minutes. Whisk in the chicken stock & bring to a boil, cooking until it thickens, about 5 minutes.
5. Reduce heat to low. Whisk in the cream cheese (don't worry if it appears curdled), then fold in the turkey, peas and the cheeses & season generously with pepper. Add the pasta and toss to combine. Add salt if needed.
6. Transfer to prepared baking dish. Melt the last TBS of butter in a small bowl in the microwave & toss with the panko & nuts. Sprinkle over the pasta and bake until bubbly and browned, about 25 minutes.
7. Let the casserole rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Penne all'Arrabbiata

Joe and I enjoyed this spicy dish when we were in Rome in 2016, and we found this recipe from Cook's Illustrated to share with friends.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4 to 6.
- ☐ Any short tube-shaped pasta will work here.
- ☐ Don't leave the anchovies out—they add richness to the sauce without tasting fishy.
- ☐ After coarsely chopping the anchovies, you can use a fork to mash them into a paste.
- ☐ To spice things up, use hot paprika, if you have it, but not smoked, and hot cherry peppers instead of the pepperocini

Ingredients

- 1 28 oz can whole peeled tomatoes
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup stemmed, minced pepperocini
- 2 TBS tomato paste
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 4 anchovy fillets, rinsed, patted dry, and minced to a paste
- ½ tsp paprika
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup grated Pecorino Romano, plus extra for serving
- 1 lb penne

Method

1. Pulse tomatoes and their juice in a food processor until finely chopped, about 10 short pulses.
2. Heat the next seven ingredients, along with ½ tsp each salt and pepper, in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until deep red in color, 7 to 8 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes and Pecorino and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally until thickened, about 20 minutes.
4. While the sauce simmers, cook the pasta al dente. Reserve ½ cup cooking water, drain pasta and return to pot. Add sauce and toss, adding some water if needed to thin the sauce. Serve, passing additional Pecorino.

Baked Pasta with Sausage

One weekend Alexia was visiting and we had eggplant from the garden, so I tried a recipe from the Food Network that used eggplant and pancetta. It came out greasy, so I substituted sausage and changed the method for cooking the eggplant to cut the fat. But you can leave the eggplant out entirely for a plain sausage pasta dish.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 450°; have ready a greased 9" by 13" pan.
- ☐ This recipe refers to the next one for Pasta alla Norma for instructions on how to prepare the optional eggplant.



Ingredients

- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 TBS extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- One 28 oz can and one 15 oz can whole plum tomatoes
- 1 cup water
- 4 large sprigs fresh basil
- 1 lb hot Italian sausage
- 1 medium eggplant, cut into ½-inch cubes (optional)
- 1 lb cavatappi or penne
- 3 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1 cup grated Parmesan

Method

1. Cook the pasta about 2 minutes less than package directions. It will finish cooking in the oven. Drain and rinse.
2. Heat 2 TBS oil in a medium saucepan or a 3-qt braise over medium heat. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, until the garlic is golden, about 2 minutes.

See Sausage, next page.

Pasta alla Norma

We did not eat eggplant when we were kids, but I found out as I got older that it has a richness in flavor and texture that makes it really nice in pasta.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4 to 6.
- ☐ This is another recipe where adding anchovies just bumps up the flavor without tasting fishy.
- ☐ You can use vegetable oil instead of regular olive oil to cook the eggplant, but don't use extra-virgin olive oil, because it burns at high heat.

Ingredients

- 1 large eggplant, 1 ¼ to 1 ½ lbs, cut into 1-inch cubes
- Kosher salt
- 3 TBS regular olive oil
- 4 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through a garlic press
- 2 anchovy fillets, minced
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 15 oz can crushed tomatoes
- 1 lb ziti, rigatoni, or penne
- 6 TBS chopped fresh basil
- 1 TBS extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 oz ricotta salata, shredded (1 cup)

Sausage, from previous page

- 3. Add both cans of tomatoes and rinse cans with water. Use a potato masher to crush the tomatoes. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer.
- 4. Reduce the heat slightly, add the basil and simmer rapidly, uncovered, until thickened, 15 to 20 minutes. Discard the basil and season with salt and pepper.
- 5. If using eggplant, follow **Steps 2 & 3 of the Pasta alla Norma recipe above** to prepare it, using a little less oil.
- 6. Cook the sausage in the skillet from the eggplant (if using) over medium

Method

- 1. Set water to boil to cook the pasta.
- 2. Toss eggplant with 1 tsp salt in a medium bowl. Line a large microwave-safe plate with coffee filters and spread the eggplant on the dish in an even layer. Microwave on high for five minutes, uncovered. Toss the eggplant so it will cook evenly and microwave on high again until dry to touch and slightly shriveled, about 5 more minutes. Wipe out bowl and transfer eggplant to it. Let cool slightly.
- 3. Drizzle the eggplant in the bowl with 1 TBS olive oil, tossing to coat. Heat 1 TBS olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add eggplant in a single layer. Cook, stirring carefully with a spatula until well browned and tender, about 10 minutes. Turn off heat. Remove filter paper from the plate; place the eggplant on it and set aside.
- 4. To the hot skillet add the last TBS olive oil, garlic, anchovies, and pepper flakes to warm them, stirring constantly for a few minutes, until garlic is pale golden. (If the skillet is not hot enough, place over low heat.)
- 5. Add tomatoes and return skillet to medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, 8 to 10 minutes.
- 6. When water boils, cook pasta al dente. Reserve ½ cup pasta water; drain pasta and return to pot.
- 7. While pasta is cooking, when sauce is thick, add eggplant to skillet and gently stir to incorporate. Bring to simmer over medium-heat and cook, until eggplant is heated through, 3 to 5 minutes.
- 8. Stir basil and 1 TBS extra virgin olive oil into sauce; adjust seasoning with salt. Add sauce to cooked pasta, adjusting consistency with reserved pasta water. Serve immediately, topped with ricotta salata.

heat until browned. Transfer to a large bowl using a slotted spoon.

- 7. Add the cooked pasta and eggplant, if using, to the bowl with the sausage. Mix in the tomato sauce, half of the mozzarella and half of the Parmesan to the bowl. Transfer the pasta mixture to the prepared baking dish and top with the remaining mozzarella and Parmesan.
- 8. Bake, uncovered, until browned, about 15 minutes. Let the pasta stand about 10 minutes before serving.

Pasta with Cream Sauce, Four Ways

I found a recipe for a shrimp pasta dish that used the method below for cooking the shrimp, and other recipes helped with getting the cream sauce right. The basics are used for four different dishes below and on the next page (Pasta with Mushrooms & Cream is pictured at right). Enjoy!

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 4.
- ☐ Have ready a 13" skillet, non-stick works well here.
- ☐ You can also try using rigatoni or other tube-shaped pasta instead of long pasta.



Spicy Shrimp Pasta with Garlic Cream

Ingredients

Main Component

- 1 lb shelled, raw, deveined shrimp
- 12 oz linguine, fettuccine, pappardelle or other long pasta

Fats

- 1 TBS olive oil
- 2 TBS butter

Seasonings

- Kosher salt
- Sweet or hot paprika
- Crushed red pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, minced

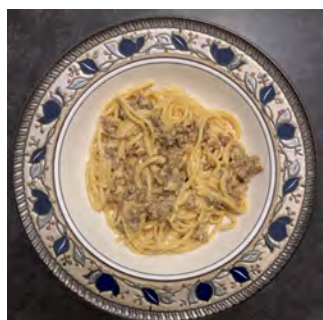
White pepper

To Finish the Dish

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup white wine
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan

Method

1. Lay shrimp on waxed paper, and sprinkle both sides with kosher salt and paprika. Set aside.
2. Cook pasta al dente, making sure water is well salted. Drain but do not rinse, and set aside.
3. Heat oil in the skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shrimp in a single layer, and sprinkle generously with paprika and pepper flakes. Cook one minute.
4. Turn shrimp, cook two more minutes, remove to a bowl, & set aside.
5. In the same pan, heat butter and sauté the onions with a pinch of salt until beginning to brown. Add garlic, cook one minute, and add wine.
6. Cook, stirring constantly, until wine reduces to barely cover the bottom of the pan. Add cream, and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring, for two minutes. Season with white pepper to taste.
7. Add Parmesan and stir to incorporate. When cheese has melted, add pasta and toss to coat, then add shrimp and toss to combine. Adjust seasonings before serving.



Pasta with Sausage and Cream.

Pasta with Mushrooms & Cream

Pictured above.

Ingredient Revisions

Main Component

- 1/4 oz dried Porcini
- 1 lb cremini mushrooms, sliced thin

Fat

- 4 TBS unsalted butter

Seasonings

- Kosher salt
- White pepper
- Thyme

Method

Instead of Step 1, rinse the dried porcini to remove any dust and soak in 1/2 cup of boiling water for 30 minutes. Chop the reconstituted mushrooms finely and strain the soaking water, reserving it for the sauce. **Then follow Step 2.**

For Step 3, use 2 TBS butter to sauté the fresh mushrooms, seasoning them with salt, thyme & white pepper. Cook until the liquid evaporates and the mushrooms brown. Add the chopped porcini and remove from pan. **Skip Step 4.**

Continue with Step 5, using the remaining 2 TBS butter, but when onions begin to brown, return the mushrooms to the pan. Add the wine and soaking liquid and **complete Steps 6 & 7** to finish the dish.

Rigatoni with Sausage and Fennel

Joe and I really liked this recipe by Ina Garten from the FoodNetwork.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6.
- ☐ Have a 7-qt Dutch oven ready.
- ☐ Crush the fennel seed with a mortar and pestle or use a small, heavy frying pan or rolling pin.

Ingredients

3 TBS good olive oil
3 cups chopped fennel (1 large bulb)
1 ½ cups chopped yellow onion
1 ¼ lb sweet loose Italian sausage
2 tsp minced garlic (2 cloves)
½ tsp whole fennel seeds, crushed
½ tsp red pepper flakes
Kosher salt and black pepper
1 cup dry white wine
1 cup heavy cream
⅔ cup half-and-half
2 TBS tomato paste
1 pound rigatoni
½ cup chopped parsley
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Method

1. Heat the olive oil in the Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the fennel and onion and sauté for 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender.
2. Add the sausage and cook for 7 to 8 minutes, crumbling it with a fork, until nicely browned. Add the garlic, crushed fennel seeds, red pepper flakes, 2 tsp salt, and 1 tsp black pepper and cook for one minute.
3. Pour in the wine, bring to a boil, and add the heavy cream, half-and-half, and tomato paste. Bring back to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer for 20 minutes, until the sauce has thickened.
4. Meanwhile, cook the rigatoni according to package directions. Drain and add to the sauce, stirring to coat the pasta.
5. Cook over low heat for 5 minutes to allow the pasta to absorb the sauce. Off the heat, stir in the parsley and ½ cup of the Parmesan. Serve hot in shallow bowls with the remaining ½ cup Parmesan on the side.

Creamy Cajun Pasta

Full recipe on previous page.

Ingredient Revisions

Main Component

½ lb shelled, raw, deveined shrimp
½ lb andouille sausage, sliced ¼ inch thick

Seasonings

Kosher salt
Hot or hot smoked paprika
½ tsp oregano
½ tsp thyme
¼ tsp cayenne
4 garlic cloves, minced
White pepper to taste

Method

Follow steps 1 and 2 above.

In Step 3, first brown the sausage in oil. Remove to a bowl and then season and cook the shrimp as directed, using hot or hot smoked paprika. Continue with Step 4.

In Step 5, when sautéing the onions, add the oregano, thyme & cayenne. Then continue with Step 5 and complete Steps 6 & 7 to finish the dish, adding sausage with the shrimp.

Pasta with Sausage & Cream

Full recipe on previous page.

Ingredient Revisions

Main Component

1 lb hot Italian sausage

Fat

2 TBS butter

Seasonings

Kosher salt
4 garlic cloves, minced
White pepper

Method

Skip Step 1, then follow Step 2.

Skip Steps 3, 4, and 5.

Then: Use the butter to sauté the onions over medium-high heat. When they begin to brown, add the sausage to the pan and cook till crumbled and brown. If there is more fat than a film on the bottom of the pan, remove some. Add the garlic, cook one minute, then add the wine and follow Steps 6 & 7 to finish the dish.

Rice & Dumplings

Amelia Yaros' Chicken Rice

Amelia worked the Tuesday night St. Joe's bingo with Mom, and she would show up to potluck dinners with a roaster full of this rice.

Before getting started:

☐ Serves 8 to 10 as a side.

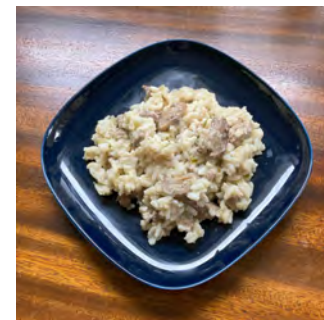
☐ Add additional milk to the rice if it seems dry.

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 TBS butter | 1 can condensed cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup |
| 1 medium onion, chopped fine | 1/2 soup can of milk |
| 1/2 bell pepper, chopped fine | 2 1/2 cups Ben's Converted Rice |
| 1 rib celery, chopped fine | 4 1/2 cups water or broth |
| Salt & pepper | 2 tsp salt |
| Garlic powder | 1 medium onion, sliced & 1 12 oz canned sliced mushrooms, sautéed in butter (optional) |
| 1 lb total, chicken gizzards & livers, cleaned & finely chopped | |
| 1 cup chicken broth | |

Method

1. In a 3-quart sauce pan over medium-high heat, melt butter and add the onion, bell pepper, and celery. Season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste & sauté until soft.
2. Add gizzards, livers & broth to the pot. Bring to a boil, and reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and cook until tender, about an hour.
3. While the meat and vegetables simmer, use



the water or broth & salt to cook the rice per package directions. If rice seems dry during cooking, add up to 1/2 cup of liquid.

4. Add soup and milk to the gizzard mixture and simmer until hot.
5. Pour liquid over cooked rice and mix well with optional mushrooms and onions, if using.
6. Hold in a 200° oven covered in foil, until ready to serve.

Aunt Jo's Parsley Dumplings

Aunt Jo only made these light and fluffy dumplings with beef stew. They were so good, the kids would fight over who got the last one!.

Before getting started:

☐ Serves 8.

Ingredients

- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup milk
- 2 cups sifted flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup minced parsley
- 1/4 cup shortening

Method

1. Beat egg and milk in small bowl until well combined. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt to combine. Add the parsley and shortening to the flour mixture and cut in until mixture resembles corn meal.
3. Add the egg mixture to the bowl and mix only until all flour is dampened.
4. Drop by spoonfuls into soup, then cover and cook for 12 to 15 minutes until cooked through.

Jambalaya

Based on jambalaya recipes from Chef Paul Prudhomme's Louisiana Kitchen.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6 to 8.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 350°; have ready an ungreased 8" square baking dish, preferably glass.
- ☐ One ½" slice of a deli ham is about ½ lb, enough for this dish.
- ☐ I prefer using chicken thighs, but substitute breasts if you like.

Ingredients

Seasoning Mix

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1 ½ tsp salt | 1 cup each, chopped |
| 1 ½ tsp white pepper | onions, celery & bell peppers |
| 1 tsp cayenne | 1 TBS minced garlic |
| 1 tsp dried thyme | 2 bay leaves |
| ½ tsp black pepper | 2 ½ cups chicken broth |
| ¼ tsp rubbed sage | 1 14 oz can whole tomatoes, chopped, ½ cup of juice reserved |

Dish

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 TBS unsalted butter | 1 ½ cups Ben's Converted Rice |
| ½ lb ham, ½" dice | |
| ¾ lb boneless chicken, ½" dice | |

Method

1. Combine seasoning ingredients in a small bowl.
2. Melt butter in a 3-qt saucepan over high heat. Add the ham, cook & stir until meat starts to brown, about 3 minutes. Add the chicken & cook until brown, about 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Add the seasoning mix, garlic, and half of the chopped vegetables. Cook until tender, about 5 to 8 minutes, scraping pan bottom as needed.
4. Stir in ½ cup of the broth and cook about 1 minute, scraping bottom of pan. Add the tomatoes, reserved juice & remaining vegetables. Remove from heat & stir in the remaining stock and rice, mixing well.
5. Transfer to pan and bake uncovered until rice is tender but still firm, about 1 hour. Remove from oven. Stir well & remove bay leaves. Let sit 5 minutes; adjust seasonings before serving.

Helen Budgin's Pierogi

Cousin Carol's school friend, Barry Budgin, was of Polish descent and his mother Helen shared this recipe for pierogi with Aunt Jo in the 1960s. These became a family tradition to get the family together to make dozens of them just before Christmas, so everyone can have a taste of home for the holidays.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Makes about 36 pierogies.
- ☐ Use fillings from the other pierogi recipes in this book or search the internet for your own.
- ☐ If using filling recipes from this book, be sure they are cold or at room temperature as directed in the recipes.

Ingredients

- 8 egg yolks
- 1 TBS salt
- 1 cup water
- 8 cups flour
- 1 ½ cups shortening
- ¾ lb cooked, cooled potatoes
- Fillings of your choice
- Melted butter

Method

1. Set water to boil in a large pot.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the first three ingredients together until well blended.
3. In a large bowl, cut the shortening into the flour until it resembles corn meal. Mix in cooked potatoes until well combined. Add yolk mixture and mix well. Turn dough onto a floured surface and knead, adding flour as necessary, for 5 minutes.
4. Roll dough thin (about 1/8") and cut into 3" or 4" circles. Place a scant TBS of filling on each, fold over and seal edges.
5. When water boils, add about 1 TBS salt to the water and cook the pierogis until done. Drain them and add to a pan with melted butter to brown them slightly. Serve hot.

Grandma Vernarsky's Pierogi and Fillings

Mary Thomas and I have been close friends since high school, and I got to know her grandparents, Emery and Dorothy Vernarsky. Mary shared the following about this recipe: "Grandma's recipe always called for Farmer's cheese, but over time she was less and less able to find it in the market, so she used dry cottage cheese with small curds. The fillings were cooked right after lunch, and the method for mixing the dough was the same for pierogi and noodles, that mountain of flour on the board that transformed from an egg volcano into something wonderful!"



Before getting started:

- ☐ Makes 3 to 4 dozen pierogi.
- ☐ Preheat oven to 200°; have ready a large pot, a large board, some extra flour & a bench scraper to help with sticky dough!
- ☐ Other equipment: a glass of water to seal the pierogi, a baking sheet to hold the dumplings, and a non-stick skillet to brown the cooked pierogi.
- ☐ Uncooked pierogi can be frozen solid on a cookie sheet, then placed in bags. Use within three to five months.
- ☐ Try using white pepper for the potato filling.

Ingredients

Cabbage Filling

- 1 large head cabbage
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup + 2 TBS butter
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper

Potato & Cheese Filling

- 2 russet potatoes (about 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs)
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cups grated Colby cheese (about 5 oz)

Sweet Cheese Filling

- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb farmer's cheese or dry, small curd cottage cheese
- Grated rinds from one small or medium lemon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar or more to taste

Dumplings

- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour, plus more for the board
- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ TBS cold water

Method

Fillings

Fillings should be made ahead and be at room temperature before filling the pierogi. Use about 1 filling recipe per batch of dough. You can also use the fillings on the facing page, but chill them before use.

Cabbage

Core & finely shred the cabbage, removing any hard ribs. Sauté in skillet with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter until cabbage wilts & starts to dry. Add more butter with salt and pepper and cook until soft.

Potato & Cheese

Peel and cut potatoes into large chunks. Cover with water, add salt, and simmer until very soft. Drain, return potato to pot, and mash, adding salt and pepper to taste. Add the cheese and mash until smooth.

Sweet Cheese

Mix all ingredients thoroughly until smooth. Cheese pierogi can be sprinkled with a bit of sugar or a mix of sugar and grated lemon zest.

Dumplings

1. Have fillings ready and let them cool to room temperature.

2. Start a large pot of water on the stove, adjusting heat so it will be boiling when needed.
3. Mound flour on bread board, make a well in the mound, crack in the eggs & add the salt and water. Without collapsing the mound of flour, use a fork to whip the egg, water, salt mixture. Once blended thoroughly, use your fingers to start gradually mixing in the flour, maintaining the flour mountain for as long as you can.
4. Once you have a sticky dough, pull in the remaining flour walls and using your hands and a bench scraper as needed, knead the dough to slowly incorporate the remaining flour.
5. Test the dough by pinching it with clean, dry fingers, kneading in more flour until the dough does not stick to your fingers. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside to rest at least 15 minutes.
6. Cut dough into quarters, roll each quarter into a rope about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter. Cover three of

See Pierogi, next page.

Virginia Gregorczyk's Pierogi

When we were growing up, Mom & Dad would treat us on some Fridays during Lent with pierogies from the Knights of Columbus building on 5th Avenue in Gary. I found this recipe that recreates them in the 1977 edition of St. Joseph the Worker (Croatian) Parish's Our Favorite Recipes. The recipe calls for both sour cream and cream cheese, which makes the dough easy to work with and keeps the wrappers tender.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Makes about 36 pierogi.
- ☐ See the recipe on the facing page for equipment & storage, which is mostly the same for these.
- ☐ You can use the fillings from Grandma Vernarsky's recipe, or try those below.
- ☐ The fillings here work better cold.

Ingredients

Kraut & Mushroom Filling

- ½ medium head cabbage
- ⅓ cup + 1 TBS butter
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 oz brown mushrooms, chopped
- 4 oz sauerkraut, squeezed dry and chopped

Prune Filling

- One prune per dumpling

Dumplings

- 2 ½ cups flour, plus more for the board
- 2 egg yolks
- ¼ cup water
- 4 TBS sour cream
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 oz cream cheese, cut in 8 pieces at room temperature

Method

Fillings

Kraut & Mushroom

Follow the method for the cabbage filling on preceding page using ⅓ cup butter. Cool to room temperature. Sauté onion & mushrooms in remaining butter with a pinch of salt. Chop cooled cabbage and add to pan with sauerkraut. Heat, adjust seasoning and refrigerate until cold.

Prune

Place prunes in a small pot and cover with water. Bring to a simmer to soften fruit. Drain and refrigerate until cold.

Dumplings

1. Start a large pot of water on the stove, adjusting heat so it will be boiling when needed.
2. Place flour in a medium bowl, making a well in the middle.
3. In a small bowl, whisk the remaining dumpling ingredients except for cream cheese until smooth. Pour into well in flour and scatter cream cheese over flour. Using a rubber spatula and then your hands, mix into a cohesive, but lumpy dough. Wrap in plastic and let rest on the counter 15 to 30 minutes.
4. Flour the work surface. Cut off ⅓ of the dough and roll into a 9" by 12" rectangle. Cut into 12 3" squares. Working with a few at a time, roll the squares again to make them as thin as possible.
5. Place a TBS of filling (or one prune) on each square, fold the corner over to make a triangle & seal edges, folding the edge of the dough over or under to pinch the sides. Place on baking sheet, and repeat using the rest of the dough.
6. Continue with **Step 8** for the recipe at right.

Pierogi, from previous page

- the ropes with plastic, and place the fourth one in the center of your board. Cut the rope into pieces about 1½" long, and place all but one back under the cover so it doesn't dry out.
7. Roll each piece of dough into a ball, and then flatten it with your hands or a rolling pin into a 4" to 5" circle. Place a rounded TBS of filling in center of the circle, dip your finger in water and dampen the edges and press to seal. Gently shape the pierogi and press edges one more time, lay it on the baking sheet, and cover
 - with plastic. Repeat using the rest of the dough.
 8. Bring stock pot of water to a boil. For Grandma Vernarsky's recipe only, add 1 TBS salt.
 9. Gently lower a dozen or so pierogi into the water. Cook for 5 to 6 minutes until wrapper is tender.
 10. While they cook, heat some butter in the skillet, use a slotted spoon to gently drain dumplings and place them in the skillet.
 11. Move the browned pierogi to an oven-proof bowl and keep warm in the oven.
 12. Repeat steps 9, 10 & 11 until all pierogi are cooked.

Asian Fare

Char Siu Pork

This is also known as Chinese BBQ pork. This red and well-seasoned meat is frequently used as an ingredient in other Chinese dishes. Joe uses this recipe from the Woks of Life website. The next two recipes use this pork: Fried Rice and Singapore Rice Noodles.



Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 8.
- ☐ Use a piece of pork with some good fat on it.
- ☐ Heat oven to 475° with rack in the top third of the oven.
- ☐ You can heat maltose in the microwave to make it easier to work with.
- ☐ Line a large sheet pan with foil and put racks on it to hold the meat so air can circulate underneath as well. Coat racks with cooking spray.
- ☐ Throughout the roasting time, check the char siu every 10 minutes or so and reduce the oven temperature if it looks like it is burning.

Ingredients

3 pounds boneless pork shoulder/pork butt

Marinade

¼ cup granulated white sugar
2 tsp salt
½ tsp five spice powder
¼ tsp white pepper
½ tsp sesame oil
1 TBS Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry
1 TBS soy sauce
1 TBS hoisin sauce
2 TBS molasses
1/8 tsp red food coloring (optional)
3 cloves finely minced garlic

Basting Sauce

2 TBS reserved marinade
2 TBS honey
1 TBS hot water

Method

1. Cut the pork into long strips or chunks about 2 to 3 inches thick. Don't trim any excess fat, as it will render off and add flavor.
2. Combine the marinade ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Reserve 2 TBS of the marinade.
3. Rub the pork with the remaining marinade in a large bowl or baking dish. Cover and refrigerate overnight, or at least 8 hours.
4. Combine the reserved marinade with the honey and 1 tablespoon hot water to make a sauce for basting the pork.
5. Place the pork on the prepared rack, leaving as much space as possible between pieces. Pour 1 ½ cups water into the pan below the rack to prevent drippings from burning.
6. Transfer the pork to your preheated oven. Roast for 10 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 375° for 15 more minutes.
7. Flip the pork. If the bottom of the pan is dry, add another cup of water. Turn the pan 180 degrees to ensure even roasting. Roast another 15 minutes.
8. Baste the pork, flip it, and baste the other side as well. Roast for a final 10 minutes.
9. By now, the pork has cooked for 50 minutes total. It should be cooked through. (You can use a meat thermometer to confirm the internal temperature of the pork has reached 160°.)
10. If the meat is not caramelized to your liking, you can turn the broiler on for a couple minutes to crisp the outside to add some color or flavor.
11. When done, remove from the oven and baste with the last bit of reserved BBQ sauce. Let the meat rest for 10 minutes before slicing and enjoying.

Singapore Rice Noodles

When I lived in Miller, I used to meet my dear friend, Mary Thomas, for lunch at a Chinese restaurant in Merrillville, which is where I first had what they called Hot Singapore Chow Mai. It's sort of like fried rice, but made with skinny noodles and flavored with curry. I developed a taste for it, and when Joe made char siu to use in his egg rolls, I decided to find a good recipe for these noodles to use up the char siu. This recipe from a You-Tube video by Souped Up Recipes fit the bill.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 2.
- ☐ Have ready a wok or a 13" non-stick frying pan.
- ☐ Set up a couple racks on a rimmed baking sheet to help the noodles dry.
- ☐ Measurements are metric by weight, so you will need a kitchen scale. The extra effort is worth it.
- ☐ When chopping the vegetables, you can combine the carrot and garlic and the bell pepper, onion, and bean sprouts, as they are added at the same time.



Ingredients

Noodles and Protein

200 grams of dried rice stick noodles
6 cups boiling water
150 grams (5.3 oz) of shrimp
Salt
White (or black) pepper
2 eggs
70 grams of char siu thinly sliced

Sauce

1 TBS of soy sauce
1 TBS of fish sauce
1 TBS curry powder (more or less to taste)
2 tsp of oyster sauce
1 tsp of sugar
1 tsp ground turmeric

Remaining Ingredients

Peanut or canola oil
42 grams (1 ½ oz) of carrot, julienned
2 cloves of garlic sliced thinly
70 grams (2 ½ oz) of multi-color bell pepper, cut into strips
42 grams (1 ½ oz) of onion, sliced thinly
42 grams (1 ½ oz) of bean sprout
28 grams (1 oz) of garlic chive, cut into 1 ½ inch long pieces

Method

1. Bring 8 cups of water to a boil then turn off the heat. Soak the rice noodles for 2 to 8 minutes depending on the thickness. For example, medium thick noodles took about 5 minutes. You can taste test them: they should be a little bit chewy at the center.
2. Remove the noodles from the water and spread them on the racks to cool and dry a bit. Do not rinse the noodles—they need to stay as dry as possible after cooking.
3. Season the shrimp with a pinch of salt and white pepper to taste. Set aside to rest.
4. Crack the 2 eggs in a bowl, season with salt and white pepper, and beat them well until well combined.
5. Thoroughly mix all the sauce ingredients in a bowl.
6. Turn the heat to high and heat your wok until smoking hot. Add a few TBS oil and swirl it around to coat the bottom of the wok. Pour in the egg and wait for it to set. Then break the egg into big pieces. Push the egg to the side so you have room to sear the shrimp. The wok is super hot, it only takes 20 seconds for the shrimp to turn pink. Push the shrimp to the side and toss the char siu for 10-15 seconds over high heat. Take all the proteins out and set them aside.
7. Add 1 more TBS oil to the wok, along with the garlic, and carrot. Give them a quick stir then add the noodles. Fluff the noodles over high heat for a few minutes.
8. Add the sauce, along with remaining vegetables except for the garlic chives. Introduce the protein back into the wok. Quickly stir to make sure the flavor is well combined. Once you don't see any white rice noodles, add the garlic chives and give it a final toss.
9. Before serving, taste, adding salt, soy sauce, or a bit of chili oil if desired.

Joe's Fried Rice

Another recipe from the Woks of Life website, this is one of Joe's favorites. He makes it a bit differently each time, depending on what ingredients are on hand, but it is always good.

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6.
- ☐ Have ready a wok or a 13" non-stick frying pan.
- ☐ If you are using leftover rice, be sure to bring it to room temperature before cooking.
- ☐ You can also add other ingredients, like shrimp or cubed chicken. Just season them and cook in the wok with a small amount of oil separately after you cook the eggs.

Ingredients

Sauce

- 1 TBS hot water
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1/4 tsp white pepper

Proteins, Rice & Aromatics

- 2 eggs
- 5 cups cooked jasmine rice
- 1 TBS oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 pound char siu, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup bean sprouts
- 2 scallions, chopped

Method

1. Prepare jasmine rice to result in 5 cups of cooked rice following package directions, adding 1 tsp oil to the water. Set the rice aside.
2. Combine the hot water, honey, sesame oil, shaoxing wine, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and white pepper in a small bowl. This is the sauce that you'll be adding to the rice, and it's much easier to have it combined and ready to go before you start cooking.
3. Crack the 2 eggs in a bowl, season with salt and white pepper, and beat them well until well combined.
4. Turn the heat to high and heat your wok until smoking hot. Add a few TBS oil and swirl it around to coat the bottom of the wok. Pour in the egg and wait for it to set. Then break the egg into big pieces and remove from the wok.
5. Take your cooked rice and fluff it with a fork or with your hands to get rid of any big clumps.
6. With the wok over medium heat, add a TBS oil, sauté the onions until translucent, then stir in the char siu. Add the rice and mix well, cooking until the rice is heated through.
7. Add the sauce mixture and salt and mix with a scooping motion until the rice is evenly coated with sauce. Break up any remaining clumps of rice as you stir. The rice should be hot by this time.
8. Toss in your mung bean sprouts, scrambled eggs, and scallions. Mix thoroughly for another minute or two and serve!

Beef & Broccoli

*Joe has made this a number of times, and it's the best we've had.
The recipe is also based on one from the Woks of Life website.*

Before getting started:

- ☐ Serves 6.
- ☐ Have ready a wok or a 13" non-stick frying pan.
- ☐ Cut the steak across the grain, and cut each slice into bite-sized pieces.
- ☐ The baking soda helps to tenderize the meat. The original recipe has this as optional, but there is no down side to having tender beef.

Ingredients

Beef and Marinade

- 1 pound flank steak, sliced ¼-inch thick
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 3 TBS water
- 1 ½ tsp cornstarch
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp oyster sauce

Sauce

- ⅔ cup chicken stock, warmed
- 1 ½ tsp granulated or brown sugar
- 1 ½ TBS soy sauce
- 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1 TBS oyster sauce
- ½ tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp white pepper

To Finish the Dish

- 4 cups broccoli florets
- 3 TBS vegetable oil, divided
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- ¼ teaspoon ginger, grated or minced (optional)
- 1 TBS Shaoxing wine
- 2 ½ TBS cornstarch, mixed with 3 tablespoons water
- Cooked rice for serving

Method

1. In a bowl, mix the baking soda and water and add the sliced beef. Massage the beef with your hands until all the liquid is absorbed. Mix in the remaining marinade ingredients and set aside to marinate for at least 30 minutes.
2. Mix the sauce ingredients and set aside.
3. Bring a pot of water to a boil and blanch the broccoli for 30 to 60 seconds, less time for crunchy florets and more if you prefer a more tender bite. Drain and place in a bowl large enough to hold it and the meat. Set aside.
4. Heat a wok over high heat until smoking. Add 2 TBS oil, add the beef, and sear on both sides until browned, about 2 to 3 minutes. Turn off the heat, remove the beef from the wok, and add to the bowl with the broccoli.
5. Set the wok over medium heat and add another TBS oil along with the garlic and ginger (if using). Stir the garlic and ginger for 5 seconds and then pour the Shaoxing wine around the perimeter of the wok.
6. Add the sauce mixture you made earlier. Stir the sauce around the sides of the wok to deglaze it, incorporating any fond from stir-frying the beef into the sauce). Bring the sauce to a simmer. Give the cornstarch and water mixture a final stir to ensure it's well combined, and drizzle the mixture into sauce while stirring constantly. Allow sauce to simmer and thicken for 20 seconds.
7. Toss in the broccoli and beef, along with any juices. Mix everything together over medium heat until the sauce coats the beef and broccoli. If the sauce seems thin, turn up the heat and reduce it further, or add a bit more cornstarch slurry. If the sauce is too thick, add a splash of chicken stock or water. Serve with plenty of steamed rice.

