



FOOD FOR SHARING WINE FOR ENJOYING

Avery Cooks, Pairs and Sips

Recipes, travels, and the pleasure of a good table

FOR AVERY

For the cook who makes
the whole table feel welcome.

*For every beautiful plate, every generous pour,
and every ordinary evening made into an occasion.*

With love,
Rob

A COOKBOOK BY AVERY TRENT

Avery Cooks, Pairs and Sips

Good food. Thoughtful wine.

A generous way of bringing people together.



A seat at Avery's table

There is a moment before a good dinner when the kitchen becomes the happiest room in the house. Something is sizzling. Someone is looking for the corkscrew. A cutting board has quietly become a place to gather. The cook is answering a question, handing over a taste, and making it all look like part of the fun.

That is the spirit of Avery's table. Her food is colorful and generous. A seafood pan can become an event, a few slices of ripe fruit can turn into a beautiful first bite, and a bottle of wine can make an already delicious dish feel newly alive. The knowledge is there, but so is the delight.

This book follows those pleasures. It travels from the Oregon coast to Argentina and the Philippines, then brings everything home to the grill, the garden, and a table with room for friends. Filipino flavors give the kitchen a particularly lively heartbeat: sour broth, warm rice, garlic, coconut, and the irresistible pull of one more spoonful.

The recipes are invitations. Cook one on an ordinary Tuesday. Build a whole afternoon around another. Use the pairing notes to notice what changes when you take a bite and then a sip. Above all, leave room for Avery's own instincts. The most interesting part of this book is the cook who will make it hers.

Come hungry. Stay curious.



The joy is part of the recipe.

A life with an appetite



Avery's wine story reaches back to living in Oregon in 1999 and 2000, when Pinot Noir and the stories behind a bottle began to capture her attention. Okanagan winery tours and tasting experiences at Sumac Ridge followed, connecting what was in the glass with the pleasure of welcoming people.

Her background includes sommelier experience, WSET Level 3, and Oregon Pinot Camp in 2011 through her work with Ontario importer Terroir. Wine travel has carried that curiosity through Italy, Napa, Sonoma, Washington, Oregon, and Mendoza. The Okanagan remains an important home base, with Fitzpatrick events and tasting-room experience among her local connections.

Those details describe the knowledge behind the pairings. Her photographs describe something just as important: the smile across a table, the dish offered before anyone has to ask, the way a gathering becomes memorable because someone has cared about how it feels.

Avery's kitchen can be thoughtful without becoming solemn. It can love a beautiful wine and still make room for a burger, a messy taco, or a plate piled high with crab legs. That combination is what gives this book its appetite.

Make this book your own

Start with the photograph

Every recipe begins with a dish, a mood, or a memory suggested by Avery's photographs. Some are close interpretations; others take a playful culinary detour. The chicken adobo is a new recipe inspired by her Philippine travels rather than a photograph of the finished dish.

Cook with all your senses

Times are guides. Pan size, burner strength, ingredient temperature, and personal taste will change the details. Look for the cues in the method and use a thermometer where a safe cooking temperature matters.

Read the pairing as an invitation

The wine styles are suggestions to explore, not a shopping list of essential labels. Acidity, sweetness, body, and texture matter more here than price or a particular vintage. A dry Okanagan rosé or an Oregon Pinot Noir can have many delicious counterparts.

Give Avery the final say

This is a first taste of a future cookbook. The newly imagined recipes and vignettes are working interpretations to cook, taste, and refine together. They are not presented as tested transcriptions of Avery's original recipes, and the narrative passages are not quotations from her.

Make the table your own

Servings are flexible, especially for little bites. If this is supper, make enough. If it is one part of a larger spread, let people graze. A good meal can be planned carefully and still leave room for a happy change of direction.

Find something delicious

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Let the food lead the wine

A good pairing makes you want another bite.

Follow the strongest flavor

The sauce often decides the wine. Salmon with orange and dill asks a different question from salmon with coconut and ginger. Look first for citrus, sweetness, smoke, heat, cream, or a deeply savory glaze.

Let freshness lift richness

A lively wine can refresh the palate after butter, cheese, fried edges, or creamy dressing. Think sparkling wine with little bites, dry Riesling with crab, or a bright Pinot Noir with mushrooms.

Treat sweetness with care

A touch of sweetness can soften a spicy bite, while a very dry wine beside a sweet sauce may seem sharper. With dessert, try a wine at least as sweet as the food.

Match the weight of the moment

A delicate broth does not need a huge red. A slow braise can carry more body and tannin. Start by matching light with light and rich with rich, then notice where a contrast feels delicious.

Try one bite then one sip

Taste the wine, taste the food, and taste the wine again. Has the fruit become brighter? Has the sauce grown rounder? Do you want another bite? That last question is a very useful guide.

Eight styles to know

- 01 **Traditional method sparkling**
For salty nibbles, creamy cheese, crisp edges, and a first toast. Brut styles bring freshness; sweeter food may need a sweeter bottle.
- 02 **Dry Riesling**
A bright starting point for crab, coconut, ginger, and clean seafood flavors. Choose an off-dry style when the chili gets lively.
- 03 **Sauvignon Blanc**
A green, citrusy partner for herbs, goat cheese, tomatoes, and a generous squeeze of lime.
- 04 **Chardonnay**
Look for a fresh, lightly oaked style with butter, cream, roast chicken, and cedar-planked salmon.
- 05 **Dry rosé**
The friendly bridge across a mixed table: watermelon, grilled prawns, tomato salads, and summer platters.
- 06 **Pinot Noir**
A natural recurring guest in Avery's story. Try its freshness and red-fruit character with salmon, mushrooms, pork, and roast turkey.
- 07 **Malbec or Syrah**
For char, beef, ribs, and the satisfying depth of a long braise. Match intensity to the sauce rather than choosing the biggest bottle automatically.
- 08 **Late harvest or lightly sweet sparkling**
For fruit, cream, and the final course. A lightly sweet sparkling wine can be lovely with berries; richer desserts call for more sweetness in the glass.

A glass beside the cutting board



Pour what makes the work pleasant

The cooking sip in each recipe is a small suggestion for the kitchen: something bright with herbs, aromatic with ginger, or sparkling with a platter of little bites. It need not be the same wine that reaches the table.

Taste the sauce before choosing

A squeeze of lime, a little chili, or a spoonful of cream may change the best match. A quick taste is more useful than a rigid rule.

Make room for another kind of glass

Keep water nearby. Sparkling water with citrus, iced tea, or a favorite alcohol-free pour belongs at this table too.

If a recipe asks for wine in the pan, use a sound bottle you enjoy drinking. A faulty or heavily oxidized wine will not become better simply because it is warmed.

The cook deserves to enjoy the evening too.

A pantry with a passport

The Filipino corner

Soy sauce, cane vinegar or unseasoned rice vinegar, prepared tamarind paste, fish sauce, bay leaves, garlic, ginger, and jasmine rice. Taste tamarind products before using them; strength and saltiness vary widely.

The bright shelf

Lemons, limes, good olive oil, Dijon mustard, capers, and a vinegar you enjoy. These are the ingredients that wake up the last five minutes of cooking.

The warm shelf

Coconut milk, curry paste, smoked paprika, cumin, chili flakes, and sesame oil. Add strong flavors gradually so the main ingredient remains part of the conversation.

The little bite collection

Goat cheese, blue cheese, mozzarella, toasted nuts, crackers, and a baguette ready to become crostini. Keep ripe seasonal fruit nearby and an appetizer is rarely far away.

The freezer that helps

Peeled prawns, good stock, dumpling wrappers, sliced bread, and small portions of cooked beans. Thaw safely in the refrigerator and keep raw proteins apart from ready-to-eat food.

The finishing basket

Basil, cilantro, parsley, scallions, flaky salt, and freshly ground pepper. Tender herbs belong near the end; taste before adding more salt to cheese, cured meat, or fish sauce.

Make room for the good part

Before anyone arrives

Clear one working surface. Set out the serving plates, check the corkscrew, fill the water carafe, and make the cold components. A kitchen feels calmer when the little decisions have already been made.

Give the guests a first bite

Choose something that can wait comfortably: crostini components, a tomato platter, or a bowl of chilled gazpacho. Bring out small portions of perishable food and replenish from the refrigerator.

Keep a useful kit

A heavy skillet, a reliable sheet pan, a sharp chef's knife, a rice pot, a fine grater, tongs, and an instant-read thermometer will do most of the work in this book. A steamer and grill widen the possibilities.

Choose one dramatic moment

Let the paella, the roast, or the pavlova be the centerpiece. The rest can be simple. A platter of tomatoes or a few lemon wedges can be exactly the right supporting cast.

Bring people into the pleasure

Give someone the bread to slice or the herbs to scatter. Offer a spoonful of sauce. Ask what the wine does with the next bite. An invitation to help can also be an invitation to belong.

A world brought home



Oregon



Argentina



The Philippines



The people at the table



CHAPTER 01

First pours and little bites

A little bite can set the whole evening in motion.

The first thing on the table should make someone reach for a plate. A ripe fig, a sizzling scallop, a crisp little Yorkshire pudding: each is an invitation to linger. These are dishes for the part of the evening when the kitchen is still busy, the conversation is gathering speed, and nobody is asking what time dinner will be ready.



Fresh Fig & Goat Cheese Crostini

A little honey, a little lemon, one lovely bite



A plate of figs can make an ordinary kitchen counter look like the beginning of a party. Here, their soft, jammy centers meet tangy goat cheese and the bright perfume of lemon zest. The toast supplies just enough crunch to keep everything interesting, while a restrained thread of honey brings the fruit into focus. At Avery's table, these are an opening invitation: something beautiful to pass around while dinner takes its time and everyone settles into the evening.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry rosé, preferably a Grenache-based style

A dry rosé brings red-fruit freshness to the figs without making the honey feel sweeter. Its acidity refreshes the palate after the creamy cheese, while a gently savory finish suits the thyme and toast. Look for a bright, lightly textured bottle rather than a strongly oaked or noticeably sweet style.

The cooking sip: For the cook, pour a small glass of dry sparkling rosé while the bread toasts; the bubbles make the first little snack feel celebratory.

Fresh Fig & Goat Cheese Crostini

Makes 12 crostini; serves 6 • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 10 minutes

For the toasts

12 baguette slices, cut 1/2 inch thick
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

For the topping

4 ounces soft goat cheese, at room temperature
1 tablespoon plain Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
6 ripe fresh figs, stemmed and quartered
2 teaspoons mild honey
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
1/8 teaspoon flaky sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

01 Toast the bread. Heat the oven to 400°F. Arrange the baguette slices on a baking sheet and brush their tops with the olive oil. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, turning once, until crisp at the edges but still pleasantly tender in the center.

02 Whip the cheese. Stir the goat cheese, yogurt, and half the lemon zest until smooth. If the cheese is very firm, let it soften longer; it should spread without tearing the bread.

03 Prepare the fruit. Gently rinse and thoroughly dry the figs before quartering. Choose pieces that hold their shape, and keep the cut sides facing up so their juice stays with the fruit instead of soaking into the toast.

04 Build each bite. Let the toasts cool for 3 minutes, then divide the goat cheese among them. Set two fig quarters on top, pressing very lightly so they sit securely in the cheese.

05 Finish and pass. Drizzle the honey in thin threads over the crostini. Scatter with the remaining lemon zest, thyme, flaky salt, and a little black pepper. Transfer to a platter and serve promptly, while the bread still has its crunch.

A little kitchen wisdom: Ripe figs should yield slightly when gently pressed and smell sweet near the stem. If their skins are splitting and the centers are collapsing, save them for spooning over yogurt; firm, intact fruit is easier to balance on crostini.

Make it ahead: Toast the bread up to one day ahead and store airtight once cool. Mix and refrigerate the cheese separately for one day. Bring it to spreading temperature, then cut the figs and assemble just before serving.

Roasted Pear, Goat Cheese & Pecan Crostini

Warm orchard fruit with a savory little crunch



Some appetizers announce themselves with a flourish; these arrive with the quieter confidence of warm pears and toasted nuts. Roasting concentrates the fruit's sweetness and leaves the edges beautifully golden. A creamy layer of goat cheese supplies the tang, pecans bring a buttery crunch, and rosemary keeps the whole thing comfortably on the savory side. They would be equally happy beside a holiday dinner or a casual kitchen gathering, especially when someone is already reaching for a second glass and another little toast.

PAIR IT WITH

Chenin Blanc with gentle texture and little or no oak

Chenin Blanc often offers orchard-fruit character that feels at home with roasted pear. Its lively acidity balances the goat cheese, while a little texture meets the nuts and toasted bread. Choose a dry or just off-dry example; pronounced sweetness would overshadow the appetizer's subtle rosemary and savory edges.

The cooking sip: A small pour of Pinot Gris makes an easy kitchen companion while the pears roast, particularly a fresh style with pear notes and bright acidity.

Roasted Pear, Goat Cheese & Pecan Crostini

Makes 12 crostini; serves 6 • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 35 minutes

For the crostini

12 baguette slices, cut 1/2 inch thick
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
2 firm-ripe Bosc pears, cored and cut into 1/4-inch wedges
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

For the topping

1/3 cup pecan halves, roughly chopped
4 ounces soft goat cheese, at room temperature
1 tablespoon heavy cream
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary
2 teaspoons honey

01 Start the pears. Heat the oven to 400°F. Toss the pear wedges with 1 tablespoon olive oil, the salt, and pepper. Spread on a parchment-lined baking sheet in one layer, leaving a little space between pieces.

02 Roast until golden. Roast for 18 to 22 minutes, turning halfway through, until tender with lightly browned edges. Transfer to a plate. The pears should remain sturdy enough to lift without falling apart.

03 Toast bread and nuts. Brush the bread with the remaining tablespoon of oil. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, turning once. During the last 4 to 5 minutes, toast the pecans on a separate small tray, watching closely and removing them when fragrant.

04 Make the spread. Beat the goat cheese with the cream until smooth, then stir in the rosemary. Spread generously over the warm baguette slices; let piping-hot bread cool slightly first.

05 Assemble and serve. Arrange two or three pear wedges on each toast, depending on their size. Sprinkle with the pecans and finish with thin trails of honey. Serve warm or at room temperature, with napkins close by for escaping crumbs.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use pears that are ripe enough to smell fragrant but still feel firm. Very soft pears release more juice and can become slippery on the toast. Cut the wedges to an even thickness so they roast at the same speed.

Make it ahead: Roast the pears and mix the cheese up to one day ahead, refrigerating separately. Toast the bread and nuts ahead, storing airtight. Rewarm the pears briefly, then assemble within 15 minutes of serving.

Prosciutto-Wrapped Mango with Basil & Blue Cheese

Sweet, salty, creamy, and ready for the first toast



This is a small bite with an excellent sense of drama: sunny mango, a ribbon of prosciutto, a flash of basil, and a tiny surprise of blue cheese. The fruit softens the cheese's assertiveness, while the ham supplies enough salt to make the next sip especially inviting. There is no stove to watch and no elaborate assembly line to manage. A platter of these gives the host a few extra minutes to enjoy the company, which is a very sensible ingredient in any gathering.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Riesling

A little residual sweetness gives Riesling room to meet ripe mango and salty ham, while its acidity keeps the blue cheese from feeling heavy. The wine's citrus notes also connect naturally with the lime. An off-dry bottle is especially useful when the cheese has a pronounced, pleasantly pungent character.

The cooking sip: While wrapping, a small glass of chilled dry rosé keeps the mood light; save the slightly sweeter Riesling for the finished mango and cheese bites.

Prosciutto-Wrapped Mango with Basil & Blue Cheese

Makes 16 bites; serves 6 to 8 • Prep 25 minutes • No cooking

For the bites

2 large firm-ripe mangoes
3 ounces creamy blue cheese, divided into 16 small pieces
16 small fresh basil leaves
8 thin slices prosciutto, each halved lengthwise

For finishing

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
1/2 teaspoon finely grated lime zest
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

01 Cut the mango. Peel the mangoes and cut the flesh away from the flat pits. Slice the large cheeks into 16 sturdy wedges, each about 2 inches long. Reserve any small uneven pieces for another meal; they are awkward to wrap neatly.

02 Dry the fruit. Pat the mango wedges gently with a paper towel. Arrange them in a single layer on a board. Removing surface moisture helps the basil and prosciutto stay in place without squeezing the fruit too tightly.

03 Add cheese and basil. Lay a basil leaf along each mango wedge and nestle one small piece of blue cheese against it. Keep the cheese portions modest so that every bite still tastes clearly of mango.

04 Wrap the pieces. Wind a strip of prosciutto around the middle of each wedge, tucking the end underneath. Secure with a short cocktail pick if needed. Arrange on a platter with the open ends of the fruit visible.

05 Dress lightly. Whisk the olive oil and lime juice together. Brush or spoon a very small amount over the mango bites; avoid pooling dressing beneath them. Sprinkle with lime zest and black pepper, then serve cool but not refrigerator-cold.

A little kitchen wisdom: If the blue cheese crumbles too readily, chill it well before portioning and use the flat side of a knife to gather each piece. Choose thin prosciutto that separates cleanly; thick slices can overwhelm the fruit and feel chewy.

Make it ahead: Assemble the undressed bites up to four hours ahead, cover, and refrigerate. Keep the lime dressing separate. Let the platter stand for about 10 minutes before dressing and serving so the fruit's aroma can open up.

Watermelon, Mozzarella & Chorizo Party Skewers

Juicy melon meets a smoky Spanish accent



Watermelon has a knack for making a platter look cheerful before anyone has taken a bite. Add little mozzarella pearls, smoky chorizo, and fresh basil, and the cheerful platter becomes a proper party starter. The combination is playful but balanced: cool fruit, soft cheese, savory sausage, and a sharp little splash of sherry vinegar. These skewers are built for easy conversation, with enough contrast in each mouthful to make people pause, smile, and inspect the next one before reaching for it.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Spanish rosado, made from Garnacha or Tempranillo

A fresh rosado has enough fruit to welcome watermelon and enough savory character to sit beside smoky chorizo. Acidity brightens the mozzarella and vinegar dressing. Keep the wine dry and moderately light in alcohol, particularly if the sausage carries some heat, so the refreshing side of the appetizer remains clear.

The cooking sip: For assembly, try a small chilled pour of Vinho Verde; its light body and citrus freshness are especially pleasant while working with cool summer ingredients.

Watermelon, Mozzarella & Chorizo Party Skewers

Makes 20 skewers; serves 6 to 8 • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 3 minutes

For the skewers

4 ounces fully cooked or ready-to-eat cured Spanish chorizo, casing removed if tough

20 seedless watermelon cubes, each about 1 inch

20 small mozzarella balls, about 5 ounces, drained

20 small basil leaves

For the dressing

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons sherry vinegar

1/2 teaspoon honey

1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

01 Prepare the chorizo. Cut the ready-to-eat Spanish chorizo into 20 thin coins or small half-moons. Warm a dry skillet over medium heat. Cook the pieces for 2 to 3 minutes, turning once, just until fragrant and lightly crisp at the edges.

02 Cool the sausage. Transfer the chorizo to a paper towel and let it cool completely. This keeps its rendered fat from melting the mozzarella or warming the watermelon. The slices should remain pliable enough to thread onto a pick.

03 Dry the components. Pat the watermelon and drained mozzarella gently dry. Line them up with the basil and chorizo on a board. Use short skewers or sturdy cocktail picks with enough room left at one end for fingers.

04 Thread the skewers. Thread one piece each of chorizo, basil, mozzarella, and watermelon onto every pick, finishing with the watermelon as a sturdy base. Arrange the skewers on a shallow platter without stacking them heavily.

05 Dress and enjoy. Whisk the olive oil, vinegar, honey, salt, and pepper until blended. Drizzle lightly over the skewers just before serving, turning the platter as needed so every piece gets a little dressing without sitting in a puddle.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use Spanish chorizo labeled ready to eat or fully cooked. Fresh raw chorizo is a different product and will not work in these neat slices. If the melon cubes are very juicy, drain them briefly before building the skewers.

Make it ahead: Cut the melon, drain the cheese, and crisp the chorizo up to one day ahead, storing separately in the refrigerator. Assemble up to two hours ahead, cover and chill, then add dressing immediately before serving.

Mini Yorkshire Puddings with Roast Beef

Little golden cups with horseradish cream



A tiny Yorkshire pudding is a wonderfully convincing reason to turn roast beef into party food. Its crisp rim and soft center make a natural cup for a folded slice of beef and a spoonful of horseradish cream. The proportions are deliberately small, so guests get the pleasure of a roast dinner without needing to balance a dinner plate. For a cookbook about cooking, pairing, and sipping, this is the sort of generous little flourish that makes the opening chapter feel like an occasion.

PAIR IT WITH

Cabernet Franc with fresh acidity and restrained oak

Cabernet Franc brings savory red-fruit character to roast beef without overwhelming a two-bite appetizer. Its acidity helps with the sour cream, and moderate tannin suits the meat. Choose a supple bottle rather than a heavily extracted one, because sharp horseradish can make powerful tannins seem more insistent.

The cooking sip: Pour a small glass of Gamay while the batter rests; its juicy freshness is easy company and leaves room for the richer beef bites ahead.

Mini Yorkshire Puddings with Roast Beef

Makes 24 mini puddings; serves 8 • Prep 25 minutes, plus 30 minutes resting • Cook 25 minutes

For the puddings

2 large eggs
1/2 cup whole milk
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons neutral oil or beef drippings

For the filling

1/2 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon prepared horseradish, drained
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
8 ounces thinly sliced cooked roast beef
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives

01 Rest the batter. Whisk the eggs and milk, then whisk in the flour and salt until smooth. Rest for 30 minutes at room temperature; whisk briefly again before filling the pan.

02 Mix the cream. Stir the sour cream, horseradish, Dijon, and pepper together. Refrigerate while the puddings bake. Separate the beef slices and divide them into 24 small folds so assembly will be quick.

03 Heat the pan. Heat the oven to 425°F. Divide the oil among the 24 wells of a metal mini muffin pan, using 1/4 teaspoon per well. Put the pan in the oven for 5 minutes, until the oil is very hot.

04 Bake the puddings. Carefully set the hot pan on a heatproof surface. Divide the batter evenly among the 24 wells. Return to the oven immediately and bake 14 to 17 minutes, without opening the door, until well puffed and deeply golden.

05 Fill and serve. Lift the puddings onto a rack and cool for 3 minutes. Open any closed centers. Fill with roast beef and horseradish cream, scatter with chives, and serve immediately.

A little kitchen wisdom: A metal pan and genuinely hot fat make the biggest difference to the rise. Keep the oven closed during baking. If the puddings look pale at the end of the suggested time, give them another minute or two before checking again.

Make it ahead: Bake the empty puddings up to one day ahead and refrigerate. Recrisp at 400°F for 5 to 7 minutes. Mix the cream separately one day ahead; add beef, cream, and chives only when ready to serve.

Parmesan-Stuffed Mushrooms

Golden crumbs, garlic, and an irresistible savory center



Stuffed mushrooms are familiar in the best possible way: the sort of warm appetizer that disappears while everyone is still deciding where to stand. These lean into their savory side with finely chopped stems, garlic, Parmesan, and a crisp breadcrumb cap. Cream cheese keeps the filling tender rather than crumbly, and a little lemon lifts the richness without calling attention to itself. They are small enough for a first glass and substantial enough to make that first glass feel like the official start of dinner.

PAIR IT WITH

Pinot Noir with earthy notes and modest oak

Pinot Noir's earthy side makes an easy connection with mushrooms, while its red-fruit freshness keeps the creamy filling lively. The wine does not need much weight: the Parmesan brings plenty of savory intensity on its own. A lighter, gently oaked example lets the lemon and parsley remain part of the conversation.

The cooking sip: An unoaked Chardonnay is a cheerful cooking pour here; a small glass stays fresh beside the garlic aromas and creamy filling as the mushrooms bake.

Parmesan-Stuffed Mushrooms

Makes 20 mushrooms; serves 6 to 8 • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 30 minutes

For the mushrooms

20 medium cremini mushrooms,
about 1 pound
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 small shallot, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

For the filling and topping

4 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan,
divided
1/3 cup panko breadcrumbs, divided
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon olive oil

01 Prepare the caps. Heat the oven to 400°F. Wipe the mushrooms clean and remove their stems. Finely chop the stems. Toss the caps with 1 tablespoon olive oil and arrange them hollow-side up on a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet.

02 Cook the filling base. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Cook the stems, shallot, salt, and pepper for 6 to 8 minutes, until dry. Add garlic, cook 1 minute, then cool for 5 minutes.

03 Mix the filling. Stir the cooked mushroom mixture, cream cheese, 1/3 cup Parmesan, 2 tablespoons panko, parsley, and lemon zest together until evenly mixed.

04 Fill and top. Spoon the filling into the mushroom caps, mounding it slightly. Combine the remaining Parmesan and panko with the teaspoon of olive oil. Sprinkle this mixture evenly over the filled caps, pressing gently so the crumbs adhere.

05 Bake until golden. Bake for 18 to 22 minutes, until tender with hot filling and golden tops. Rest 5 minutes, then transfer to a platter, leaving released liquid on the sheet.

A little kitchen wisdom: Choose mushrooms with wide caps and sturdy edges, then chop the stems very finely so the filling fits neatly. Cook the stem mixture until fairly dry; extra moisture can dilute the cheese and leave the caps sitting in a puddle.

Make it ahead: Fill the mushrooms, cover, and refrigerate for up to one day. Keep the crumb topping separate until baking. Bake straight from the refrigerator, adding a few minutes as needed until the centers are thoroughly hot.

Seared Scallops with Strawberry Salsa

A golden sear with a bright berry surprise



Scallops bring a little restaurant glamor to a home kitchen, although their best trick is quite simple: a dry surface, a hot pan, and the patience to leave them alone. Strawberry salsa gives their natural sweetness a fresh counterpoint, with lime and a little jalapeño making sure the fruit stays lively. Each plate needs only three scallops and a spoonful of salsa to feel complete. It is a polished opening course with very little fuss, leaving plenty of attention available for the table.

PAIR IT WITH

Brut sparkling rosé

The wine's berry notes echo the strawberries, while brisk acidity and bubbles refresh the palate after the butter. A dry, delicate style supports the scallops' sweetness without competing with their texture. Avoid a strongly tannic red here; the salsa's lime and the scallops' gentle flavor favor brightness and finesse.

The cooking sip: During the salsa prep, a small pour of dry Sauvignon Blanc offers a crisp citrus lift; finish the glass before turning full attention to the pan.

Seared Scallops with Strawberry Salsa

Serves 4 as an appetizer • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 6 minutes

For the salsa

- 1 cup finely diced strawberries
- 2 tablespoons finely diced red onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon finely minced seeded jalapeño
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

For the scallops

- 12 large dry-packed sea scallops, about 1 pound, side muscles removed
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon neutral oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lime zest

01 Mix the salsa. Combine the strawberries, red onion, basil, lime juice, jalapeño, and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Stir gently and stand for 10 minutes. The salsa should taste bright rather than sharply acidic.

02 Dry the scallops. Pat the scallops very dry on all sides with paper towels. Season with the 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper immediately before cooking. Set out four small plates so the finished scallops can go directly to the table.

03 Heat the skillet. Heat a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Add the oil. When it shimmers, add the scallops with space between them, working in batches if necessary.

04 Sear and finish. Leave the scallops undisturbed for about 2 minutes, until golden underneath. Turn, add the butter, and cook for 1 to 3 minutes more, spooning butter over them, until the centers reach 145°F. Timing varies with thickness; check the largest scallop.

05 Plate promptly. Divide the salsa among the plates using a slotted spoon. Add three scallops to each, drizzle with pan butter, and scatter with lime zest. Serve immediately.

A little kitchen wisdom: Dry-packed scallops brown more readily than scallops treated with added water. If the pan fills with liquid, pause between batches, wipe it carefully, and heat it again. A beautiful sear comes from surface dryness and space, rather than constant moving.

Make it ahead: Dice the salsa ingredients up to four hours ahead and refrigerate separately from the lime juice and salt. Combine shortly before cooking. Pat scallops dry ahead, keep refrigerated, and sear only when guests are ready.

Chicken & Vegetable Summer Rolls

Fresh, crunchy bundles with a generous peanut dip



Summer rolls offer an abundance of crisp vegetables, tender chicken, fresh herbs, and a sauce worth sweeping up with the last bite. Their translucent wrappers show off the colors inside, making the platter feel generous before the dipping begins. Once the fillings are lined up, rolling becomes a pleasant little rhythm, and a slightly lopsided first attempt is simply the cook's opportunity to check that the peanut sauce is doing its job.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Riesling

Riesling's acidity keeps peanut sauce lively, while a hint of sweetness softens the sriracha and ginger. Its citrus character suits lime and fresh herbs, and its lighter body respects the delicate wrappers. Choose a gently off-dry bottle rather than a dessert wine so the crunchy vegetables remain the focus.

The cooking sip: A small chilled glass of Pinot Blanc is an easy companion for the rolling session, offering gentle fruit and freshness without asking for much attention.

Chicken & Vegetable Summer Rolls

Makes 12 rolls; serves 6 • Prep 40 minutes • Cook 5 minutes

For the rolls

2 ounces thin rice vermicelli
12 round rice-paper wrappers, about
8 1/2 inches wide
2 cups shredded cooked chicken,
chilled
12 small tender lettuce leaves
1 large carrot, cut into fine
matchsticks
1/2 English cucumber, cut into fine
matchsticks
1/2 cup fresh mint leaves
1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves

For the peanut sauce

1/3 cup smooth peanut butter
1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy
sauce
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
2 teaspoons honey
1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger
1 teaspoon sriracha
3 to 5 tablespoons warm water

01 Cook the noodles. Prepare the vermicelli according to the package, usually 3 to 5 minutes. Drain, rinse under cool water, and drain well. Snip into shorter lengths with kitchen scissors.

02 Whisk the sauce. Whisk the peanut butter, soy sauce, lime juice, vinegar, honey, ginger, and sriracha. Add warm water gradually until thickly pourable; transfer to a serving bowl.

03 Set up the station. Arrange all fillings within reach. Fill a shallow dish with lukewarm water and cover the work surface with a clean, lightly damp towel to prevent sticking.

04 Fill a wrapper. Dip a wrapper for 5 to 10 seconds, following package directions. Lay on the towel; it continues softening. Arrange modest portions of lettuce, noodles, chicken, vegetables, and herbs across the lower third.

05 Roll and repeat. Fold the bottom over the filling, fold in the sides, and roll snugly without stretching. Repeat, keeping finished rolls apart on a lightly damp platter.

06 Serve for dipping. Serve whole or halve diagonally with a damp knife, with sauce alongside. Keep refrigerated until serving so the chicken stays properly chilled.

A little kitchen wisdom: Keep each roll modestly filled, especially the first few. Overstuffing stretches the wrapper until it tears. If a wrapper splits, soften another and wrap it around the damaged roll; the slightly thicker result still makes a very good snack.

Make it ahead: Make the sauce up to three days ahead and refrigerate. Roll up to four hours ahead, cover with a barely damp paper towel and a lid, and refrigerate. Keep rolls separate; loosen sauce with water before serving.

Pear, Goat Cheese & Pecan Flatbread

Crisp edges, soft cheese, and an orchard finish



Flatbread is an excellent friend to the host who wants something warm on the table without committing the evening to dough. A ready-made base becomes a golden canvas for thin pear slices, soft goat cheese, and buttery pecans. Rosemary adds an aromatic edge, and arugula arrives at the end with a little peppery confidence. Cut into narrow pieces, this feels generous and informal, the sort of platter that encourages everyone to gather around the counter while the next part of dinner comes together.

PAIR IT WITH

Pinot Gris with fresh pear character and a dry finish

Pinot Gris can echo the pear without turning this into a sweet pairing. A dry bottle with some texture holds its own beside goat cheese and pecans, while acidity keeps the honey and creamy topping balanced. Look for freshness and restrained oak so the rosemary and arugula remain clear.

The cooking sip: While the flatbread bakes, a small pour of dry sparkling wine is a crisp, uncomplicated choice and a pleasant contrast to the warm kitchen aromas.

Pear, Goat Cheese & Pecan Flatbread

Serves 4 as an appetizer • Prep 15 minutes • Cook 15 minutes

For the flatbread

2 large naan or prebaked flatbreads,
about 7 ounces total
1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
4 ounces soft goat cheese, at room
temperature
2 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt
1 large firm-ripe pear, cored and very
thinly sliced
1/3 cup roughly chopped pecans
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh
rosemary
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

To finish

1 cup baby arugula
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons honey

01 Warm the oven. Heat the oven to 425°F with a large baking sheet inside. Brush the flatbreads with 2 teaspoons of the olive oil. Heating the sheet helps the undersides become crisp before the pears release much moisture.

02 Make the cheese layer. Mix the goat cheese and yogurt until spreadable. Spread evenly over the flatbreads, leaving a narrow border. An even layer helps the topping warm consistently.

03 Add the toppings. Arrange the pear slices in a loose overlapping pattern. Add the pecans, rosemary, salt, and pepper, pressing large nuts lightly into the cheese to secure them.

04 Bake until crisp. Carefully transfer the flatbreads to the hot sheet. Bake for 10 to 14 minutes, until the edges are golden, the pears have softened, and the cheese is hot. Check early if the bases are thin or already well browned.

05 Dress and slice. Toss the arugula with the remaining teaspoon of oil and lemon juice. Scatter over the flatbreads, drizzle with honey, and cut into narrow wedges. Serve immediately.

A little kitchen wisdom: Slice the pear thin enough to soften during the short bake. A firm pear works better than a very juicy one, and a light hand with toppings protects the crisp base. Let any washed arugula dry completely before dressing it.

Make it ahead: Mix the cheese spread one day ahead and refrigerate. Chop the nuts and rosemary ahead, keeping them separate. Assemble up to one hour ahead and refrigerate; bake just before serving, then add the dressed arugula and honey.

Tomato, Mozzarella & Basil Bites

A tiny caprese with a glossy balsamic finish



A good tomato does most of the storytelling here. Sweet, juicy, and just firm enough to stay on a pick, it needs only mozzarella, basil, and a restrained touch of balsamic to feel complete. These little caprese bites are familiar for a reason: the colors look beautiful together, the flavors make immediate sense, and the platter does not demand a knife and fork. They are a useful reminder that a cookbook can leave room for the pleasures of assembling something lovely as well as cooking it.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Italian rosato or a fresh Sangiovese rosé

Tomatoes bring their own acidity, so a lively rosato meets them comfortably. Gentle red-fruit character suits the balsamic glaze, while the wine's freshness balances mild mozzarella. A dry finish is useful here: too much sweetness would make the small amount of glaze feel more prominent than the tomato and basil.

The cooking sip: For the cook, a small glass of Vermentino offers a bright citrus edge and an easy savory note while the little skewers come together.

Tomato, Mozzarella & Basil Bites

Makes 24 bites; serves 6 to 8 • Prep 25 minutes • No cooking

For the bites

24 ripe cherry tomatoes, about 1 pint
24 small fresh mozzarella balls, about 8 ounces, drained
24 small basil leaves, or 12 large leaves torn in half

For the finishing drizzle

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon thick balsamic glaze

01 Prepare the tomatoes. Rinse and dry the tomatoes. Choose firm fruit that will hold its shape. Pierce any tough skins with the tip of a small knife to make threading easier.

02 Drain the cheese. Spread the mozzarella on a clean paper towel for 5 minutes and pat dry. Removing excess packing liquid keeps the dressing from becoming diluted and the platter watery.

03 Build the bites. Thread one tomato, one basil leaf, and one mozzarella ball onto each cocktail pick. Fold large basil leaves loosely so they fit without tearing. Arrange the bites in a single layer or a shallow overlapping circle on a platter.

04 Mix the dressing. Whisk the olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper together in a small bowl. Spoon lightly over the bites, turning a few as necessary so the seasoning reaches the cheese as well as the tomato skins.

05 Add the finish. Drizzle the balsamic glaze in thin ribbons, accenting the tomatoes rather than covering their flavor. Serve at cool room temperature, with a small dish for used picks.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use the best tomatoes available and keep the balsamic drizzle modest. If the glaze is too thick to make fine lines, warm the closed bottle briefly in a mug of warm water; avoid thinning it directly on the platter.

Make it ahead: Thread the undressed bites up to four hours ahead, cover, and refrigerate. Whisk the dressing separately. Let the platter lose its refrigerator chill for 10 minutes, then add dressing and balsamic glaze immediately before serving.



WHAT INSPIRES AVERY

Oregon

Salt air and the first Pinot

Salt air and the first Pinot

Oregon belongs near the beginning of Avery's wine story. Living there in 1999 and 2000 helped kindle an affection for Pinot Noir that still gives this book a natural thread. A glass of Pinot beside cedar-planked salmon can feel like a small return to that beginning.

The coast adds another kind of inspiration. The photographs move between a weathered pub by the water, a warm mug near the fire, and an unhurried stretch of beach. They suggest food with warmth and a little salt on its sleeve: mussels in a deep bowl, bread for the sauce, a fish supper after a windy afternoon.

There is room for that mood at home. Put a pot in the middle of the table. Choose a wine with freshness. Let the bread be generous and the conversation last longer than the recipe. The coast need not be outside the window for a meal to carry something of it.





A rainy afternoon is a perfectly good reason to cook something beautiful.

A coastal evening

A few dishes to carry the mood back to the kitchen

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CHAPTER 02

From the garden

Color is an ingredient too.

The garden gets a generous seat at this table. Peaches lean into tomatoes, a bowl of gazpacho brings a watermelon blush, and carrots arrive wearing every color they own. This is food that asks for a sharp knife, a lively dressing, and the confidence to stop while the ingredients still taste like themselves.



Peach, Tomato & Burrata Salad

Summer fruit, soft cream, and basil by the handful



This salad belongs to the happy moment when peaches smell of peaches and tomatoes need very little persuasion. The fruit is arranged generously rather than fussily, with torn burrata creating soft pockets of cream among the bright slices. Basil, a little vinegar, and good olive oil give the platter its shape. It feels special enough to open a long dinner and easy enough to become lunch. At Avery's table, the only real competition would be between the last peach slice and the last piece of bread.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry rosé with peach and red-berry character

A fragrant dry rosé can meet both the peach's sweetness and the tomato's acidity, making it a useful bridge across the platter. Fresh acidity keeps the burrata light on the palate. Choose a fruit-forward bottle with a dry finish and restrained oak so the basil and ripe produce stay expressive.

The cooking sip: A small glass of dry sparkling rosé makes a bright companion while slicing the fruit, especially if the afternoon still has a little sunshine left.

Peach, Tomato & Burrata Salad

Serves 4 • Prep 20 minutes • No cooking

For the platter

3 ripe but firm peaches
1 pound mixed ripe tomatoes
2 cups baby arugula
8 ounces burrata, drained
1/2 cup small basil leaves
1/4 cup toasted pistachios, roughly
chopped

For the dressing

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

01 Slice the fruit. Pit the peaches and cut into thick wedges.

Slice large tomatoes into wedges or rounds and halve small ones. Keep any flavorful tomato juices on the board and add them to the dressing bowl rather than wiping them away.

02 Whisk the dressing. Whisk the olive oil, vinegar, honey, salt, pepper, and collected tomato juices. Taste with a tomato piece; the dressing should be lively without hiding the fruit.

03 Start the platter. Scatter the arugula over a wide platter. Arrange the peach and tomato slices on top, alternating shapes and colors. Leave spaces for creamy pockets of cheese throughout.

04 Add the burrata. Tear the burrata gently over the salad, allowing the soft center to settle among the fruit. Spoon the dressing evenly over the peaches, tomatoes, and cheese. Avoid tossing aggressively, which would muddy the burrata into the juices.

05 Finish and serve. Scatter the basil leaves and pistachios over the platter. Let stand for 5 minutes so the juices mingle, then serve with a broad spoon that can gather fruit, cheese, and dressing together in each portion.

A little kitchen wisdom: If the peaches are juicy enough to drip when cut, slice them over a bowl and add their juice to the dressing. Choose tomatoes with distinct sweetness and acidity; mixing varieties gives the salad more character than relying on color alone.

Make it ahead: Mix the dressing up to one day ahead and refrigerate. Wash and dry the greens and basil ahead. Slice the fruit and assemble within an hour of serving; add burrata, dressing, and pistachios at the end.

The Big Platter Cobb Salad

A generous supper with a place for everything



A Cobb salad is a small feast that happens to arrive on lettuce. Chicken, crisp bacon, eggs, avocado, tomatoes, and blue cheese each have their own place, so every serving can become a slightly different combination. Presenting it on one large platter gives the meal a welcoming, help-yourself spirit. The dressing is sharp enough to cut through the richer ingredients, and the lettuce stays properly crunchy underneath. It is supper with plenty going on, but nothing that requires the cook to miss the conversation.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry rosé with a little body

Cobb salad asks a wine to navigate bacon, blue cheese, avocado, and vinegar at once. A dry rosé with fresh acidity and some texture is a flexible answer: fruit softens the salty ingredients, while the crisp finish keeps the dressing and lettuce lively. Avoid heavy oak, which can complicate the eggs and blue cheese.

The cooking sip: A small pour of unoaked Chardonnay suits the chopping and arranging stage, offering enough softness for the kitchen's bacon aromas without becoming a heavy start.

The Big Platter Cobb Salad

Serves 4 as a main course • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 20 minutes

For the salad

4 large eggs
6 slices bacon
8 cups chopped romaine lettuce,
washed and dried
2 cups diced cooked chicken, chilled
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
1 ripe avocado, diced
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese
2 tablespoons chopped chives

For the dressing

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon honey
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

01 Cook the eggs. Put the eggs in a saucepan, cover with cold water by 1 inch, and bring to a boil. Cover, remove from heat, and let stand for 11 minutes. Transfer to ice water, cool completely, then peel and quarter.

02 Crisp the bacon. Cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat for 8 to 12 minutes, turning as needed, until crisp. Drain on paper towels, let cool slightly, and cut into bite-size pieces.

03 Shake the dressing. Shake the oil, vinegar, Dijon, honey, salt, and pepper in a lidded jar until emulsified. Taste with lettuce; avocado and eggs will soften the dressing's assertive edge.

04 Arrange the platter. Spread the romaine across a large shallow platter. Arrange the chicken, tomatoes, avocado, eggs, bacon, and blue cheese in generous rows or loose sections. Keep the toppings visible so guests can choose the balance they prefer.

05 Dress and finish. Spoon two-thirds of the dressing over the salad and scatter with chives. Serve remaining dressing alongside. Use broad spoons to lift lettuce and toppings together; serve promptly.

A little kitchen wisdom: Dry lettuce thoroughly so the dressing clings instead of sliding to the bottom of the platter. For clean avocado pieces, dice it just before assembly and lift from the skin with a spoon rather than squeezing the halves.

Make it ahead: Cook eggs and bacon one day ahead; chill separately. Make dressing up to three days ahead. Keep chicken and washed lettuce refrigerated. Assemble close to serving, adding avocado, dressing, and bacon at the last moment.

Creamy Cucumber & Tomato Salad

Cool crunch with dill, lemon, and a little tang



There is a special place on the table for a cool, creamy salad that quietly improves everything beside it. Cucumbers bring the crunch, tomatoes bring the juice, and a dill-flecked dressing ties them together without weighing them down. The small act of salting and draining the cucumber makes a noticeable difference: the dressing stays creamy instead of turning into soup. This is the sort of useful, cheerful side that can sit beside grilled chicken, a piece of fish, or an entirely unplanned second helping.

PAIR IT WITH

Sauvignon Blanc with crisp citrus and herbal notes

Sauvignon Blanc's acidity matches the lemon and tangy dairy dressing, while its herbal character feels natural beside dill and cucumber. The tomatoes need a wine with enough freshness to keep up. Choose a clean, lightly textured bottle rather than a heavily oaked style, allowing the salad's cool, bright character to lead.

The cooking sip: A small pour of dry Pinot Grigio makes an easy cooking companion here, with a crisp finish that suits the vegetables and keeps the palate fresh.

Creamy Cucumber & Tomato Salad

Serves 6 as a side • Prep 20 minutes, plus 15 minutes draining • No cooking

For the vegetables

2 English cucumbers, about 1 1/2 pounds, thinly sliced
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1 pound cherry tomatoes, halved
1/4 small red onion, very thinly sliced

For the dressing

1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/4 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon honey
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

01 Drain the cucumber. Toss the cucumber with 1/2 teaspoon salt in a colander over a bowl. Stand for 15 minutes, then shake and spread on a clean towel. Gently blot away released moisture.

02 Soften the onion. Soak the onion in cold water for 10 minutes, then drain and pat dry. This softens its sharpness while preserving color and crunch.

03 Mix the dressing. Whisk the yogurt, sour cream, lemon juice, lemon zest, Dijon, honey, dill, pepper, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Stir until the dressing is smooth and the dill is evenly distributed.

04 Combine gently. Add the cucumber, tomatoes, and onion. Fold together with a broad spoon until lightly coated, scraping the bottom so no pockets of dressing remain underneath.

05 Chill briefly and serve. Refrigerate for 10 to 15 minutes to let the flavors settle. Give the salad one gentle turn and taste before serving. Transfer to a shallow bowl, leaving behind any small amount of watery liquid that has collected.

A little kitchen wisdom: A mandoline makes neat cucumber slices, but a sharp knife works perfectly well. Aim for thin pieces that still have substance. Blotting after salting is more effective than squeezing hard, which can bruise the cucumber and rob it of crunch.

Make it ahead: Make the dressing up to two days ahead and refrigerate. Slice and drain the cucumber up to four hours ahead, keeping it chilled. Combine with tomatoes and dressing no more than 30 minutes before serving.

Watermelon & Tomato Gazpacho

A chilled summer soup with a bright, savory edge



Gazpacho makes a useful argument for leaving the stove alone. Watermelon lends this version a soft sweetness and a vivid color, while tomato, cucumber, pepper, and sherry vinegar keep its feet firmly in the savory camp. A small bowl can begin dinner beautifully; a little glass can turn it into a party appetizer. The garnish adds the crunch that a smooth chilled soup welcomes. It is lively, refreshing, and particularly satisfying on a day when the kitchen already feels warm enough without any assistance.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry rosé with bright acidity

The soup combines fruit sweetness with tomato and vinegar, so a dry rosé needs enough acidity to feel refreshing alongside it. Gentle red-fruit notes acknowledge the watermelon without making the pairing sugary. A light, clean style works best; heavily oaked whites and powerful tannic reds would crowd the chilled vegetables.

The cooking sip: While the soup chills, a small glass of dry sparkling wine provides a clean, crisp pause and leaves the fruit-and-tomato combination to shine at serving.

Watermelon & Tomato Gazpacho

Serves 6 as a starter • Prep 25 minutes, plus 2 hours chilling • No cooking

For the soup

4 cups cubed seedless watermelon
 1 1/2 pounds ripe tomatoes, cored
 and roughly chopped
 1 English cucumber, peeled and
 chopped, divided
 1 red bell pepper, chopped, divided
 2 tablespoons chopped red onion
 1 small garlic clove, chopped
 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

For the garnish

2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh basil
 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

01 Save the crunch. Reserve 1/4 cup each finely diced cucumber and bell pepper for garnish. Put the remainder in a blender with the watermelon and tomatoes, working in batches if necessary.

02 Blend the base. Add the red onion, garlic, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Blend until very smooth, stopping to scrape the sides as needed. Do not overfill the blender; if working in batches, divide these seasonings among them.

03 Add the oil. With the blender on low, stream in the 3 tablespoons of oil until slightly creamy. If blending in batches, divide the oil between them, then combine thoroughly.

04 Chill and balance. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, until thoroughly cold. Stir well, since a little separation is natural. Taste cold before serving; chilling softens aromas, and ripe tomatoes vary in how much acidity they bring.

05 Garnish the bowls. Ladle into six chilled bowls. Divide the reserved cucumber and pepper among them, scatter with basil, and finish with the teaspoon of oil, a few drops per bowl.

A little kitchen wisdom: Watermelon sweetness varies dramatically. Taste the fruit before blending; a bland melon makes a bland soup. For a silkier texture, strain the blended soup through a medium-mesh sieve, pressing lightly, although a little vegetable texture is perfectly welcome here.

Make it ahead: Blend the soup up to one day ahead and refrigerate in a covered container. Store the diced garnish separately. Stir or briefly reblend before serving, then add basil and the final olive oil only at the table.

Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Basil

Golden edges, lemon butter, and a fresh green finish



Rainbow carrots bring their own good looks, but roasting gives them something even better: concentrated sweetness and browned edges that make a vegetable platter feel generous. A little lemon butter adds gloss without hiding their character, and torn basil supplies a fresh contrast to the warm, earthy roots. The recipe is deliberately straightforward, leaving the oven to do the useful work. It belongs beside roast chicken, fish, or a holiday spread, and deserves a serving spoon that can gather up every last buttery piece.

PAIR IT WITH

Chardonnay with gentle oak and lively acidity

A lightly oaked Chardonnay has enough roundness for roasted carrots and butter, while its acidity meets the lemon finish. Subtle toast notes complement the browned edges and pistachios. Choose a balanced bottle rather than a very buttery, heavily oaked style so the carrots' sweetness and fresh basil remain distinct.

The cooking sip: A small glass of dry Chenin Blanc makes a fresh kitchen pour during roasting, bringing citrus and orchard-fruit notes while the carrots turn golden.

Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Basil

Serves 6 as a side • Prep 15 minutes • Cook 30 minutes

For the carrots

2 pounds rainbow carrots, scrubbed or peeled

2 tablespoons olive oil

3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1 tablespoon honey

For the finish

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

1/3 cup loosely packed basil leaves, torn

1/4 cup shelled pistachios, roughly chopped

01 Cut evenly. Heat the oven to 425°F. Trim the carrots. Halve medium carrots lengthwise and quarter thick ones to make pieces of similar thickness; leave very slim carrots whole.

02 Season the tray. Toss the carrots with the oil, salt, and pepper on a rimmed baking sheet. Spread in one layer, cut sides down. Use two sheets if needed to avoid crowding.

03 Roast and glaze. Roast for 20 minutes, then turn the carrots and drizzle with honey. Roast for another 8 to 12 minutes, until browned at the edges and tender when pierced with a knife. Check slender pieces early and remove as needed.

04 Make the lemon butter. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice and zest. Keep warm; the mixture should be fragrant and fluid rather than browned.

05 Finish the platter. Transfer the hot carrots to a serving dish with their juices. Spoon over the lemon butter and turn to coat. Scatter with basil and pistachios, then serve warm.

A little kitchen wisdom: Different-colored carrots can cook at different speeds, especially if their diameters vary. Size matters more than color: cut thick roots down to match the slimmer ones. Give the pan a little space; crowding is the quickest way to lose golden edges.

Make it ahead: Trim and cut the carrots one day ahead and refrigerate. Roast up to four hours ahead, then chill promptly. Rewarm at 400°F until hot; add freshly made lemon butter, basil, and pistachios immediately before serving.

Warm New Potato & Fiddlehead Salad

A spring platter with mustard, lemon, and tender greens



The potato and fiddlehead salad is pictured on the left, beside citrus cedar-planked salmon.

New potatoes and fiddleheads make a platter that looks as though spring has finally found its way to dinner. The potatoes catch the mustard dressing while still warm, and the curled greens bring an earthy, gently grassy contrast. Radishes add a peppery crunch and a little pink brightness. Fiddleheads need careful preparation before they join the salad, so the method gives that step its full attention. The result is a satisfying seasonal side, equally comfortable beside a roast or at the center of a light lunch.

PAIR IT WITH

Sauvignon Blanc or a crisp Sauvignon Blanc blend

The wine's herbal notes connect with the fiddleheads and parsley, while bright acidity matches the mustard-lemon dressing. Potatoes give the salad enough substance for a white with a little texture. Keep oak subtle so the green flavors remain fresh and the radishes' peppery edge does not compete with woody richness.

The cooking sip: A small pour of dry Pinot Blanc is gentle company during the vegetable prep, with clean fruit and enough freshness to suit the salad's spring mood.

Warm New Potato & Fiddlehead Salad

Serves 6 as a side • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 25 minutes

For the salad

- 1 1/2 pounds small new potatoes, halved
- 12 ounces fresh edible ostrich-fern fiddleheads from a reputable food supplier
- 4 radishes, thinly sliced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

For the dressing

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus salt for the potato water
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

01 Clean the fiddleheads. Trim tough stem ends and remove all brown papery husks. Wash the fiddleheads thoroughly in several changes of clean cold water, lifting them out each time to leave grit behind. Do not taste them raw.

02 Cook the potatoes. Cover the potatoes with cold water by 1 inch and salt lightly. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 12 to 18 minutes, until tender. Drain and steam-dry for 2 minutes.

03 Fully cook the fiddleheads. Meanwhile, bring a separate large pot of generous fresh water to a boil. Add the cleaned fiddleheads, return to a full boil, and boil for 15 minutes. Drain and discard all cooking water. This full cooking step is essential before serving or further cooking.

04 Whisk the dressing. Whisk the oil, lemon juice, mustard, honey, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and pepper. Fold in the warm drained potatoes so they absorb some dressing.

05 Combine and serve. Add the fully cooked, drained fiddleheads, radishes, scallions, and parsley. Fold gently, keeping the potatoes intact. Serve warm in a shallow bowl, spooning any remaining dressing over the vegetables.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use fiddleheads sold for eating by a reputable supplier; other fern shoots may be unsafe. Follow the full 15-minute boil even if they look tender earlier. If unavailable, use asparagus cut into pieces and simmer separately until tender.

Make it ahead: Fully cook the potatoes and fiddleheads up to one day ahead, cool promptly, and refrigerate separately. Bring them back to steaming hot before dressing for a warm salad. Slice radishes and add herbs just before serving.

Jalapeño & Cheddar Skillet Cornbread

A golden crust with a warm, cheesy center



A skillet of cornbread changes the mood of a table before the first wedge is cut. There is the browned edge, the warm corn aroma, and the promise of cheddar tucked into a tender crumb. Jalapeño supplies a friendly glow rather than a challenge, especially when its seeds and ribs are removed. This version has a little honey to round the flavor without turning it into cake. It can stand beside soup, barbecue, or a big salad, and the corner of the kitchen nearest the skillet may become unexpectedly popular.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Riesling or a fresh, gently fruity rosé

Cheddar, corn, and mild jalapeño welcome a wine with fruit and fresh acidity. A hint of sweetness in Riesling softens the chile warmth, while a dry but fruit-forward rosé suits the cornbread when served with a larger meal. Keep alcohol moderate so the jalapeño's gentle heat stays comfortable.

The cooking sip: A small glass of chilled rosé is easy company while the skillet heats, with enough freshness to make the first warm, cheesy wedge especially inviting.

Jalapeño & Cheddar Skillet Cornbread

Makes 8 wedges • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 25 minutes

For the batter

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled, divided
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar, divided
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely diced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced

For the skillet

- 1 tablespoon neutral oil

01 Heat the skillet. Heat the oven to 425°F with a 10-inch cast-iron skillet inside for at least 10 minutes. Have a trivet and oven mitts ready; the handle remains hot after baking.

02 Combine dry ingredients. Whisk the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl, breaking up lumps to distribute the leavening evenly.

03 Mix the batter. Whisk the buttermilk, eggs, honey, and 5 tablespoons of melted butter in another bowl. Pour into the dry ingredients and fold just until no dry flour remains. Fold in 3/4 cup cheddar, the jalapeño, and scallions; do not beat smooth.

04 Fill the hot pan. Carefully remove the skillet. Add the oil and tilt to coat the bottom and sides. Scrape in the batter, spread evenly, and top with the remaining 1/4 cup cheddar.

05 Bake and rest. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden and a skewer inserted into the center comes out without wet batter. Brush with the remaining tablespoon of butter. Cool in the skillet for 10 minutes, then cut into eight wedges and serve warm.

A little kitchen wisdom: For a milder loaf, remove the jalapeño's ribs as well as its seeds. Finely dice the pepper so the heat spreads evenly. Stir the batter gently and bake promptly after mixing; overworking it can make the cornbread tough.

Make it ahead: Bake up to one day ahead, cool completely, wrap, and refrigerate. Reheat covered at 325°F until warm, then uncover briefly to refresh the edges. Freeze individual wedges for up to two months and thaw before reheating.



CHAPTER 03

Sea salt and smoke

Bring the pan to the table and let dinner become the centerpiece.

Avery's seafood photographs have a wonderful sense of occasion. There is a pan to gather around, a shell to crack, a spoon to dip, and almost always a reason to pass the bread. This chapter follows that energy from a quiet cedar-planked supper to a paella with enough personality to take over the patio.



Avery's Backyard Seafood Paella

The pan that turns dinner into a party



A pan of paella announces that everyone belongs to the same delicious occasion. Red peppers, green peas, glossy shells, and pink prawns make an edible centerpiece, with smoky chorizo tucked into the saffron rice below. Inspired by Avery's exuberant seafood pans, this version makes room for theater and passing plates. A cold bottle arrives, someone claims a favorite shellfish, and the backyard becomes the best restaurant in town. The serving spoon should be large; the invitation should be larger.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Spanish rosé or a lively Albariño

Dry rosé has enough red-fruit flavor to meet the chorizo and peppers, while its freshness keeps the shellfish feeling bright. Albariño takes a more coastal route, emphasizing citrus and a saline impression. Either style stays nimble through the many flavors sharing this very crowded pan.

The cooking sip: Pour a small glass of dry Cava while the vegetables soften; its bubbles make the long anticipation feel like part of the celebration.

Avery's Backyard Seafood Paella

Serves 6 generous servings • Prep 35 minutes • Cook 45 minutes, plus 8 minutes resting

The rice

2 tablespoons olive oil
6 ounces cured Spanish chorizo, diced
1 onion, finely diced
1 red bell pepper, sliced
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
2 ripe tomatoes, grated
2 cups bomba or Calasparra rice
5 cups hot low-sodium seafood or chicken stock, plus extra if needed
1/2 teaspoon saffron threads
3/4 cup frozen peas
Kosher salt and black pepper

The seafood

1 pound clams, scrubbed
1 pound mussels, scrubbed and debearded
1 1/2 pounds large raw prawns, peeled and deveined
8 ounces cooked crab meat or cracked crab legs, optional
1/4 cup chopped parsley
2 lemons, cut into wedges

01 Prepare the heat. Use a 16-inch paella pan on a broad burner or medium grill, about 400°F. Steep saffron in hot stock; keep extra stock warm.

02 Build the base. Heat oil. Cook chorizo and onion 6 minutes; add pepper for 3 minutes, then garlic and paprika for 30 seconds. Add tomatoes; cook until thick, about 4 minutes.

03 Start the rice. Stir in rice, saffron stock, and a little salt. Spread evenly. Simmer without stirring 12 minutes, rotating the pan if heat is uneven.

04 Add the clams. Nestle clams into rice. Cover with grill lid or loose foil; cook 5 minutes. Add hot stock if rice dries before softening.

05 Finish the seafood. Add mussels, prawns, and peas; cover. Cook 7-10 minutes until rice is tender, shells open, and prawns reach 145°F. Discard unopened shellfish.

06 Rest and gather. Heat optional crab through during the final 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover loosely, and rest 8 minutes. Finish with parsley, pepper, and lemon wedges.

A little kitchen wisdom: Resist stirring once the stock goes in. An even, gentle simmer matters more than chasing a dramatic crust. If using a smaller pan, divide the recipe between two pans so the rice cooks in a shallow layer.

Make it ahead: Chop vegetables and chorizo one day ahead and refrigerate separately. Measure rice and spices in advance. Clean shellfish shortly before cooking, keep all seafood refrigerated, and cook the paella when guests are ready to gather.

Orange & Dill Cedar-Planked Salmon

A bright Pacific Northwest centerpiece



Orange wheels make this salmon look dressed for a garden party, but the real attraction is the easy conversation between citrus, dill, and gentle cedar smoke. It is a dish with the relaxed confidence of the Pacific Northwest: beautiful fish, a few thoughtful ingredients, and enough room on the plate for whatever the season offers. Avery's photographs suggest the pleasure of presenting salmon on its cooking plank, still fragrant and golden at the edges. A bowl of warm potatoes and a crisp green salad need very little persuasion to join it.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Pinot Gris with citrus and pear notes

Pinot Gris brings enough body for salmon without burying the dill or orange. Its pear and citrus flavors echo the glaze, while a dry finish balances the honey. Choose a fresh, lightly textured style with restrained oak so the cedar remains a gentle accent on the plate.

The cooking sip: An unoaked Chardonnay makes a lovely cooking glass, especially with a few salted almonds while the plank soaks and the grill warms up.

Orange & Dill Cedar-Planked Salmon

Serves 4 servings • Prep 15 minutes, plus 1 hour soaking • Cook 18-25 minutes

Salmon and glaze

1 untreated, food-safe cedar grilling plank large enough for the fish
 1 1/2 pounds center-cut salmon, skin on
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 1 tablespoon honey
 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 1 orange, thinly sliced
 1 lemon, cut into wedges

01 Soak the plank. Submerge the cedar plank in water for at least 1 hour, following its manufacturer's directions. Weight it down so the entire plank soaks. Remove salmon from the refrigerator only when ready to prepare it.

02 Arrange two heat zones. Heat one side of a covered grill to medium, about 400°F, leaving the other side unlit for indirect cooking. Keep water nearby for small plank flare-ups; move the plank away from flames if necessary.

03 Mix the citrus glaze. Stir together oil, mustard, honey, zest, juice, dill, salt, and pepper. Pat salmon dry. Set it skin side down on the drained plank and spread the glaze over the flesh.

04 Add the orange. Overlap orange slices lightly on top, leaving some salmon visible so heat can circulate. Place the plank on the indirect side of the grill and close the lid.

05 Cook and serve. Cook 18-25 minutes, depending on thickness, until the thickest part reaches 145°F. Check occasionally for charring. Transfer the plank carefully to a heatproof tray, rest 3 minutes, and serve with lemon wedges.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use only planks sold for cooking; construction cedar is unsuitable. Keep the plank over indirect heat throughout this recipe. If its edges ignite, move it off the heat safely and extinguish the flames before continuing.

Make it ahead: Mix the glaze up to one day ahead and refrigerate. Slice oranges a few hours before cooking. Keep salmon chilled and add the glaze just before grilling so the fish retains its fresh texture.

Maple-Dijon Planked Salmon

Sweet, savory, and ready for a generous glass



Some combinations earn a permanent place in the dinner rotation because they make everyone look good. Maple and Dijon belong to that useful little club. The syrup softens the mustard's sharp edges, garlic keeps the glaze firmly on the savory side, and cedar gives the whole thing a whisper of the outdoors. Inspired by Avery's shining planked salmon, this is an inviting centerpiece with very little last-minute fuss. It leaves the cook free to toss a salad, open something delicious, and enjoy the company before the fish reaches the table.

PAIR IT WITH

Lightly oaked Chardonnay

A Chardonnay with bright acidity and modest oak has the breadth to meet the salmon and the roundness to suit maple. A little toasted character also connects with cedar smoke. The key is balance: a very buttery, heavily oaked bottle can make this gently sweet glaze feel heavier than intended.

The cooking sip: Start with a crisp dry rosé while preparing the glaze; its red-fruit lift offers a cheerful preview of the salmon's sweet-savory character.

Maple-Dijon Planked Salmon

Serves 4 servings • Prep 15 minutes, plus 1 hour soaking • Cook 18-25 minutes

For the grill

1 untreated, food-safe cedar grilling plank

1 1/2 pounds salmon fillet, skin on

Maple-Dijon glaze

2 tablespoons pure maple syrup

1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

2 garlic cloves, finely grated

1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley, plus extra to finish

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1 lemon, thinly sliced

01 Soak the cedar. Submerge the plank in water for at least 1 hour, or as the manufacturer directs. Choose a plank that supports the fish without its edges hanging far over the sides.

02 Prepare the grill. Set up a covered grill with a medium heat zone, about 400°F, and an unlit zone for indirect cooking. Have water close by for small flare-ups, and a heatproof tray ready for the cooked plank.

03 Whisk the glaze. Combine maple syrup, Dijon, oil, lemon juice, garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper. Pat the salmon dry and inspect for pin bones. Place skin side down on the soaked, drained plank.

04 Dress the fish. Lay lemon slices around the salmon on the plank. Brush the glaze evenly over the flesh, using all of it. Place the plank on the indirect side and close the grill lid.

05 Cook gently. Grill 18-25 minutes, until salmon reaches 145°F in the thickest part. Check the plank occasionally and move it away from any flames. Lift onto the prepared tray and rest 3 minutes.

06 Make an entrance. Scatter extra parsley over the fish. Serve on the heatproof tray with cooked lemon slices, lifting portions away from the skin.

A little kitchen wisdom: Maple syrup can scorch over direct flame, which is another reason to keep the plank on the indirect side. A thermometer through the side of the thickest section gives a more reliable reading than judging color alone.

Make it ahead: Prepare and refrigerate the glaze up to two days ahead. Check the salmon for pin bones earlier in the day and keep chilled. Soak the plank while organizing the rest of dinner, then glaze just before cooking.

Rosemary, Lemon & Cedar Salmon

Wood smoke, garden herbs, and golden edges



Rosemary gives this salmon a slightly wilder personality: piney, fragrant, and happy beside the grill. Lemon and a thin coating of mustard keep the herb from taking over, while the cedar adds another quiet woodland note. The photograph that inspired it has all the appeal of a meal caught in the making, before the polished serving platter arrives. That is part of the fun. Good cooking has its own beauty, and a salmon fillet resting on a smoky plank hardly needs decoration beyond a few fresh herbs and people ready to eat.

PAIR IT WITH

Fresh, medium-bodied Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir's red-fruit flavor feels at home with salmon's richness, and its earthy side makes a natural bridge to rosemary and cedar. Choose a supple wine with modest oak and lively acidity. Strong tannins can dominate the fish, while this lighter style lets the herbs remain wonderfully clear.

The cooking sip: A small glass of dry sparkling rosé keeps the cook company while the plank soaks and tastes especially good with a simple cheese nibble.

Rosemary, Lemon & Cedar Salmon

Serves 4 servings • Prep 15 minutes, plus 1 hour soaking • Cook 18-25 minutes

The salmon

- 1 untreated, food-safe cedar grilling plank
- 1 1/2 pounds salmon fillet, skin on
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 small rosemary sprigs
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

01 Give the plank a bath. Soak the plank submerged in water for at least 1 hour, following its package instructions. Drain just before cooking. Never substitute treated wood or a piece of building lumber.

02 Create gentle heat. Heat a covered grill to about 400°F with one burner or side unlit. The plank will cook over this indirect zone. Set out long tongs, a heatproof tray, and water for small flare-ups.

03 Make the herb coating. Stir oil, Dijon, lemon zest and juice, garlic, chopped rosemary, thyme, salt, and pepper together. Pat the salmon dry and place it skin side down on the drained plank.

04 Grill with the lid closed. Spread the herb coating over the flesh and lay the rosemary sprigs on top. Put the plank over indirect heat. Close the lid and cook 18-25 minutes, checking occasionally for excessive plank charring.

05 Check and finish. When the thickest part of the fish reaches 145°F, lift the plank onto the heatproof tray. Rest 3 minutes. Remove the woody rosemary sprigs and serve the salmon with fresh lemon wedges.

A little kitchen wisdom: Rosemary is potent, so chop the measured teaspoon finely and use the whole sprigs only for aroma. Keep the plank away from direct flame; the aim is a fragrant background, not a fillet surrounded by fire.

Make it ahead: Mix the herb coating the morning of dinner and refrigerate. Keep the washed herb sprigs wrapped in a damp towel. Prepare side dishes first, since the salmon is best served shortly after it comes off the grill.

Garlic-Butter Prawns with Lime

A sizzling skillet worth gathering around



A sizzling skillet brings its own soundtrack to the table. These prawns offer the familiar comfort of garlic butter, then take a lively turn with lime, smoked paprika, and a generous handful of herbs. The sauce is the reason to put bread within everyone's reach before the pan arrives. Inspired by Avery's vivid prawn photographs, this is the kind of dish that invites an informal first course, an extra napkin, and a debate over who gets the last one. It also makes a thoroughly convincing dinner with rice and a crunchy green salad.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Sauvignon Blanc

Sauvignon Blanc's citrus and herbal notes answer the lime and cilantro, while its acidity refreshes the palate after garlic butter. A fruity but dry style is particularly useful if the prawns carry a little chili heat. Keep oak restrained so the sauce stays bright and the seafood remains the star.

The cooking sip: A dry, citrusy sparkling wine makes a festive cooking pour and is happy to remain in the glass when the sizzling prawns arrive.

Garlic-Butter Prawns with Lime

Serves 4 as an appetizer or 2 as a main • Prep 15 minutes • Cook 8 minutes

Prawns and sauce

1 1/2 pounds large raw prawns,
peeled and deveined, tails optional
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes,
optional
3 tablespoons low-sodium seafood or
chicken stock
1 teaspoon finely grated lime zest
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
3 tablespoons chopped cilantro or
parsley
1 lime, cut into wedges
Crusty bread or cooked rice, for
serving

01 Dry and season. Pat the prawns very dry with paper towels. Toss with salt and pepper. Have the remaining ingredients ready; the cooking moves quickly once the skillet gets hot.

02 Sear the first side. Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil and 1 tablespoon butter. When the butter foams, arrange prawns in a single layer and cook 2 minutes. Work in two batches if crowded.

03 Turn down the heat. Flip prawns and reduce heat to medium. Add garlic, paprika, and optional pepper flakes to the open spaces. Stir gently for 30 seconds, keeping the garlic from browning.

04 Make the sauce. Add stock and cook 1-2 minutes, until prawns are opaque throughout and reach 145°F. Remove the skillet from heat. Stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter, lime zest, and lime juice.

05 Finish with herbs. Fold through the chopped herbs. Taste the sauce and add a little salt if needed. Serve immediately with lime wedges and bread or rice to catch the buttery juices.

A little kitchen wisdom: Crowded prawns steam instead of searing. If your skillet is small, cook them in batches, then return them all to the pan for the sauce. Take the pan off the heat before whisking in the final butter.

Make it ahead: Peel and devein prawns earlier the same day and refrigerate. Chop garlic and measure the sauce ingredients in advance. Cook just before serving; reheating can quickly turn tender prawns firm and rubbery.

King Crab, Lemon Butter & Grilled Corn

A summer feast with permission to use your hands



King crab is already a celebration, so the smartest approach is good company and very little interference. Sweet corn, avocado salad, and warm lemon butter create an extravagant plate that asks surprisingly little of the cook. Avery's photograph captures that glorious tangle of orange shell and summer color. This interpretation keeps the same generous spirit. Put crackers and napkins on the table, let everyone settle into opening shells, and allow dinner to take as long as the conversation requires.

PAIR IT WITH

Traditional-method brut sparkling wine

Fine bubbles and bright acidity make a wonderful companion to sweet crab and melted butter. A brut sparkling wine brings enough texture for this luxurious plate without distracting from the seafood. Its fresh citrus character also echoes the lemon and offers a lively contrast to the corn's sweetness.

The cooking sip: Open a dry Riesling while the corn grills; its orchard-fruit aroma and fresh finish suit a sunny, slightly messy seafood evening very well.

King Crab, Lemon Butter & Grilled Corn

Serves 4 servings • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 15 minutes

Crab and corn

2 1/2 pounds fully cooked king crab legs, thawed in the refrigerator
4 ears corn, husked
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, divided

Lemon butter

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 garlic clove, lightly crushed
1 teaspoon lemon zest
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 lemon, cut into wedges

The salad

4 cups mixed salad greens
1 avocado, sliced
2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
Black pepper

01 Heat the grill and steamer. Heat a grill to medium-high. Simmer 1 inch of water in a large pot fitted with a steamer basket. Cut crab legs at joints to fit.

02 Grill the corn. Brush corn with olive oil and season with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Grill 10-14 minutes, turning regularly, until tender with scattered charred spots. Move to a platter and cover loosely.

03 Warm the crab. Place cooked crab legs in the steamer, cover, and steam 6-8 minutes, or until thoroughly hot. Work in batches if needed. This warms already cooked crab; follow package instructions if they differ.

04 Flavor the butter. Meanwhile, melt butter with garlic over low heat for 3 minutes. Remove garlic. Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, parsley, and a pinch of the remaining salt.

05 Toss the salad. Gently combine greens, avocado, and tomatoes. Dress with extra-virgin olive oil, lemon juice, the remaining salt, and black pepper. Keep the dressing light so the salad stays refreshing.

06 Set out the feast. Divide crab, corn, and salad among plates. Serve butter in small bowls with lemon wedges, shell crackers, seafood picks, and a bowl for empty shells.

A little kitchen wisdom: Most king crab is sold fully cooked. Check the label before you begin, thaw it in the refrigerator, and warm gently. Use kitchen shears to open a few shells before serving if that makes the table more comfortable.

Make it ahead: Thaw crab overnight in the refrigerator. Prepare lemon butter one day ahead and rewarm gently. Wash greens and cut tomatoes a few hours ahead; slice avocado and dress the salad immediately before serving.

Mussels with Bacon, Cider & Scallions

A big bowl, a good loaf, a very happy table



Mussels have a wonderful ability to turn a short ingredient list into a dinner that feels like an event. Here, crisp bacon lends a smoky foundation, dry cider supplies apple brightness, and scallions keep every spoonful lively. Avery's photograph is gloriously piled high, which is exactly the right attitude for this recipe. The broth deserves as much attention as the shells, so a good loaf is essential equipment. Bring the pot to the table, pass deep bowls, and leave a little space for the inevitable second piece of bread.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Chenin Blanc

Chenin Blanc can offer apple-like fruit that links beautifully with the cider, alongside the acidity needed for bacon and butter. A dry, lightly textured bottle has enough substance for the broth while preserving the mussels' delicacy. Avoid a noticeably sweet style, which can make this savory bowl feel less precise.

The cooking sip: A small glass of the dry cider used in the pot is an easy cooking companion, especially with a few slices of sharp cheddar.

Mussels with Bacon, Cider & Scallions

Serves 4 servings • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 18 minutes

For the pot

3 pounds live mussels
 4 thick-cut bacon slices, diced
 1 large shallot, finely sliced
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 4 scallions, sliced, white and green parts separated
 1 cup dry hard cider
 1/2 cup low-sodium seafood or chicken stock
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
 Black pepper
 1 lemon, cut into wedges
 1 crusty baguette, warmed

01 Clean the mussels. Keep mussels refrigerated until needed. Scrub under cold running water and pull away beards. Discard cracked shells and mussels that remain open after a firm tap. Do not soak them in fresh water.

02 Crisp the bacon. Cook bacon in a large, lidded pot over medium heat for 6-8 minutes. Transfer half to a small bowl for finishing. Leave about 1 tablespoon rendered fat in the pot.

03 Build the broth. Add shallot and scallion whites. Cook 3 minutes until softened. Add garlic for 30 seconds, then cider, stock, and Dijon. Bring to a lively simmer, scraping up the browned bits.

04 Steam the shells. Add mussels and cover. Cook 5-7 minutes, shaking the pot carefully once or twice, until shells open. Transfer open mussels to a bowl as needed; discard any that stay closed after cooking.

05 Finish generously. Remove pot from heat. Stir butter, parsley, lemon juice, scallion greens, and black pepper into the broth. Return mussels, toss gently, and top with reserved bacon. Serve with lemon wedges and warm baguette.

A little kitchen wisdom: Buy mussels from a trusted seafood counter and store them in a colander over a bowl, covered with a damp towel in the refrigerator. Never seal live mussels in an airtight container or leave them submerged in water.

Make it ahead: Slice aromatics and dice bacon up to one day ahead, refrigerating separately. Clean mussels close to cooking time. Set the table first: the mussels take only minutes and taste best while their fragrant broth is piping hot.

Seared Scallop Pad Thai

Sweet, sour, salty, and gloriously tangled



A tangle of noodles becomes dinner-party worthy with golden scallops perched on top. The pleasure is in the contrasts: tender seafood, chewy noodles, crunchy sprouts, toasted peanuts, and sauce dancing between sweet, sour, and salty. Avery's photograph adds avocado to the familiar pad Thai landscape, a playful optional finish here. This interpretation is built for a home kitchen and a crowded table, with the chopping done before the pan gets hot and lime wedges ready for enthusiastic squeezing.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Riesling

A little residual sweetness cushions chili heat and balances the tamarind's tartness, while Riesling's acidity keeps the noodles feeling lively. Its citrus and stone-fruit flavors are especially flattering to scallops. Choose an off-dry wine with a fresh finish, rather than a rich dessert style that would overwhelm the dish.

The cooking sip: Dry Pinot Blanc is a gentle cooking glass while the noodles soak, offering enough fruit to accompany a few peanuts without stealing the spotlight.

Seared Scallop Pad Thai

Serves 4 servings • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 15 minutes

Noodles and seafood

8 ounces medium-width dried rice noodles
 1 pound dry-packed sea scallops, side muscles removed
 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 3 tablespoons neutral oil, divided
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 2 cups bean sprouts
 4 scallions, cut into 1-inch pieces
 1/3 cup roasted unsalted peanuts, chopped
 1 avocado, sliced, optional
 1 lime, cut into wedges

The sauce

3 tablespoons prepared, ready-to-use tamarind paste, not concentrated extract
 2 tablespoons fish sauce
 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
 2 tablespoons water
 1 teaspoon chili-garlic sauce, optional

01 Soften and organize. Soak noodles as directed until flexible but slightly firm. Drain. Whisk sauce ingredients until sugar dissolves. Pat scallops dry; season with salt.

02 Sear the scallops. Heat tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Sear scallops 2-3 minutes per side until opaque and 145°F. Transfer to a warm plate.

03 Cook the eggs. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a wok or large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic for 20 seconds. Pour in eggs and scramble until just set, about 1 minute.

04 Toss the noodles. Add drained noodles and sauce. Toss with tongs for 3-5 minutes until tender and glossy, adding water a tablespoon at a time if noodles remain firm or begin to stick.

05 Add the crunch. Fold in sprouts and scallions. Stir-fry 1-2 minutes until sprouts are steaming hot but still crisp. Stir in half the peanuts. Taste and adjust with a squeeze of lime if desired.

06 Build the bowls. Divide noodles among four bowls and add scallops. Finish with remaining peanuts, optional avocado, and lime wedges. Serve immediately while the noodles are loose and the scallops are warm.

A little kitchen wisdom: Prepared tamarind products vary enormously. This recipe uses a spoonable, ready-to-use paste; intensely concentrated extract needs dilution according to its label. Taste the mixed sauce before cooking; it should be assertively tangy, salty, and gently sweet.

Make it ahead: Mix sauce and chop garnishes one day ahead; refrigerate separately. Soak noodles shortly before cooking. Dry scallops thoroughly and keep chilled until searing. Finish the dish just before serving, since rice noodles tighten as they sit.

The Grand Seafood Boil

Crab, lobster, corn, and a table full of possibilities



A seafood boil is wonderfully generous: everyone chooses their favorites, and formality disappears beneath a pile of shells. Inspired by Avery's abundant platter, this version layers potatoes, smoky sausage, sweet corn, mussels, and an unapologetic collection of crustaceans. The trick is timing, with sturdy ingredients going in first and delicate seafood joining later. The result looks like a holiday even when the calendar insists otherwise. Napkins, lemon butter, and something cold in the glasses complete the invitation.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry rosé with bright acidity

A dry rosé comfortably travels between smoky sausage, sweet corn, rich lobster, and briny mussels. Its fruit softens the impression of spice without adding sweetness, and its acidity refreshes after lemon butter. A fresh, medium-bodied style is more useful here than a highly oaked or intensely tannic wine.

The cooking sip: A cold, dry sparkling wine makes a fine first glass while potatoes simmer and the seafood platter waits for its very dramatic entrance.

The Grand Seafood Boil

Serves 6 servings • Prep 35 minutes • Cook 35 minutes

For a 16- to 20-quart pot

1 1/2 pounds small potatoes, halved if large
 12 ounces fully cooked smoked sausage, cut into thick coins
 4 ears corn, each cut into thirds
 2 lemons, halved, plus extra wedges to serve
 1 garlic head, halved across the middle
 2 bay leaves
 3 tablespoons salt-free Cajun-style seasoning
 1 tablespoon kosher salt
 4 quarts water
 4 raw lobster tails, about 5 ounces each
 1 pound live mussels, cleaned
 1 pound fully cooked crab legs, thawed
 1 pound fully cooked crawfish, thawed
 1/4 cup chopped parsley

Lemon butter

8 tablespoons unsalted butter
 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 1 garlic clove, finely grated
 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

01 Make a fragrant pot. Boil water, halved lemons, garlic head, bay leaves, seasoning, and tablespoon salt. Scrub mussels; discard cracked shells and those that do not close when tapped.

02 Start the potatoes. Simmer potatoes 12-15 minutes until almost tender. Add sausage and corn; simmer 5 minutes. Maintain a steady simmer as additions cool the broth.

03 Cook the lobster. Add lobster; simmer 4 minutes. Add mussels, cooked crab, and crawfish. Cover; simmer 5-7 minutes until mussels open and lobster is opaque and 145°F.

04 Check the whole pot. Confirm potatoes are tender and precooked seafood thoroughly hot, following package directions. Remove open mussels as they finish; discard those that remain closed.

05 Melt the butter. Melt butter with grated garlic over low heat for 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in lemon juice and 1/4 teaspoon salt.

06 Pile it high. Lift food from broth with a slotted spoon; drain well. Arrange on a warm platter, scatter with parsley, and serve with lemon wedges and butter.

A little kitchen wisdom: The raw and precooked seafood in this recipe have different jobs in the pot. Read labels before starting. If the pot becomes crowded, cook seafood in batches in the same broth, keeping finished portions covered and warm.

Make it ahead: Thaw cooked seafood in the refrigerator overnight. Cut corn and sausage and make lemon butter one day ahead. Keep raw lobster separate from ready-to-eat ingredients. Clean mussels and cook the entire feast shortly before serving.

Sesame Salmon with Snap Peas & Cucumber

A crisp, green plate with a coastal wink



This plate offers satisfying contrasts: crisp salmon skin, glossy snap peas, cool cucumber, and the briny crunch of sea asparagus. Inspired by Avery's colorful salmon dinner, it takes a simple fish fillet in a fresh, sesame-scented direction. The cucumber dressing brightens the rich fish, while the greens make the meal feel like spring has arrived early. There is enough interest for a special dinner, but nothing so demanding that the cook misses the first round of conversation.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Grüner Veltliner

Grüner Veltliner's citrus, green-fruit, and sometimes peppery character is a useful companion to crunchy vegetables and sesame. Bright acidity balances the salmon, while a dry finish keeps the cucumber salad refreshing. A clean, medium-bodied example also gives the sea asparagus room to contribute its distinctive savory edge.

The cooking sip: A fresh Pinot Grigio is an easy early pour while the cucumber marinates, particularly alongside a small bowl of lightly salted roasted nuts.

Sesame Salmon with Snap Peas & Cucumber

Serves 4 servings • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 15 minutes

Salmon and greens

4 skin-on salmon fillets, about 6 ounces each
 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
 2 tablespoons neutral oil, divided
 12 ounces snap peas, trimmed
 3 ounces sea asparagus (samphire), tough ends removed, or 3 extra ounces snap peas
 1 garlic clove, minced
 1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger
 1 tablespoon water

Cucumber salad

1 large English cucumber
 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
 1 teaspoon sugar
 1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce
 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
 1 teaspoon sesame seeds
 2 sliced scallions

01 Make the cool salad. Cut cucumber into pieces or ribbons. Whisk vinegar, sugar, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Add cucumber, teaspoon sesame seeds, and scallions; toss and set aside.

02 Prepare the salty greens. Blanch sea asparagus in unsalted boiling water 30 seconds; drain. Taste its natural saltiness before adding any extra salt to the vegetables.

03 Season the salmon. Pat fish dry; season with measured salt and pepper. Press tablespoon sesame seeds onto flesh. Heat tablespoon neutral oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high.

04 Sear and finish. Place salmon skin side down and cook 5-6 minutes, pressing gently for the first 20 seconds. Turn carefully, reduce heat to medium, and cook 3-5 minutes more until the thickest part reaches 145°F.

05 Quickly cook the greens. Transfer fish to warm plates. In a second skillet, heat remaining tablespoon oil over medium-high. Add snap peas, garlic, ginger, and water. Stir-fry 3 minutes; add blanched sea asparagus for the final 30 seconds.

06 Bring it together. Add warm vegetables and cucumber salad to the salmon plates. Spoon over a little salad dressing. Serve promptly to preserve crisp skin and cool cucumbers.

A little kitchen wisdom: Sea asparagus is an optional flourish, not a reason to postpone dinner. Extra snap peas work beautifully. Patting salmon skin dry and letting it cook undisturbed are the two most useful steps for a crisp, clean release.

Make it ahead: Mix the salad dressing and trim vegetables one day ahead. Refrigerate separately. Toss cucumber with dressing about 15 minutes before serving. Keep salmon chilled until the pans and the rest of dinner are ready.



WHAT INSPIRES AVERY

The Philippines

A bright and generous influence

A bright and generous influence

The Philippine photographs bring a different light to Avery's story: water at sunset, tropical fruit, a table by the sea, and friends leaning close enough to fit into the frame. Food sits comfortably inside that wider pleasure of being somewhere together.

Filipino influence gives this kitchen a lively sense of balance. Sour tamarind broth makes the next spoonful irresistible. Soy and vinegar give adobo its savory depth. Rice catches the sauce; garlic and ginger keep the meal awake. These are flavors with enough personality to welcome a curious wine beside them.

The sinigang photograph is the clearest anchor: a carefully presented bowl, bright vegetables, and a star-fruit flourish. The recipe here follows the idea of a light fish sinigang, while leaving space for Avery to tell us what was truly in her pot. Around it, coconut, citrus, sweet-sour sauce, and shared plates create a chapter that looks outward without losing its center.





Bring the sourness, the rice, and the welcome.

A Filipino inspired supper

A few dishes to carry the mood back to the kitchen

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CHAPTER 04

A world of flavor

A curious kitchen always has room for another flavor.

Filipino sourness, coconut warmth, ginger, garlic, rice, and the pleasure of sharing form the center of this chapter. Around them is room for dumplings, Japanese rice triangles, and a hot pot that invites everyone to become a cook. The influences are many; the welcome is familiar.



Filipino Fish Sinigang

A bright, sour broth with a generous heart



Sinigang brings a particular comfort: savory broth sharpened with tamarind, tender vegetables, and gently simmered fish. Avery's photograph adds a star fruit garnish, a bright detail that makes the bowl feel personal. This interpretation follows the dish's sour, welcoming spirit, ready for her own refinements later. The pleasure is in adjusting the broth until it feels alive: a little more tamarind, a little more fish sauce, then a spoonful over warm rice and another taste.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry or gently off-dry Riesling

Sinigang's sour broth calls for a wine with its own lively acidity. Riesling can meet that brightness while adding citrus and orchard-fruit flavor beside the fish. A touch of residual sweetness is useful if the optional chili is present, though the wine should still finish fresh and light.

The cooking sip: A small glass of dry sparkling wine is a cheerful preparation pour, especially while tasting and adjusting the soup's lively tamarind balance.

Filipino Fish Sinigang

Serves 4 servings • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 25 minutes

The soup

1 tablespoon neutral oil
 1 small onion, sliced
 2 ripe tomatoes, cut into wedges
 5 cups low-sodium fish or vegetable stock
 2-3 tablespoons prepared, ready-to-use tamarind paste
 1 tablespoon fish sauce, plus more to taste
 8 ounces daikon radish, peeled and thinly sliced
 6 ounces green beans, trimmed and halved
 1 mild green chili, left whole, optional
 1 1/4 pounds firm white fish such as cod or halibut, cut into 2-inch pieces
 3 cups baby spinach or tender water spinach leaves
 1 star fruit, thinly sliced, optional garnish
 Cooked jasmine rice, for serving

01 Soften the aromatics. Heat oil in a medium soup pot over medium heat. Add onion and cook 4 minutes until softened. Add tomatoes and cook 3 minutes, stirring gently so they begin to release their juices.

02 Make the sour broth. Pour in stock. Stir in 2 tablespoons tamarind paste and the fish sauce. Bring to a gentle simmer, then add daikon and optional whole chili. Simmer 8 minutes, until daikon is nearly tender.

03 Add the beans. Stir in green beans and cook 4 minutes. Taste the broth. Add the remaining tamarind a little at a time for more tang, or a small splash of fish sauce for savory depth.

04 Poach the fish. Lower fish pieces into the simmering soup. Cook gently for 4-6 minutes, depending on thickness, until opaque, easily flaked, and 145°F in the center. Avoid a vigorous boil that could break the fish.

05 Finish with greens. Fold in spinach and simmer 1 minute until wilted. Remove the whole chili if used. Ladle into bowls, add optional star fruit slices, and serve alongside jasmine rice for spooning into the broth.

A little kitchen wisdom: Tamarind strength varies by brand. Use prepared paste here, not a highly concentrated extract, and build the sourness gradually. If star fruit is unsuitable for a guest's diet, leave it out; the soup already has plenty of character.

Make it ahead: Make the broth with daikon one day ahead, cool promptly, and refrigerate. Reheat to a simmer, then add beans, fish, and greens just before serving so the vegetables stay lively and the fish remains tender.

Chicken Adobo & Garlic Rice

Vinegar, soy, and the comfort of another spoonful



PHILIPPINE TRAVEL INSPIRATION

Adobo makes a kitchen smell like dinner long before anyone is called to the table. Vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves turn chicken into something deeply savory and wonderfully spoonable. This version is a companion to Avery's Philippine travel pages, ready for her own refinements later. Garlic rice catches every drop of sauce. A crisp cucumber salad brings freshness, while the pot encourages the very sensible idea of going back for more.

PAIR IT WITH

Juicy, lightly chilled Gamay

Gamay's bright red fruit and gentle tannins work well with the chicken and the adobo's savory sauce. Its freshness helps navigate the vinegar without making the meal feel sharper. Choose a supple, fruit-forward style and serve it slightly cool; heavily tannic reds can feel stern beside this tangy braise.

The cooking sip: A dry rosé is a lovely cooking glass while the adobo simmers, particularly with cucumber slices or a few crisp, lightly salted crackers.

Chicken Adobo & Garlic Rice

Serves 4 servings • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 45 minutes

Chicken adobo

2 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
1 tablespoon neutral oil
1/3 cup low-sodium soy sauce
1/3 cup cane vinegar or unseasoned rice vinegar
3/4 cup water
8 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon black peppercorns, lightly cracked
1 tablespoon brown sugar, optional
2 sliced scallions, to finish

Garlic rice

1 1/2 cups jasmine rice
Water as directed on the rice package
2 tablespoons neutral oil
5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

01 Start the rice. Rinse rice; cook with water according to package directions. Spread on a plate to release steam while chicken cooks. Proceed with frying promptly.

02 Brown the chicken. Pat thighs dry. Heat tablespoon oil in a deep skillet over medium-high heat. Brown chicken skin side down for 6 minutes, then turn and cook 3 minutes. Spoon away excess fat, leaving about 1 tablespoon.

03 Build the braise. Add soy sauce, vinegar, water, crushed garlic, bay leaves, peppercorns, and optional sugar. Bring to a boil, then lower to a gentle simmer. Cover and cook 20 minutes, turning chicken halfway through.

04 Reduce the sauce. Uncover; simmer 10-15 minutes until chicken is tender and at least 165°F. Reduce sauce further without chicken if needed. Discard bay leaves; dilute with water if intense.

05 Fry the garlic rice. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add chopped garlic and cook 1-2 minutes until pale gold. Immediately add cooked rice and salt. Stir-fry over medium heat for 3-4 minutes until steaming hot.

06 Serve with sauce. Divide garlic rice among plates and add chicken. Spoon over the glossy sauce and soft garlic cloves. Scatter with scallions and serve while hot.

A little kitchen wisdom: Soy sauces vary in saltiness, so use low-sodium sauce and reduce gradually. Chicken thighs tolerate the gentle braise beautifully. For an easier table, remove the whole peppercorns with a small strainer or bundle them in cheesecloth before cooking.

Make it ahead: Adobo develops wonderful flavor overnight. Cool promptly, refrigerate, and reheat chicken and sauce to 165°F. If cooking rice ahead, cool quickly, refrigerate within two hours, and use chilled rice for the garlic-rice step.

Coconut-Ginger Salmon Bowls

Creamy coconut, bright lime, and plenty of green



Coconut milk gives salmon a soft landing, while ginger and lime keep the bowl awake. Inspired by Avery's photograph of pink fish, white rice, green scallions, and tangled sprouts, this recipe brings tropical warmth to an ordinary evening. The fragrant sauce leaves room for chili at the table. Rice catches the coconut broth, vegetables add freshness, and salmon settles into the middle as though invited there all along. It is comfort food with a passport.

PAIR IT WITH

Aromatic, gently off-dry Riesling

Riesling's citrus and stone-fruit aromas suit ginger, lime, and coconut, while its acidity keeps the creamy sauce from feeling heavy. A small amount of sweetness also cushions the curry paste. Choose a fresh, moderate-alcohol bottle so the gentle heat remains pleasant and the salmon's flavor stays clear.

The cooking sip: A dry Chenin Blanc makes a bright cooking pour as the aromatics soften, and its apple-like fruit is lovely with a few toasted cashews.

Coconut-Ginger Salmon Bowls

Serves 4 servings • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 25 minutes

Rice and salmon

1 cup jasmine rice
 Water as directed on the rice package
 4 skinless salmon fillets, about 6 ounces each
 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
 1 tablespoon neutral oil

Coconut sauce

1 small shallot, finely chopped
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
 1 tablespoon mild green curry paste
 1 can (13.5 ounces) full-fat coconut milk
 1/2 cup low-sodium vegetable stock
 1 tablespoon fish sauce
 1 teaspoon brown sugar
 4 ounces green beans, cut into 2-inch pieces
 1 cup bean sprouts
 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 4 scallions, sliced
 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
 1 lime, cut into wedges

01 Cook the rice. Rinse rice; cook as directed. Keep covered and warm. Season salmon with measured salt.

02 Wake up the aromatics. Heat oil in a wide, lidded skillet over medium heat. Add shallot and cook 3 minutes. Stir in garlic, ginger, and curry paste; cook for 1 minute until fragrant, without browning the garlic.

03 Simmer the sauce. Pour in coconut milk and stock. Stir in fish sauce and sugar, bring to a gentle simmer, and add green beans. Cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally.

04 Poach the salmon. Nestle salmon into the sauce. Cover and cook gently for 8-12 minutes, depending on thickness, until the fish is opaque and reaches 145°F in its thickest part. Keep the sauce below a vigorous boil.

05 Finish fresh. Add sprouts around the salmon for the final 2 minutes so they become steaming hot. Remove from heat and stir lime juice into the sauce. Taste and adjust with a little extra fish sauce if needed.

06 Fill the bowls. Spoon rice into warm bowls. Add salmon, beans, sprouts, and plenty of coconut sauce. Finish with scallions, cilantro, and lime wedges.

A little kitchen wisdom: Curry pastes differ in heat and salt, so begin with the measured tablespoon and taste the sauce before adding more. Keep the simmer gentle after adding salmon; the creamy sauce should barely tremble around the fish.

Make it ahead: Make the coconut sauce without vegetables or fish one day ahead and refrigerate. Reheat gently, then add beans and salmon as directed. Prepare herbs and scallions ahead, keeping them chilled until serving.

Coconut Squash & Prawn Curry

Golden comfort with peanuts and a squeeze of lime



Avery's golden bowl suggests a wonderful starting point: a smooth, warmly spiced base, tender prawns, peanuts, and a fresh green finish. Here, squash and coconut milk become a silky curry that feels indulgent without losing its brightness. Ginger, lime, and a restrained spoonful of curry paste balance the sweetness. It welcomes a rainy evening, though a colorful side salad can persuade it into summer. There is always room for one more squeeze of lime.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Chenin Blanc

Chenin Blanc's orchard-fruit character complements squash, while its acidity brings lift to coconut milk. A gently off-dry style is useful alongside curry heat and the naturally sweet prawns. The peanuts add savory depth, making a wine with a little texture especially satisfying without requiring weight or obvious oak.

The cooking sip: An aromatic Pinot Gris is an appealing cooking glass while the squash simmers, offering soft fruit and an easy transition to the finished curry.

Coconut Squash & Prawn Curry

Serves 4 servings • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 30 minutes

The curry

- 1 tablespoon neutral oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon mild yellow or red Thai curry paste
- 1 1/2 pounds peeled butternut squash, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 can (13.5 ounces) full-fat coconut milk
- 1 1/2 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1 pound large raw prawns, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

To serve

- 1/3 cup roasted unsalted peanuts, chopped
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves
- 1/4 cup pea shoots, optional
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- Cooked jasmine rice

01 Soften the onion. Heat oil in a medium heavy pot over medium heat. Cook onion for 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Add garlic and ginger and cook 1 minute, stirring so they do not catch.

02 Bloom the spices. Stir in curry paste for 30 seconds. Add squash, coconut milk, stock, fish sauce, and sugar. Bring to a gentle simmer, then partially cover.

03 Cook until tender. Simmer 18-22 minutes, stirring occasionally, until squash is very tender. Add a splash of water if the mixture becomes too thick before the squash softens.

04 Make it silky. Purée with an immersion blender, keeping its head submerged. Alternatively, blend carefully in small batches with the lid vented to release steam.

05 Add the prawns. Return the curry to a gentle simmer. Add prawns and cook 3-5 minutes, stirring gently, until opaque throughout and 145°F. Remove from heat and stir in lime juice. Taste for balance.

06 Add the bright finish. Ladle into bowls over or beside rice. Scatter with peanuts, cilantro, and optional pea shoots. Serve lime wedges at the table for anyone who likes an extra tangy finish.

A little kitchen wisdom: Blend the squash completely for a restaurant-style smooth base, or leave a few chunks for a more rustic bowl. Adjust thickness before adding prawns; once they are cooked, prolonged simmering will make them firm instead of tender.

Make it ahead: Prepare the puréed curry base up to two days ahead, cool promptly, and refrigerate. Reheat gently, loosening with water as needed. Add prawns, lime, and garnishes only when ready to serve.

Filipino-Style Sweet & Sour Pork

Pineapple, colorful peppers, and a glossy skillet sauce



Pineapple, peppers, and glossy sauce make a skillet that wears its cheerful personality with confidence. Inspired by Avery's colorful photograph, this home version gives pork a light cornstarch coating and a quick shallow fry before a final tumble through sweet-and-sour sauce. The balance should be lively enough to invite another bite. Spoon it over rice, add a crisp vegetable, and let the table enjoy a dish that seems positively determined to brighten the evening.

PAIR IT WITH

Fruity, gently off-dry rosé

A rosé with lively fruit and a touch of sweetness can meet pineapple and ketchup without tasting austere. Fresh acidity echoes the vinegar, while low tannins keep the pork and peppers comfortable together. Choose a bright, moderate-alcohol style; the sauce is energetic enough without adding a powerful wine.

The cooking sip: An off-dry Riesling is a bright preparation pour and can stay at the table, especially if a guest adds chili sauce to the finished plate.

Filipino-Style Sweet & Sour Pork

Serves 4 servings • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 25 minutes

Pork and vegetables

- 1 1/4 pounds pork tenderloin, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1/3 cup neutral oil, divided
- 1 onion, cut into wedges
- 1 carrot, thinly sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into chunks
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into chunks
- 1 cup pineapple chunks, drained if canned
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Cooked rice, for serving

Sweet-and-sour sauce

- 1/3 cup pineapple juice
- 1/4 cup cane vinegar or unseasoned rice vinegar
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons water

01 Prepare pork and sauce. Toss pork with tablespoon soy sauce and egg. Separately, whisk sauce ingredients until cornstarch dissolves. Line a clean plate with paper towels.

02 Coat and fry. Heat all but tablespoon oil in a wide skillet over medium-high. Lift pork from egg mixture; coat in 1/2 cup cornstarch. Fry in batches 5-7 minutes, turning, until golden.

03 Check the pork. Confirm pork reaches 145°F; rest on clean plate 3 minutes. Discard unused egg and coating. Pour away frying oil when safe to handle.

04 Keep vegetables bright. Add reserved tablespoon oil to the skillet over medium-high heat. Cook onion and carrot 3 minutes. Add peppers and cook 3 minutes, then pineapple and garlic for 1 minute.

05 Glaze everything. Whisk the sauce again and pour into the skillet. Simmer 1-2 minutes until glossy and lightly thickened. Fold in pork just long enough to coat and heat through, about 1 minute.

06 Serve immediately. Dilute sauce with a little water if intense. Spoon over hot rice and serve immediately, while the coating retains some texture.

A little kitchen wisdom: Keep the pork and sauce apart until the last moment. The coating softens quickly once glazed, so finish the rice and set the table before the final toss. A wide skillet helps the vegetables cook without turning watery.

Make it ahead: Cut vegetables and mix sauce one day ahead, refrigerating separately. Cut pork and keep chilled. Coat and fry close to serving time. The complete dish reheats well for flavor, though its coating will lose its crispness.

Pork & Cabbage Dumplings

A little folding, a little patience, a very good reward



Dumpling making can become part of the evening: a spoonful of filling, a dampened edge, a few uneven pleats. Perfection is optional, and dinner still tastes wonderful. Avery's photographs show a practical little press and bamboo steamer, reminders that good food begins with ordinary tools. This version fills wrappers with pork, cabbage, ginger, and scallions, then steams them until tender. A sharp, savory dipping sauce adds the flourish, and the first opened basket rarely waits long for attention.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry or gently off-dry Riesling

Riesling brings the acidity to refresh after savory pork and enough aromatic fruit to complement ginger. A dry style works beautifully with the plain dipping sauce; a little residual sweetness becomes useful when chili crisp joins in. Its lightness also suits the delicate steamed wrappers instead of weighing them down.

The cooking sip: A crisp dry sparkling wine keeps the folding session cheerful and pairs nicely with the first warm dumpling sacrificed to the cook's quality check.

Pork & Cabbage Dumplings

Makes about 30 dumplings; serves 6 as a starter • Prep 50 minutes • Cook 12-15 minutes per batch

Dumplings

3 cups finely shredded napa cabbage
 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
 1 pound ground pork
 3 scallions, finely sliced
 1 tablespoon finely grated ginger
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
 1 teaspoon sugar
 1/4 teaspoon white or black pepper
 30 large round dumpling wrappers,
 plus spares
 Water, for sealing
 Parchment or spare cabbage leaves,
 for the steamer

Dipping sauce

3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
 1 tablespoon water
 1 teaspoon grated ginger
 1 teaspoon chili crisp, optional

01 Prepare the cabbage. Toss cabbage with salt; stand 10 minutes. Squeeze firmly in a clean towel to remove excess moisture and prevent soggy wrappers.

02 Mix the filling. Mix cabbage, pork, scallions, tablespoon ginger, garlic, tablespoon soy sauce, sesame oil, sugar, and pepper until sticky. Refrigerate between folding batches.

03 Fill and seal. Put a heaped tablespoon filling in each wrapper. Moisten rim, fold into a half-moon, and seal firmly; pleat if desired. Keep unused wrappers covered.

04 Arrange the steamer. Line steamer with perforated parchment or cabbage leaves. Space dumplings apart. Simmer water beneath the basket; water must not touch the dumplings.

05 Steam through. Cover; steam 12-15 minutes. Check a dumpling's center reaches 160°F with a thermometer. Check water between batches. Use clean utensils for cooked dumplings.

06 Dip and enjoy. Whisk dipping-sauce ingredients together. Serve hot dumplings with sauce alongside. Replenish steamer carefully and avoid escaping steam when lifting the lid.

A little kitchen wisdom: A simple, firmly sealed half-moon is better than an elaborate dumpling that opens in the steamer. Avoid overfilling, and press out trapped air as you seal. A dumpling press is welcome if it makes the process more fun.

Make it ahead: Freeze uncooked dumplings in a single layer until firm, then transfer to a freezer bag for up to one month. Steam from frozen, adding several minutes and confirming a 160°F center. Refrigerate mixed sauce separately.

Ginger Beef Noodle Bowls

A warm bowl with bright, crunchy company



A noodle bowl offers small discoveries: a carrot ribbon, a tender leaf of bok choy, a slice of beef, a little egg, then another sip of ginger-scented broth. Inspired by Avery's neatly arranged bowl, this version keeps components distinct until the final pour. It is a weeknight dinner that invites care with presentation. The ingredients accommodate a vegetable drawer with its own opinions, and the broth gives them all a warm place to meet.

PAIR IT WITH

Light, fruit-forward Pinot Noir

A supple Pinot Noir has enough savory depth for beef while staying light beside the ginger broth and tender vegetables. Bright red fruit also offers a friendly contrast to soy sauce. Keep oak and tannins modest, and serve the wine slightly cool so the warm bowl remains refreshing rather than heavy.

The cooking sip: A dry rosé is an easy cooking glass while the stock takes on its ginger fragrance, especially with a few crisp cucumber slices nearby.

Ginger Beef Noodle Bowls

Serves 4 servings • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 20 minutes

Broth and toppings

6 cups low-sodium beef stock
 1 1/2-inch piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced
 3 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
 1 tablespoon unseasoned rice vinegar
 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
 4 eggs
 8 ounces dried wheat noodles or ramen noodles, seasoning packets discarded
 1 pound sirloin steak, trimmed and sliced into thin strips
 1 teaspoon neutral oil
 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 8 ounces baby bok choy, halved
 2 carrots, shaved into ribbons
 4 scallions, thinly sliced
 Black pepper
 Chili oil, optional for serving

01 Infuse the broth. Simmer stock, ginger, and garlic 15 minutes. Strain out aromatics. Return broth to pot; stir in soy sauce, rice vinegar, and sesame oil.

02 Cook the eggs. Lower eggs into gently boiling water; cook 10 minutes for firm yolks. Cool in cold water, peel, quarter, and set in a clean bowl.

03 Prepare the noodles. Cook noodles in a separate pot of boiling water according to package directions. Drain and divide among four large bowls. This keeps excess noodle starch out of the clear broth.

04 Sear the beef. Pat beef strips dry and season with salt. Heat neutral oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook beef in two batches, 2-4 minutes per batch, until at least 145°F, then rest 3 minutes.

05 Tenderize the vegetables. Bring broth back to a simmer. Add bok choy and carrot ribbons; cook 2-3 minutes until leaves wilt and stems are crisp-tender. Taste and add black pepper.

06 Arrange and pour. Divide beef, bok choy, carrots, and egg quarters among noodle bowls. Ladle hot broth around the toppings. Scatter with scallions and offer chili oil separately for anyone who wants extra warmth.

A little kitchen wisdom: Slice the steak across the grain for tenderness, and keep it separate from the broth until serving. Cooking noodles in their own pot prevents a cloudy, overly starchy soup and makes it easier to portion attractive bowls.

Make it ahead: Infuse and refrigerate broth up to two days ahead. Hard-cook eggs one day ahead and keep chilled. Slice vegetables in advance. Cook noodles and beef at serving time, then assemble with reheated, simmering broth.

Salmon Onigiri, Two Ways

Little rice parcels with two very good outfits



One wears a crisp nori jacket; the other gets a colorful coat of furikake. Both begin with warm rice and a savory salmon center, inviting something pleasantly hands-on. Avery's photograph makes these rice parcels look like characters waiting to join a picnic. Simple shapes and gentle seasoning leave space for the contrast between seaweed, sesame, and tender rice. They make a lovely lunch or starter beside cucumber salad and a small dish of crunchy pickles.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry sparkling rosé

Sparkling rosé's gentle red-fruit flavor flatters salmon, while bubbles and acidity refresh the palate after the rice. A dry, lightly textured style also works with sesame and nori without making their savory flavors feel harsh. Serve small, cool glasses so these delicate parcels retain their easy, picnic-like charm.

The cooking sip: A dry Pinot Blanc makes a quiet cooking glass while the rice rests, with enough soft fruit to accompany the savory salmon filling.

Salmon Onigiri, Two Ways

Makes 8 onigiri • Prep 35 minutes • Cook 25 minutes, plus brief cooling

Rice and filling

1 1/2 cups Japanese short-grain rice
 Water as directed on the rice package
 8 ounces skinless salmon fillet
 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 1 teaspoon neutral oil
 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
 1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce
 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
 1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

For shaping and finishing

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt in a small dish
 2 nori sheets, each cut into 4 strips
 3 tablespoons furikake seasoning
 Clean water, for dampening hands

01 Cook the rice. Rinse rice until water is less cloudy. Cook according to package or rice-cooker directions. Rest covered 10 minutes, then fluff gently.

02 Cook the salmon. Heat oven to 400°F. Rub salmon with oil and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Bake on a lined tray 10-14 minutes until 145°F. Cool briefly.

03 Make the filling. Flake salmon into a clean bowl, removing any bones. Stir in mayonnaise, soy sauce, lemon juice, and sesame seeds. Let the rice cool just enough to handle comfortably while still warm.

04 Shape the parcels. Wash hands, dampen with clean water, and rub fingertips with a pinch of shaping salt. Flatten 1/4 cup rice in one palm. Add a heaped tablespoon filling; cover with another 1/4 cup rice.

05 Give them two outfits. Press gently into a triangle or round, enclosing the filling completely. Repeat for eight parcels. Wrap four with nori strips. Roll the edges of the other four in furikake, pressing lightly so it adheres.

06 Serve thoughtfully. Serve promptly, adding remaining nori strips alongside if desired. For later use, cool and refrigerate within 2 hours; do not leave filled rice parcels sitting at room temperature for a picnic or long buffet.

A little kitchen wisdom: Warm short-grain rice holds together best; long-grain rice is too loose for these shapes. Damp hands prevent sticking, but avoid soaking the rice. An onigiri mold is a perfectly sensible shortcut, particularly when making several matching parcels.

Make it ahead: Cook the salmon filling one day ahead and refrigerate. Shape onigiri the day they will be eaten. Wrap individually and chill promptly if holding, adding nori at serving time to preserve its crispness.

Avery's Choose-Your-Own Hot Pot

Two broths, many possibilities, one very sociable table



Hot pot turns dinner into a shared adventure, each guest building a bowl from a colorful spread. Avery's photographs show its wonderful abundance: mushrooms, greens, tofu, delicate slices, and steaming pots. This version offers gentle ginger broth and slightly spicy miso broth, making room for different appetites. The host sets out ingredients and utensils, then everyone takes a small turn at cooking, discovers a favorite combination, and happily starts another bowl. Dinner becomes the evening's entertainment.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Riesling or a fresh dry rosé

An off-dry Riesling is especially forgiving beside chili, ginger, and the different toppings moving through the pot. Its acidity keeps the experience bright. Dry rosé offers another flexible route for guests choosing the gentler broth, with fruit and light tannins that work comfortably across pork, shrimp, tofu, and vegetables.

The cooking sip: A dry sparkling wine makes a welcoming first pour while guests choose seats and the broths come to their gentle, fragrant simmer.

Avery's Choose-Your-Own Hot Pot

Serves 6 servings • Prep 45 minutes • Cook 20 minutes for broths, then 30-45 minutes at the table

Two broths

12 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock, divided
 1 2-inch piece ginger, sliced
 4 garlic cloves, crushed
 4 scallions, divided
 3 tablespoons white miso
 1 tablespoon chili-garlic sauce, plus more to taste
 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce

The table

1 pound thinly sliced pork loin
 1 pound raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
 14 ounces firm tofu, cubed
 8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems removed
 8 ounces baby bok choy, separated
 8 ounces broccoli florets
 1 red bell pepper, sliced
 8 ounces fresh wheat noodles
 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
 1/4 cup chopped cilantro

01 Make two bases. Simmer stock, ginger, garlic, and 2 chopped scallions 15 minutes. Strain; divide between two tabletop-safe electric hot pots or one divided pot.

02 Season the second broth. Keep one broth plain. Dissolve miso, chili-garlic sauce, and tablespoon soy sauce in the second. Bring both to a steady simmer.

03 Arrange a clean table. Plate vegetables, tofu, and noodles separately. Keep raw pork and shrimp chilled separately. Provide dedicated raw-food tongs, clean serving utensils, individual bowls, and a thermometer.

04 Mix the dipping sauce. Mix 1/4 cup soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, remaining sliced scallions, and cilantro. Divide into individual bowls. Keep cooked food away from raw-food platters.

05 Cook small batches. Simmer mushrooms, broccoli, and peppers 4-5 minutes; tofu and bok choy 2-3 minutes. Cook pork to 145°F and rest 3 minutes; cook shrimp to 145°F.

06 Finish with noodles. Maintain simmer after additions; retrieve food with clean utensils. Cook noodles as directed. Refill raw trays in chilled batches; discard leftovers from raw-food platters.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use equipment designed for tabletop cooking and set it securely away from dangling cords. Keep raw and cooked utensils distinct. Start with small portions in the broth; overloading drops its temperature and makes doneness harder to judge.

Make it ahead: Prepare broths and dipping sauce one day ahead and refrigerate. Wash and cut vegetables earlier the same day. Keep pork and shrimp refrigerated until service, replenishing small platters rather than leaving the full supply on the table.



WHAT INSPIRES AVERY

Argentina

The pleasure of following a bottle

The pleasure of following a bottle

Argentina adds another chapter to a life spent asking what makes a bottle interesting. Avery's wine travels include Mendoza in 2025, and these photographs carry the pleasure of discovery: a tasting glass, a gathering beneath the trees, and shelves with more possibilities than one visit could ever exhaust.

For this book, that curiosity becomes an invitation to cook with confidence. Put a steak on the grill, make a green chimichurri, and choose a Malbec with enough freshness to keep the meal moving. Let the herbs and the char have a conversation with the fruit in the glass.

The lesson is as much about attention as it is about a particular wine. Smell before sipping. Notice what a sauce changes. Ask why one bottle feels right beside a meal and another does not. Bring home that habit, and a familiar supper can offer a new place to explore.





A tasting glass. A cellar full of possibilities. The pleasure of another discovery.

The best thing to bring home is another reason to be curious.

A table with an Argentine accent

A few dishes to carry the mood back to the kitchen

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CHAPTER 05

Fire comfort and company

Feed people well and leave room for seconds.

Some meals need a stack of napkins. Others need a long afternoon and a pot that barely murmurs. Here are the burgers, tacos, ribs, roasts, and slow-cooked comforts that make a table feel generous. The wines can be serious. The mood can stay wonderfully relaxed.



Seaside Prawn & Scallop Tacos

A small tortilla with a very big vacation mood



Some dinners arrive with their own change of scenery. These tacos suggest a table near the water, something green and tangy, and absolutely no reason to hurry. Prawns bring sweetness, scallops bring a little luxury, and avocado softens the smoky edges. The arrangement is loose, the colors are generous, and the whole plate seems ready for company. The final flourish is peppery arugula and a loose ribbon of lime crema, because even a relaxed taco deserves a good entrance.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Albariño

Albariño's lively acidity and citrus character suit the lime, while its generous fruit leaves room for sweet shellfish. A fresh, unoaked example keeps the scallops in focus. This is a style suggestion to explore together, preferably with a taco already in hand.

The cooking sip: A small glass of dry sparkling wine makes an easy opening pour while the crema is mixed and the seafood is patted dry.

Seaside Prawn & Scallop Tacos

Serves 4 • makes 8 tacos • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 12 minutes

Seafood

12 oz large prawns, peeled and deveined

8 large sea scallops, about 12 oz, side muscles removed

2 tbsp neutral oil, divided

1 garlic clove, finely grated

1 tsp smoked paprika

1 tsp finely grated lime zest

3/4 tsp kosher salt

1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Crema & assembly

1/2 cup sour cream

2 tbsp fresh lime juice

1-2 tbsp water

1/4 tsp kosher salt

8 small flour tortillas

1 ripe avocado, sliced

2 cups baby arugula

1 lime, cut into wedges

01 Make it tangy. Stir the sour cream, lime juice, water, and 1/4 teaspoon salt together. Aim for a sauce that drizzles easily. Refrigerate while preparing the seafood.

02 Dry, then season. Pat both kinds of seafood thoroughly dry. Toss the prawns with garlic, paprika, lime zest, 1 tablespoon oil, and half the seafood salt and pepper. Season the scallops with the rest.

03 Give scallops a crust. Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high heat with the remaining oil. Add scallops with space between them. Sear about 2-3 minutes per side, until browned and 145°F in the center. Transfer to a warm plate.

04 Follow with prawns. Add the prawns to the skillet in a single layer. Cook about 2 minutes per side, until opaque and 145°F. Work in batches if necessary; crowding makes them steam.

05 Warm the tortillas. Heat tortillas briefly in a clean skillet, then wrap in a towel. Slice each scallop in half horizontally so its sweetness can find its way into several bites.

06 Build and pass. Divide avocado, arugula, prawns, and scallops among the tortillas. Spoon over crema and serve immediately with lime wedges. Put extra napkins within easy reach.

A little kitchen wisdom: Buy dry-packed scallops when available, and make drying them the most important minute of preparation. A wet surface resists browning. If using frozen seafood, thaw it in the refrigerator and drain well before seasoning.

Make it ahead: Mix the crema up to two days ahead and refrigerate. Wash and dry the arugula earlier in the day. Cook the seafood just before serving, then assemble tacos at the table.

Roasted Squash & Black Bean Tacos

Golden edges, creamy sesame, happy company



A good taco can take a cheerful detour through the pantry. Here, roasted squash meets black beans, sesame, and a lime-bright tahini sauce. The combination borrows freely and lands somewhere entirely its own: sweet, earthy, nutty, and unexpectedly elegant for something eaten with the hands. The finished platter celebrates the pleasure of making vegetables the main event. A scatter of scallions supplies the fresh green finish, and a second helping is a very reasonable plan.

PAIR IT WITH

Off-dry Riesling

A little residual sweetness can echo roasted squash without making the pairing feel heavy. Riesling's acidity also refreshes the sesame sauce and beans. Choose a bright, lightly sweet style with moderate alcohol; the goal is an easy conversation between earthy vegetables, citrus, and fruit.

The cooking sip: Try a small pour of dry rosé while the squash roasts; its freshness makes a pleasant companion to the aromas from the oven.

Roasted Squash & Black Bean Tacos

Serves 4 • makes 8 tacos • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 30 minutes

Roasted squash

1 1/2 lb peeled butternut squash, cut into 3/4-inch cubes

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp smoked paprika

1 tsp ground cumin

3/4 tsp kosher salt

Beans

1 tbsp olive oil

1 garlic clove, minced

1/2 tsp ground cumin

1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed

1/4 cup water

1/4 tsp kosher salt

Sesame sauce & assembly

1/4 cup tahini, well stirred

3 tbsp fresh lime juice

2 tsp maple syrup

3-5 tbsp warm water

8 small flour tortillas

2 scallions, thinly sliced

1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

01 Roast the sunshine. Heat the oven to 425°F. Toss squash with its oil, paprika, cumin, and salt. Spread on a large sheet pan in one layer, leaving a little breathing room between pieces.

02 Find the golden edges. Roast 25-30 minutes, turning after 15 minutes, until tender and browned. Give pale pieces another few minutes without stirring.

03 Make the bean layer. Heat the bean oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in garlic and cumin for 30 seconds. Add beans, water, and salt; simmer 5 minutes. Mash about half the beans, keeping the rest whole.

04 Whisk the sesame sauce. Combine tahini, lime juice, and maple syrup. It may tighten at first. Add warm water a tablespoon at a time, whisking until smooth and spoonable. Taste before adding any extra salt.

05 Warm and gather. Warm tortillas in a dry skillet for 20 seconds per side, then cover with a towel. Bring all the fillings to the table.

06 Layer generously. Spread beans down the center of each tortilla. Add roasted squash, drizzle with tahini sauce, and finish with scallions and sesame. Fold loosely and serve while the squash is hot.

A little kitchen wisdom: Tahini varies in thickness and bitterness. Stir the jar thoroughly before measuring, then loosen the sauce gradually. If a squash cube tastes underseasoned, adjust the tray before assembly; the beans and sauce cannot season its center.

Make it ahead: Roast the squash and cook the beans a day ahead, then refrigerate separately. Reheat the squash in a hot oven and the beans gently with a splash of water. Whisk the sauce again before serving.

The Double Smash Cheeseburger

Crisp edges and absolutely no restraint



There is a particular kind of happiness in a burger that needs two hands. A glossy bun, melted cheese, and those wonderfully ragged browned edges make the case beautifully. This version goes for the full double stack, with a tangy sauce and enough pickle to keep everything lively. It is less a formal dinner than an invitation to lean over the plate, laugh at the first drip, and decide that a very good burger deserves a very good glass.

PAIR IT WITH

Juicy, lightly chilled Gamay

Bright red fruit and refreshing acidity make Gamay a cheerful match for beef, cheese, and tangy burger sauce. A style with gentle tannins leaves room for pickles and mustard. Give the bottle a short chill so the pairing feels as relaxed as the food.

The cooking sip: A dry, fruit-forward rosé works nicely while the toppings are prepared and offers a lighter alternative for anyone joining the burger party.

The Double Smash Cheeseburger

Serves 4 burgers • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 15 minutes

Burger sauce

1/3 cup mayonnaise
2 tbsp ketchup
1 tsp yellow mustard
1 tsp dill pickle brine

Burgers

1 1/2 lb ground beef, preferably 80% lean
1 tbsp neutral oil
1 tsp kosher salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
8 slices American cheese
4 soft burger buns, split
4 lettuce leaves
1/4 small white onion, very thinly sliced
12 dill pickle slices

01 Stir the secret sauce. Mix mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and pickle brine in a small bowl. Refrigerate until needed. Arrange the lettuce, onion, pickles, cheese, and buns before starting the beef.

02 Keep the beef loose. Divide beef into eight equal 3-ounce portions. Loosely roll into balls without kneading. Keep cold while heating a large cast-iron skillet or flat griddle over medium-high heat.

03 Toast the landing pads. Brush the cooking surface lightly with a little of the oil. Toast bun cut sides until golden, about 1 minute. Transfer to plates, then raise the heat slightly and add the remaining oil.

04 Smash with purpose. Add two to four beef balls, depending on pan size. Cover each with a small square of parchment and press firmly with a sturdy metal spatula into a thin patty. Remove parchment and season with salt and pepper.

05 Scrape, flip, melt. Cook undisturbed about 2 minutes. Scrape decisively underneath to preserve the crust, then flip. Add cheese and cook until each patty reaches 160°F, about 1-2 minutes more. Repeat with remaining beef.

06 Make it a double. Spread sauce on bun halves. Layer lettuce, two cheesy patties, onion, and pickles on each base. Close the buns and serve immediately. Thin patties are at their best straight from the griddle.

A little kitchen wisdom: The smash happens once, immediately after the beef hits the pan. Pressing later squeezes out juices without improving the crust. Use a metal spatula sturdy enough to scrape cleanly, and keep the batches small enough for real browning.

Make it ahead: Prepare sauce and toppings a day ahead and refrigerate separately. Portion the beef a few hours ahead, cover, and keep chilled. Toasting, smashing, and stacking should happen just before everyone eats.

Bacon, Avocado & Cheddar Burgers

The glorious green-topped stack



This is a burger with a sense of occasion and a complete disregard for keeping one's sleeves pristine. Its magnificent green crown combines chunky avocado, crisp bacon, sharp cheddar, and a little heat in the sauce. Every layer earns its place: richness, crunch, freshness, tang. It is the sort of generous, colorful plate that fits the spirit of Avery's food, inviting people to settle in and enjoy the delicious business of dinner.

PAIR IT WITH

Fruit-forward Zinfandel

Ripe fruit can meet the bacon's smokiness and the cheddar's intensity, while a Zinfandel with balanced alcohol avoids overwhelming the avocado. Look for freshness as well as generosity. Keep the sriracha modest so the wine and burger stay comfortably in step throughout the meal.

The cooking sip: A chilled glass of dry rosé is a bright cooking companion, especially while the bacon sizzles and the avocado topping comes together.

Bacon, Avocado & Cheddar Burgers

Serves 4 burgers • Prep 25 minutes • Cook 20 minutes

Burgers & toppings

8 slices bacon
 1 1/2 lb ground beef, preferably 80% lean
 1 tsp kosher salt
 1/2 tsp garlic powder
 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
 4 slices sharp cheddar
 4 brioche burger buns, split
 4 lettuce leaves
 1 large tomato, cut into 4 thick slices
 1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced

Avocado & sauce

2 ripe avocados
 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
 2 tbsp chopped cilantro
 1/4 tsp kosher salt
 1/4 cup mayonnaise
 1 tsp sriracha

01 Start with bacon. Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium heat, turning occasionally, until crisp. Transfer to paper towels. Pour off excess fat, leaving a thin film in the pan for the burgers.

02 Keep the avocado chunky. Mash avocados roughly with lime juice, cilantro, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Leave plenty of texture. In another bowl, stir mayonnaise and sriracha together. Prepare the remaining toppings.

03 Shape gently. Divide beef into four equal patties slightly wider than the buns. Make a shallow indentation in each center. Season both sides with the burger salt, garlic powder, and pepper.

04 Cook and melt. Heat the skillet over medium-high heat. Cook patties about 4-5 minutes per side, adjusting heat to prevent scorching, until the centers reach 160°F. Add cheddar during the final minute and cover briefly to melt.

05 Toast the buns. Transfer burgers to a plate. Toast bun cut sides in a clean skillet or on the edge of a hot grill until lightly golden. Spread the bottom halves with spicy mayonnaise.

06 Build the beautiful mess. Layer lettuce, tomato, burgers, red onion, and two bacon slices on each bun. Spoon avocado generously over the top. Close the buns, secure if necessary, and serve immediately with extra napkins.

A little kitchen wisdom: Choose avocados that yield gently when pressed near the stem. Too soft and the topping becomes slippery; too firm and it will not cling to the burger. A chunky mash is easier to eat than a tower of slices.

Make it ahead: Mix the spicy mayonnaise up to three days ahead and refrigerate. Cook bacon earlier the same day and rewarm briefly. Prepare avocado close to serving, and cook the burgers only when the table is ready.

Seared Tuna Burgers with Pesto Mayo

A bistro idea in a backyard bun



A thick tuna steak tucked into a soft bun has a certain playful confidence. It takes the familiar burger format somewhere sunnier, with basil pesto, sweet seared onion, and a tumble of fresh greens. A savory crust gives the fish character while the supporting ingredients stay simple. The result feels special without asking for a formal occasion. Set out a few extra napkins, pour something crisp, and let a sandwich be the most interesting thing on the table.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry, textured rosé

A rosé with some body can meet a substantial tuna steak while staying fresh beside basil and lemon. Its gentle red-fruit character also flatters the seared onion. Choose a dry style with lively acidity, and serve cool enough to refresh without muting all its flavor.

The cooking sip: A crisp Sauvignon Blanc is a lively preparation pour, especially with the basil aroma rising from the pesto and lemon on the cutting board.

Seared Tuna Burgers with Pesto Mayo

Serves 4 burgers • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 15 minutes

Pesto mayo

1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tbsp basil pesto
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Tuna burgers

4 tuna steaks, about 5 oz each and 1 inch thick
3/4 tsp kosher salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp olive oil, divided
1 small red onion, cut into thick rounds
4 burger buns, split
4 lettuce leaves
1 cup fresh pea shoots or well-washed tender greens

01 Make the green sauce. Stir mayonnaise, pesto, and lemon juice together. Taste; pesto is usually seasoned already, so additional salt may not be needed. Refrigerate while preparing the fish and onion.

02 Prepare the tuna. Pat tuna dry and check for any remaining bones. Season both sides with the salt and pepper. Let stand while the skillet heats, keeping the preparation brief.

03 Soften the onion. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion rounds and cook about 3 minutes per side, until browned and softened. Transfer to a plate and separate into rings.

04 Sear the fish. Add the remaining oil. Cook tuna about 3-4 minutes per side, reducing heat if necessary, until the center reaches 145°F. Thickness affects timing, so check with a thermometer rather than relying on color.

05 Toast and spread. Transfer tuna to a plate for a brief rest. Toast buns in a clean skillet until golden on the cut sides. Spread pesto mayo over both halves of each bun.

06 Stack lightly. Add lettuce to the bun bases, followed by tuna, onion rings, and a loose handful of pea shoots or greens. Close gently and serve immediately, with any remaining sauce alongside.

A little kitchen wisdom: Keep the tuna steaks similar in thickness so they cook at the same pace. If they are much narrower than the buns, split each cooked steak into broad slices and overlap them instead of building a precarious center tower.

Make it ahead: The pesto mayo can be refrigerated for two days. Slice the onion and wash the greens earlier the same day. Cook the tuna and toast the buns just before serving for the best texture.

Mango Chutney Chicken Burgers

With avocado, grilled corn, and tropical intentions



Avery's photograph turns a backyard burger into a miniature tropical holiday. There is avocado on the bun, golden fruit relish, and corn with just enough char to smell like summer. This interpretation uses juicy chicken patties, warm spices, and a generous spoonful of mango chutney. The sweetness is balanced by lime, onion, and fresh greens, keeping every bite lively. It is a bright, cheerful sort of meal, best served when there is time to linger over the last few buttery kernels.

PAIR IT WITH

Lightly off-dry Gewürztraminer

The wine's floral and tropical-fruit character can echo mango chutney, while a touch of sweetness softens the warm spices. Choose a fresh example with moderate alcohol. The pairing works best when the chutney is fruity and gently spiced, allowing the chicken and avocado to remain part of the conversation.

The cooking sip: A small pour of sparkling rosé feels right for corn-grilling duty and supplies a refreshing contrast to the warm spice aromas in the kitchen.

Mango Chutney Chicken Burgers

Serves 4 burgers with corn • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 20 minutes

Chicken patties

- 1 1/4 lb ground chicken
- 1/3 cup plain breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp plain Greek yogurt
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp finely grated lime zest
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tbsp neutral oil

Corn & assembly

- 4 ears corn, husked
- 2 tbsp softened butter
- 4 burger buns, split
- 1 ripe avocado, sliced
- 1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 lettuce leaves
- 1/3 cup mango chutney
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

01 Mix gently. Combine chicken, breadcrumbs, yogurt, egg, lime zest, cumin, ginger, and salt. Mix just until blended. With damp hands, form four patties. Refrigerate 15 minutes while preparing the corn and toppings.

02 Bring on the char. Heat a grill to medium-high. Grill corn, turning regularly, for 12-15 minutes, until tender and lightly charred. Move to a cooler part of the grill if it colors too quickly.

03 Cook the chicken. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add patties and cook about 5-6 minutes per side, until browned and 165°F in the centers. Lower the heat if the outside browns ahead of the middle.

04 Warm the buns. Toast buns cut side down on the grill or in a clean skillet for 1-2 minutes. Butter the hot corn, turning it so the butter melts into all the little spaces.

05 Build the sunshine. Put lettuce, avocado, and onion on each bun base. Add chicken and spread chutney broadly over each patty.

06 Finish with lime. Serve burgers immediately with the corn and lime wedges. A squeeze of lime over the corn gives the buttery side the same bright finish as the burger.

A little kitchen wisdom: Chicken mixtures can be sticky; damp hands and a short chill make shaping much easier. Resist adding extra breadcrumbs simply to make the mixture feel like beef. The softer mixture helps the finished patties stay tender.

Make it ahead: Shape the patties up to a day ahead and refrigerate, covered. Slice the onion and portion the chutney in advance. Cut avocado near serving time; grill the corn and cook chicken when everyone is ready.

Slow Pulled Pork & Purple Slaw

With a proper spoonful of potato salad



A soft bun, slow-cooked pork, and a heap of purple slaw can make a plate look wonderfully unruly. It is food for a generous table, with bowls passed around and seconds quietly assumed. The oven provides dependable, tender pork, then vinegar and crunchy cabbage bring everything back into focus. It asks for patience at the beginning and very little formality at the end, which is a lovely arrangement for a long, relaxed afternoon.

PAIR IT WITH

Fresh, fruity Grenache

Grenache's generous red fruit can meet barbecue sauce without making the cabbage taste sharper. Choose a juicy style with moderate tannin and alcohol. The sweet-smoky pork and creamy potato salad give the wine plenty to work with, while the vinegar keeps the whole plate lively.

The cooking sip: A lightly chilled dry rosé is a refreshing companion while the salads come together and the pork finishes its long, fragrant afternoon in the oven.

Slow Pulled Pork & Purple Slaw

Serves 8 sandwiches • Prep 35 minutes • Cook 4-4 1/2 hours

Pork

3 lb boneless pork shoulder
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp ground cumin
2 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 small onion, sliced
1/2 cup apple juice
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
3/4 cup barbecue sauce
8 soft sandwich buns

Slaw

3 cups shredded purple cabbage
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/4 tsp kosher salt

Potato salad

1 1/2 lb small potatoes
1/3 cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
2 scallions, sliced
1/2 tsp kosher salt

01 Season for the slow road. Heat oven to 300°F. Rub pork with sugar, paprika, cumin, salt, and pepper. Set on the onion in a Dutch oven. Pour apple juice and vinegar around it.

02 Let the oven work. Cover tightly and cook 3 1/2-4 1/2 hours, until a fork turns easily in the meat, generally around 195-205°F. Check after 3 hours; add water if the pan is drying.

03 Make potato salad. Simmer potatoes in water until tender, 15-20 minutes. Drain, cool slightly, and cut into chunks. Toss with the remaining potato-salad ingredients. Refrigerate until serving.

04 Make the purple crunch. Whisk the slaw mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, and salt. Fold through cabbage. Chill at least 20 minutes, tossing again before serving so the dressing coats evenly.

05 Pull and gloss. Rest pork 20 minutes. Shred, discarding large pieces of fat. Skim the cooking liquid; stir a little into the meat with barbecue sauce until moist, saving extra liquid for reheating.

06 Pile it up. Warm the buns. Fill with pork and slaw, and serve potato salad alongside. Pass extra pork in a warm bowl.

A little kitchen wisdom: Tenderness matters more than a fixed cooking time for shoulder. If it resists shredding, cover and cook longer. Add sauce gradually; the pork should taste like seasoned meat with a glossy coating, rather than a barbecue-sauce soup.

Make it ahead: Cook and shred pork a day ahead, then cool promptly in shallow containers and refrigerate. Reheat covered with cooking liquid until 165°F. Make the salads a day ahead and keep them chilled.

Smoky Ribs & Jalapeño Cornbread

A backyard feast with a little spark



The ribs in Avery's photograph arrive with a golden square of cornbread and a little green on the side, an arrangement that needs very little improvement. This oven-friendly interpretation brings smoky spice, a sticky finish, and jalapeño-cheddar cornbread with enough personality to hold its own. Asparagus supplies a fresh, quick-cooking companion. It is a generous weekend plate, suited to the kind of meal where conversation stretches, serving platters travel, and someone inevitably asks whether there is one more piece of cornbread.

PAIR IT WITH

Juicy Syrah or Shiraz

Peppery, dark-fruited Syrah can meet the smoky rub and savory ribs with confidence. Choose a supple style and keep the barbecue sauce moderately sweet. Jalapeño can magnify the impression of alcohol, so a balanced bottle will be more comfortable than an especially powerful one.

The cooking sip: Dry sparkling rosé makes a refreshing preparation pour while the ribs cook slowly and the cornbread ingredients wait their turn on the counter.

Smoky Ribs & Jalapeño Cornbread

Serves 6 • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 3-3 1/2 hours

Ribs

2 racks baby back pork ribs, 4-5 lb total
 2 tbsp brown sugar
 2 tsp smoked paprika
 2 tsp kosher salt
 1 tsp garlic powder
 1/2 tsp black pepper
 1/2 cup apple juice
 1/2 cup barbecue sauce

Cornbread

1 cup yellow cornmeal
 1 cup all-purpose flour
 1 tbsp baking powder
 2 tbsp sugar
 1/2 tsp kosher salt
 1 cup buttermilk
 1 large egg
 1/4 cup neutral oil, plus a little for the pan
 1/2 cup corn kernels
 1/2 cup grated cheddar
 1 jalapeño, sliced

Asparagus

1 lb asparagus, woody ends trimmed
 1 tbsp olive oil
 1/4 tsp kosher salt

01 Rub and wrap. Heat oven to 300°F. Remove the tough membrane from ribs. Mix sugar, paprika, salt, garlic powder, and pepper; rub over racks. Place each on foil, add apple juice, and seal tightly.

02 Cook until yielding. Bake on a sheet pan for 2 1/2-3 hours, until meat is very tender and a skewer slips between bones easily. Keep wrapped while preparing the sides.

03 Mix the cornbread. Raise oven to 425°F. Oil an 8-inch square pan. Whisk dry cornbread ingredients. Separately whisk buttermilk, egg, and oil; fold into dry ingredients with corn and cheddar.

04 Bake the golden square. Spread batter in pan and top with jalapeño. Bake 20-25 minutes, until a tester comes out clean. Rest 10 minutes before cutting.

05 Roast the green. Toss asparagus with its oil and salt on a tray. Roast alongside cornbread for the final 10-12 minutes, until tender.

06 Glaze and gather. Unwrap ribs, transfer to a clean foil-lined tray, and brush with barbecue sauce. Broil briefly until bubbling, watching constantly. Cut between bones and serve with cornbread and asparagus.

A little kitchen wisdom: The membrane on the bone side can stay leathery after cooking. Loosen a corner with a blunt knife, grip with a paper towel, and pull it away. For mild cornbread, remove the jalapeño seeds before slicing.

Make it ahead: Bake ribs a day ahead, cool promptly, and refrigerate with their juices. Reheat covered until 165°F before glazing. Cornbread is best freshly baked; measure its dry ingredients ahead to simplify serving day.

Red Wine Short Ribs & Buttery Mash

Slow comfort, polished for company



A dark, glossy sauce spilling over mashed potatoes is one of dinner's most persuasive arguments. Avery's photographs suggest the full comfort-food picture: tender beef, golden carrots, and a plate worth sitting down for. This version takes its time in red wine and stock, allowing the vegetables and browned meat to build a sauce with real depth. It looks like occasion food, but most of the work happens quietly in the oven. The cook has ample time to set the table and enjoy the anticipation.

PAIR IT WITH

Malbec with balanced oak

Malbec's dark fruit and substantial body suit the depth of braised beef and reduced red-wine sauce. A style with fresh acidity helps the buttery mash feel lighter. The roasted carrots provide a sweet bridge, making this an appealing place to explore an Argentine bottle.

The cooking sip: Pour a small taste of the dry red used in the braise before cooking; it is a useful, enjoyable check on what enters the pot.

Red Wine Short Ribs & Buttery Mash

Serves 4 • Prep 35 minutes • Cook 3-3 1/2 hours

Short ribs

4 lb bone-in beef short ribs
 2 tsp kosher salt
 1 tsp black pepper
 2 tbsp neutral oil
 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
 1 onion, diced
 2 carrots, diced
 2 celery stalks, diced
 4 garlic cloves, smashed
 2 tbsp tomato paste
 2 cups dry red wine
 2 cups low-sodium beef stock
 4 thyme sprigs
 1 bay leaf

Mash & roasted carrots

2 lb Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and chunked
 1/2 cup warm milk
 4 tbsp butter
 1/2 tsp kosher salt
 1 lb carrots, cut into thick batons
 2 tsp olive oil
 1/4 tsp kosher salt

01 Build a brown foundation. Heat oven to 325°F. Season ribs with salt and pepper, then dust with flour. Brown in oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, working in batches. Remove.

02 Make the braise. Cook onion, diced carrots, celery, and garlic 6 minutes. Stir in tomato paste. Deglaze with wine; simmer 5 minutes. Add stock, thyme, bay, and ribs.

03 Cook gently. Cover and braise 2 1/2-3 hours, until fork-tender, turning halfway through. Maintain a gentle simmer; add water if necessary.

04 Mash the potatoes. Simmer potatoes in water until tender, 15-20 minutes. Drain well. Mash with warm milk, butter, and 1/2 teaspoon salt, adding a little hot water if needed for softness.

05 Roast the carrots. Once ribs are tender, remove the covered pot and raise oven to 425°F. Toss carrot batons with olive oil and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Roast 20-25 minutes, turning once.

06 Finish with gloss. Lift ribs out. Strain braising liquid, skim fat, and simmer until lightly coating a spoon, about 10 minutes. Warm ribs in sauce and serve over mash with roasted carrots.

A little kitchen wisdom: Short ribs vary greatly in meatiness. Choose thick pieces with a generous layer of meat above the bone. Reduce the strained sauce only after skimming; otherwise the finished sauce can feel greasy instead of silky and concentrated.

Make it ahead: Braise ribs a day ahead and refrigerate in their strained sauce after cooling promptly. Remove the hardened fat, then reheat gently, covered, until 165°F. Make mash and roasted carrots fresh for serving.

Steak, Prawns & Chimichurri

A generous board with oven fries



This is dinner presented with a flourish: sliced steak, a tumble of prawns, something crisp, and a green sauce that wakes the whole board up. Argentina supplies a natural thread of inspiration for the chimichurri, with its fresh herbs and bright vinegar. The cooking stays manageable by putting the fries in the oven first. The rest happens in quick succession, leaving the table with the happy problem of deciding whether the next bite should be steak, seafood, or another sauce-covered fry.

PAIR IT WITH

Fresh, medium-bodied Argentine Malbec

The steak gives Malbec a savory partner, while chimichurri benefits from a bottle with freshness and restrained oak. Serve a moderate-bodied example slightly cool so it can share the plate with the prawns. Lemon and herbs make this a brighter meal than the board first suggests.

The cooking sip: A crisp Torrontés is an aromatic opening pour while the herbs are chopped, especially for anyone planning to favor the prawns over the steak.

Steak, Prawns & Chimichurri

Serves 4 • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 40 minutes

Chimichurri

- 1 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp finely chopped fresh oregano
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt

Board

- 1 1/2 lb russet potatoes, cut into 1/3-inch fries
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 2 strip steaks, about 12 oz each and 1 inch thick
- 1 lb large prawns, peeled and deveined
- 2 tbsp neutral oil, divided
- 1 tsp kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp black pepper, divided
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

01 Make the green finish. Stir all chimichurri ingredients together and leave at room temperature. Taste after 15 minutes as the garlic and herbs mingle.

02 Start the fries. Heat oven to 425°F. Dry potatoes thoroughly. Toss with olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt; spread on two sheet pans. Roast 30-40 minutes, turning halfway, until browned and crisp.

03 Season the stars. Pat steak and prawns dry. Season steak with 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Season prawns with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper.

04 Sear and rest. Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high heat with 1 tablespoon neutral oil. Cook steaks about 4-5 minutes per side, until 145°F. Rest at least 3 minutes before slicing across the grain.

05 Cook the prawns. Add remaining neutral oil to the pan, reducing heat if smoking. Cook prawns in one layer, about 2 minutes per side, until opaque and 145°F. Work in batches if needed.

06 Bring it together. Arrange steak, prawns, and hot fries on a warmed platter. Spoon chimichurri over steak and pass the rest separately. Add lemon wedges and serve.

A little kitchen wisdom: Dry fries brown more effectively, and two pans prevent steaming. Chimichurri should be loose enough to spoon, with visible chopped herbs. A food processor can easily turn it into a paste, so a knife gives better control.

Make it ahead: Chop herbs and mix chimichurri earlier the same day, then refrigerate and bring to room temperature for serving. Cut potatoes a few hours ahead and keep submerged in cold water; drain and dry thoroughly before roasting.

The Big-Table Roast Turkey

With glossy gravy and bright cranberry sauce



Some meals are really about the table: all those dishes, all those helping hands, and the reassuring sight of something generous being carved. Avery's holiday spread carries that feeling beautifully. This centerpiece keeps the turkey straightforward, with lemon, thyme, buttery skin, and a gravy made from the roasting pan. Cranberry sauce supplies its bright red punctuation. There is room around it for favorite sides and family opinions, because the most inviting feast always leaves a little space for everyone to contribute.

PAIR IT WITH

Oregon Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir's red fruit, freshness, and moderate tannin make it adaptable across turkey, gravy, and the many sides a holiday table attracts. A supple Oregon style provides an appealing link to the book's travel inspiration. Keep cranberry sauce in small, bright accents rather than covering every bite.

The cooking sip: Dry sparkling wine makes a cheerful first pour while the table is set and the turkey rests, leaving the cook a moment to join the company.

The Big-Table Roast Turkey

Serves 10-12 • Prep 40 minutes • Cook 3-3 3/4 hours, plus resting

Turkey

1 fully thawed turkey, 12-14 lb, giblets removed

6 tbsp softened unsalted butter

1 tbsp kosher salt

2 tsp black pepper

1 lemon, quartered

1 onion, quartered

4 thyme sprigs

2 cups low-sodium turkey or chicken stock

Cranberry sauce

12 oz fresh or frozen cranberries

3/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup orange juice

1/2 cup water

1 tsp finely grated orange zest

Gravy

1/4 cup reserved turkey fat or butter

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

Low-sodium stock as needed to make 2 1/2 cups total with defatted pan juices

Salt and black pepper, to taste

01 Make the bright side. Simmer cranberry ingredients 10-12 minutes, until berries burst and sauce thickens. Cool; it thickens further.

02 Prepare the centerpiece. Heat oven to 325°F. Pat turkey dry. Rub with butter, salt, and pepper, including beneath breast skin. Place lemon, onion, and thyme loosely inside; leave unstuffed.

03 Roast steadily. Set turkey breast-side up on a roasting rack. Add 2 cups stock to the pan. Roast 3-3 3/4 hours, tenting breast with foil if browning quickly.

04 Check the temperature. Begin checking after 2 1/2 hours. Turkey is ready when the thickest breast and innermost thigh and wing reach 165°F, without the thermometer touching bone. Add water if pan juices dry.

05 Give it a rest. Rest turkey on a board 30 minutes, loosely tented. Pour pan juices into a jug; skim fat, reserving 1/4 cup for gravy.

06 Whisk the gravy. Measure defatted pan juices and add stock to make 2 1/2 cups total. Cook reserved fat and flour 2 minutes. Whisk in measured liquid; simmer 8-10 minutes and season.

07 Carve and gather. Slice breast and separate leg meat. Arrange on a warm platter; pass gravy and cranberry sauce separately.

A little kitchen wisdom: Plan refrigerator thawing well ahead: a large turkey takes several days. Use temperature to judge doneness and check more than one location. Keep the cavity loosely filled so hot air can circulate around the aromatics.

Make it ahead: Make cranberry sauce up to four days ahead and refrigerate. Measure gravy ingredients and prepare platters the day before. Refrigerate carved turkey leftovers promptly in shallow containers, keeping the relaxed feast easy to enjoy again.

Cheese Fondue & the Seafood Party Board

A little chalet, a little seaside celebration



A shared board offers the lovely possibility of a meal that is also an activity. Cheese bubbles in a pot, bread waits within reach, and seafood adds a celebratory flourish. Here, fondue becomes the warm center of the table, with chilled cooked prawns and lobster served alongside. Potatoes and broccoli keep things colorful. It is a cheerful invitation to share, compare favorite bites, and remember that sometimes the nicest dinner service is simply passing the board.

PAIR IT WITH

Dry Chasselas or crisp unoaked Chardonnay

A fresh white with gentle fruit and lively acidity can refresh the cheese without overwhelming sweet lobster or prawns. Chasselas offers a classic fondue direction, while unoaked Chardonnay is an accessible alternative. Use a dry, pleasant wine in the pot and let the table explore from there.

The cooking sip: A small pour of dry Riesling is bright company while the board is arranged, and offers another appealing direction for the seafood lovers.

Cheese Fondue & the Seafood Party Board

Serves 6 as a generous shared supper • Prep 30 minutes • Cook 25 minutes

Fondue

8 oz Gruyère, coarsely grated
8 oz Emmental, coarsely grated
1 tbsp cornstarch
1 garlic clove, halved
3/4 cup dry white wine
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

The board

1 lb small potatoes, halved if large
3 cups broccoli florets
1 small baguette, cut into bite-size cubes
12 oz cooked, peeled prawns, chilled
2 cooked lobster tails, about 8 oz meat total, chilled and sliced

Seafood sauce

1/2 cup ketchup
1 tbsp prepared horseradish
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

01 Prepare the board. Cut bread into sturdy cubes. Arrange chilled seafood on a separate platter and keep refrigerated until serving. Toss the grated cheeses with cornstarch so the shreds are evenly coated.

02 Cook the vegetables. Simmer potatoes in water until tender, about 15 minutes. Add broccoli for the final 2-3 minutes, then drain everything well. Keep warm; excess water can thin the fondue.

03 Mix the seafood sauce. Stir ketchup, horseradish, and lemon juice together. Spoon into a bowl and refrigerate. Taste before adding more horseradish; brands vary.

04 Warm the wine. Rub the inside of a heavy saucepan or fondue pot with the cut garlic, then discard garlic. Add wine and lemon juice. Warm over medium-low heat until steaming, without a vigorous boil.

05 Melt gradually. Add cheese by small handfuls, stirring continuously and allowing each addition to melt before adding more. Stir in nutmeg. The fondue should be smooth, glossy, and thick enough to coat bread.

06 Bring everyone in. Keep fondue warm over a gentle burner. Set out bread, potatoes, broccoli, seafood, and sauce. Use separate serving utensils for the chilled seafood and fondue, and replenish seafood from the refrigerator as needed.

A little kitchen wisdom: A gentle heat and small additions keep fondue smoother than a rushed melt. If it thickens too much, stir in warm wine a tablespoon at a time. Keep the seafood cool until the last possible moment.

Make it ahead: Grate and portion cheeses a day ahead and refrigerate. Mix seafood sauce up to two days ahead. Prepare vegetables earlier the same day, then rewarm them; make the fondue immediately before gathering everyone at the table.



CHAPTER 06

Sweet endings and the last glass

Something sweet and a little more time together.

A good ending need not hurry anyone toward the door. There might be berries tumbling over cream, plums sinking into a golden custard, or one more piece of cheese while the conversation carries on. And sometimes the best ending is tomorrow morning, with blueberry pancakes and no particular schedule.



Golden-Top Banana & Pecan Bread

The loaf worth rescuing those bananas for



The banana slices on Avery's loaf make a beautiful promise: something familiar, baked with enough care to feel special. This recipe gives the bread a tender crumb, toasted pecans, and a lightly caramelized sugar top. It belongs equally well beside a morning cup or a small after-dinner glass. The best part is the transformation itself, when the least glamorous bananas in the fruit bowl become the thing everyone wants to cut into. Waiting for the loaf to cool may be the hardest instruction.

PAIR IT WITH

A small pour of tawny Port

Tawny Port's nutty, caramel-like character complements pecans, brown sugar, and the golden banana topping. Its sweetness can comfortably meet the loaf, especially when served as a modest after-dinner slice. A small glass is plenty; this pairing is about a slow, cozy finish rather than a large pour.

The cooking sip: For an afternoon baking session, lightly sweet Moscato offers a fresh, floral sip while the kitchen begins to smell of bananas and cinnamon.

Golden-Top Banana & Pecan Bread

Serves 10 slices • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 60-70 minutes

The loaf

- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled, plus a little for the pan
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups mashed very ripe banana, about 3 bananas
- 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Golden top

- 1 ripe but firm banana, halved lengthwise
- 1 tbsp turbinado sugar

01 Prepare the landing place. Heat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan and line with parchment, leaving a little overhang on the long sides. Place on a small baking sheet.

02 Whisk the dry ingredients. Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in a bowl. Break up any lumps of baking soda so they disperse evenly through the loaf.

03 Mix the good things. Whisk melted butter and brown sugar together. Add eggs one at a time, then whisk in mashed banana, yogurt, and vanilla. The mixture need not be perfectly smooth.

04 Fold and decorate. Fold dry ingredients into wet just until no dry flour remains. Fold in pecans. Scrape into the pan and level gently. Lay banana halves cut side up on top and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.

05 Bake patiently. Bake 60-70 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the center comes out without wet batter. Tent loosely with foil if the top darkens before the middle is baked.

06 Give it a little time. Cool in the pan 15 minutes, then lift onto a rack. Wait at least another 45 minutes before slicing. Use a serrated knife and gentle strokes to preserve the tender crumb.

A little kitchen wisdom: Measure the mashed banana rather than relying on fruit count; bananas vary considerably in size. Too much can leave a gummy center. For extra pecan flavor, toast the nuts briefly and cool them before folding into the batter.

Make it ahead: Once completely cool, wrap the loaf and keep at room temperature for up to two days. Refrigerate for longer storage. Freeze individual slices for up to two months and toast gently straight from frozen.

Blueberry Buttermilk Pancakes

A slow-morning stack with glossy berries



A pancake does not need to be perfect to make a morning feel generous. Avery's photograph offers the best sort of evidence: golden edges, blueberries shining on top, and syrup finding its own way across the plate. This version uses buttermilk for tenderness and a short batter rest for an easy rhythm. The berries go into each pancake as it cooks, keeping their distribution fair. Serve a little stack, refill the coffee, and let breakfast take a pleasantly unhurried turn.

PAIR IT WITH

Sweet sparkling Muscat

For a celebratory brunch, a sweet sparkling Muscat brings gentle bubbles, floral fruit, and enough sweetness for lightly syruped pancakes. Keep the maple syrup restrained so it does not overpower the wine. This is a playful occasional pairing; coffee remains an entirely excellent everyday partner.

The cooking sip: A small splash of sparkling rosé can open a festive brunch while the first batch cooks, with coffee and water sharing the table.

Blueberry Buttermilk Pancakes

Serves 4 • about 12 pancakes • Prep 15 minutes • Cook 20 minutes

Pancakes

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 2 tbsp sugar
 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
 1/2 tsp baking soda
 1/2 tsp kosher salt
 1 1/4 cups buttermilk
 2 large eggs
 3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted and cooled
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1 1/4 cups blueberries, divided
 1 tbsp butter for the pan, plus more if needed

At the table

1/2 cup maple syrup, warmed

01 Make two bowls. Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk buttermilk, eggs, melted butter, and vanilla until evenly combined.

02 Leave a few lumps. Pour wet ingredients into dry. Fold gently just until flour is moistened; small lumps are welcome. Rest batter 5-10 minutes while heating a griddle or heavy skillet over medium heat.

03 Test the heat. Melt a small amount of the pan butter and wipe into a thin film. A teaspoon of batter should sizzle gently and turn golden in about a minute. Lower heat if it darkens immediately.

04 Give every pancake berries. Scoop 1/4-cup portions onto the pan with space between them. Scatter 1 cup of the blueberries among the pancakes as they cook. Cook 2-3 minutes, until bubbles appear and edges begin to set.

05 Turn once. Slide a thin spatula underneath and flip. Cook another 1-2 minutes, until golden and cooked through. Repeat, adding a little butter as needed and adjusting heat between batches.

06 Make a morning of it. Serve pancakes on warm plates with remaining blueberries and warm maple syrup. For a larger group, keep finished pancakes on a rack in a 200°F oven for no more than about 20 minutes.

A little kitchen wisdom: Do not press pancakes after flipping; it flattens the soft interior. If using frozen blueberries, add them directly from frozen and allow a little extra cooking time. Stirring them into the whole batter can turn everything purple.

Make it ahead: Mix dry ingredients the night before. Cooked pancakes can be cooled, refrigerated for two days, or frozen between parchment sheets. Reheat in a toaster or a covered oven tray; serve berries and syrup fresh.

Plum & Almond Clafoutis

A golden custard with jewel-like fruit



Purple plums settled into a golden, softly puffed blanket make a persuasive invitation to dessert. That is the appeal of this plum-and-almond combination: part custard, part pudding, with tart fruit keeping the sweetness lively. It is a relaxed, clafoutis-style dessert that can arrive at the table in its baking dish, where its uneven purple juices and golden rim do all the decorating. A spoon is more useful than ceremony, and a small sweet wine makes a lovely final flourish.

PAIR IT WITH

Moelleux Vouvray or another sweet Chenin Blanc

A sweet Chenin Blanc can meet the custard's sweetness while its acidity mirrors the plums' tart edge. Apple, honey, and gentle almond-like notes make an inviting bridge to the batter. Choose a genuinely sweet style so the dessert does not make the wine seem thin or sour.

The cooking sip: A lightly off-dry Riesling is a fresh baking companion while the fruit is sliced, with the sweeter dessert bottle saved for the finished dish.

Plum & Almond Clafoutis

Serves 6 • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 40-45 minutes

Fruit & pan

1 tbsp softened unsalted butter
1 lb ripe but firm plums, pitted and quartered
1 tbsp turbinado sugar

Almond custard

3 large eggs
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup almond flour
1/4 tsp kosher salt
1 cup whole milk
1/4 cup heavy cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 tsp almond extract

01 Give the fruit a home. Heat oven to 350°F. Butter a deep 9-inch pie dish or similar 6-cup baking dish. Arrange plums cut side up in an even layer, leaving small spaces for the custard.

02 Whisk the eggs. Whisk eggs and granulated sugar in a large bowl until well combined and slightly lighter. There is no need to create a large foam; a smooth mixture is the goal.

03 Make a smooth batter. Whisk in all-purpose flour, almond flour, and salt. Gradually add milk, then cream, vanilla, and almond extract. Scrape the bowl and whisk again to catch any flour at the bottom.

04 Pour and sparkle. Pour batter gently around the plums. Sprinkle turbinado sugar over the exposed fruit and surface. Set the dish on a baking sheet to catch any enthusiastic fruit juices.

05 Bake to a soft set. Bake 40-45 minutes, until the edges are puffed and golden and the center is just set with a slight wobble. A knife near the center should emerge without liquid batter.

06 Let it settle. Cool at least 20 minutes. The puff will relax, which is expected. Serve warm or at room temperature, spooning a little plum juice from the dish over each portion.

A little kitchen wisdom: Ripe but firm plums hold their shape and give a better contrast to the soft custard. Very juicy fruit can loosen the center. If the top is golden early, cover loosely with foil and continue until set.

Make it ahead: Whisk the batter a day ahead and refrigerate, then whisk again before pouring over freshly cut fruit. The baked dessert keeps refrigerated for two days; rewarm portions gently or enjoy them cool.

Cloud-Soft Espresso Tiramisu

Coffee, cocoa, and a very good reason to linger



Under a drift of cocoa, tiramisu keeps its best qualities quietly hidden: coffee-soaked layers, soft mascarpone cream, and that first cool spoonful. A generous family-style dish makes passing dessert easy, even when everyone hopes for a rather substantial helping. The egg-free cream makes assembly straightforward, and an overnight rest does the patient work. It is a dessert for the end of a happy meal, when the conversation has found its rhythm and nobody is in a particular hurry to collect the plates.

PAIR IT WITH

Sweet Marsala

A small glass of sweet Marsala can echo the wine in the coffee soak, with nutty, dried-fruit notes that complement cocoa and mascarpone. Choose a sweet style rather than dry cooking Marsala, and serve modestly. The wine should be at least as sweet as the dessert.

The cooking sip: A lightly chilled, fruit-forward Lambrusco can be a cheerful assembly-time sip, with the sweet Marsala reserved for the finished coffee-and-cream layers later on.

Cloud-Soft Espresso Tiramisu

Serves 8 • Prep 30 minutes • No baking • chill at least 6 hours

Espresso soak

1 1/2 cups strong brewed espresso or coffee, cooled

2 tbsp sweet Marsala

Mascarpone cream

1 lb mascarpone, cold

1 1/2 cups heavy cream, cold

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

2 tsp vanilla extract

Layers

24 crisp ladyfingers, about 7-8 oz

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

01 Cool the coffee. Pour cooled espresso into a shallow bowl and stir in Marsala. The coffee must be cool before dipping so it does not warm the cream or soften the biscuits too quickly.

02 Loosen the mascarpone. Use a spatula to stir mascarpone, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla just until smooth. Avoid prolonged beating, which can make mascarpone grainy. Set beside the bowl of coffee.

03 Whip a cloud. Whip heavy cream to medium peaks: it should hold a soft shape with a gently bending tip. Fold a third into the mascarpone, then gently fold in the remainder until evenly combined.

04 Build the first layer. Dip half the ladyfingers very briefly in coffee, about 1 second per side. Arrange in an 8-inch square dish, breaking a few to fill gaps. Spread half the cream over them.

05 Repeat and rest. Dip and arrange the remaining ladyfingers, then cover with remaining cream. Smooth the top without pressing down. Cover and refrigerate at least 6 hours, preferably overnight, so the layers soften and settle.

06 Finish at the table. Sift cocoa generously over the surface just before serving. Cut into squares or scoop into shallow bowls. Use a clean knife or spoon for each portion to keep the layers looking their best.

A little kitchen wisdom: Use crisp ladyfingers rather than soft sponge biscuits, and dip them quickly. They continue absorbing moisture while chilling. If the cream seems soft after folding, refrigerate it briefly before layering instead of beating it harder.

Make it ahead: This dessert benefits from an overnight rest and can be assembled up to two days ahead, covered and refrigerated. Add cocoa close to serving so its surface stays velvety rather than absorbing moisture.

Strawberry, Lemon Curd & Mint Pavlova

A spectacular finish, happily imperfect



Avery's strawberry-topped pavlova has the kind of generous beauty that makes everyone pause before the first slice. White meringue, yellow curd, and glossy red fruit already know how to put on a show. This interpretation gives the shell a crisp outside and soft center, then adds tart lemon curd to balance the sweetness. A few mint leaves bring the whole thing into focus. Cracks are welcome here; they make little places for cream and berries to settle, and a spectacular dessert feel wonderfully approachable.

PAIR IT WITH

Sweet sparkling Muscat or Brachetto d'Acqui

Meringue asks for a wine with real sweetness. Sparkling Muscat brings floral, citrus-friendly fruit; sweet Brachetto offers a red-berry direction for the strawberries. Either can provide a playful finish if it is at least as sweet as the dessert, with gentle bubbles lifting the cream.

The cooking sip: A small glass of off-dry Riesling suits curd-making and berry-slicing, while the sweeter sparkling bottle waits in the refrigerator for dessert time later on.

Strawberry, Lemon Curd & Mint Pavlova

Serves 8 • Prep 40 minutes • Cook 75-90 minutes, plus cooling

Meringue

6 large egg whites, about 180 g, at room temperature

1 1/2 cups superfine sugar

1 1/2 tsp cornstarch

1 tsp white vinegar

1 tsp vanilla extract

Lemon curd

3 large egg yolks

1 large egg

1/2 cup sugar

1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

2 tsp finely grated lemon zest

4 tbsp unsalted butter, cubed

Topping

1 lb strawberries, hulled and sliced

2 tbsp sugar

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 cup heavy cream

1 tbsp confectioners' sugar

2 tbsp small mint leaves

01 Shape the stage. Heat oven to 250°F. Draw an 8-inch circle on parchment and turn paper over on a baking sheet. Ensure bowl and whisk are clean and grease-free.

02 Whip and shine. Beat egg whites to soft peaks. Add superfine sugar a spoonful at a time, beating until stiff, glossy, and no longer gritty. Fold in cornstarch, vinegar, and vanilla.

03 Bake gently. Spoon meringue inside the circle with a shallow center hollow. Bake 75-90 minutes, until dry outside. Turn oven off, crack the door, and cool inside at least 2 hours.

04 Make the curd. Whisk yolks, whole egg, sugar, lemon juice, and zest in a saucepan. Stir over medium-low heat until thickened and 170°F, without boiling. Remove from heat; whisk in butter. Cover and chill.

05 Prepare the fruit. Toss strawberries with sugar and lemon juice. Stand 15 minutes. Whip cream with confectioners' sugar to soft peaks; keep refrigerated until assembly.

06 Let it be beautiful. Transfer cooled shell to a platter. Spoon on chilled curd, then cream. Add strawberries with only a little of their juice and scatter with mint. Serve immediately, embracing the cracks.

A little kitchen wisdom: Sugar must dissolve in the whites for a stable meringue. Rub a little between your fingers before shaping; continue beating if gritty. Humidity softens meringue, so assemble near serving and accept a few dramatic cracks.

Make it ahead: Bake the shell a day ahead and store dry in an airtight container at room temperature. Refrigerate curd for up to three days. Whip cream and prepare berries on serving day; assemble at the last moment.

The Just-One-More-Bite Cheese Board

With quick apple-ginger chutney



Not every ending needs an oven or a slice of cake. Sometimes the nicest finish is a board that invites one more little taste: sharp cheese, sweet grapes, crisp apple, something crunchy, and a spoonful of chutney. A welcoming, help-yourself spirit is all the styling it needs. Quick apple-ginger chutney adds a homemade flourish without a complicated production. Set it down with a few small glasses and let people find their favorite combinations while the evening takes its time winding down.

PAIR IT WITH

A small pour of tawny Port

Tawny Port's nutty sweetness can link walnuts, aged cheddar, blue cheese, and apple chutney. The softer goat cheese offers a contrasting, tangier bite. Start with small pours and taste combinations slowly; one board can reveal how differently the same wine behaves with each cheese and accompaniment.

The cooking sip: Dry sparkling wine is a lovely board-arranging sip and an equally useful alternative for guests who prefer a bright finish over a sweet pour.

The Just-One-More-Bite Cheese Board

Serves 6 as an after-dinner board • Prep 20 minutes • Cook 20 minutes

Quick apple-ginger chutney

1 firm apple, peeled and finely diced
 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
 1/4 cup water
 2 tbsp golden raisins
 1 tsp finely grated fresh ginger
 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
 1 pinch kosher salt

The board

4 oz aged cheddar
 4 oz soft goat cheese
 4 oz blue cheese
 1 crisp apple, thinly sliced
 2 cups seedless grapes, washed and dried
 12 sturdy breadsticks
 1/3 cup toasted walnut halves

01 Cook the little extra. Combine chutney ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer, then cook gently 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until apple is tender and liquid syrupy.

02 Cool and taste. Let chutney cool to room temperature; it will thicken further. Taste a little with cheddar before adjusting. If too thick to spoon, add water a teaspoon at a time. Transfer to a small bowl.

03 Let the cheese wake up. Take cheeses from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before serving. Place them apart on a clean board, leaving room for knives and fruit. Give the blue cheese its own knife.

04 Create easy first bites. Cut a few pieces from cheddar and goat cheese to make starting easy. Leave most intact. Arrange grapes in small, easily lifted clusters.

05 Add crunch and freshness. Slice the fresh apple just before serving. Tuck slices, walnuts, and breadsticks into open spaces, keeping some breadsticks alongside if the board feels crowded. Add the chutney bowl and a small spoon.

06 Pass and explore. Serve with small plates and napkins. Suggest cheddar with chutney, goat cheese with apple, and blue cheese with grapes and walnuts, then leave everyone free to discover their own favorite bite.

A little kitchen wisdom: Three distinct cheeses are enough to make the board interesting without turning it into a shopping expedition. Give every element a useful partner: crisp fruit for soft cheese, chutney for sharp cheese, and nuts for a salty blue.

Make it ahead: Cook chutney up to five days ahead and refrigerate in a clean covered container. Portion nuts and breadsticks ahead. Arrange cheese and grapes shortly before serving, and cut the fresh apple at the end.

The backyard paella party

The pan is the invitation



Watermelon, Mozzarella & Chorizo Party Skewers	24
Avery's Backyard Seafood Paella	60
Creamy Cucumber & Tomato Salad	48
Strawberry, Lemon Curd & Mint Pavlova	144

The day before Make the pavlova shell and lemon curd. Chill the wines. Check the paella pan and the heat source.

Two hours ahead Prepare the vegetables, stock, skewers, and salad components. Keep the seafood cold and separate.

When guests arrive Offer skewers and a glass of rosé. Start the paella when everyone can enjoy watching the pan come together.

At the table Bring the pan out to a heatproof surface. Dress the salad and finish the pavlova just before serving.

FOR THE GLASSES

Open a dry rosé for the first bites, then keep either rosé or a fresh Albariño on the table with the paella. A lightly sweet sparkling wine can follow the berries.

A Filipino inspired evening

Sour savory creamy bright



Filipino Fish Sinigang	86
Chicken Adobo & Garlic Rice	88
Coconut-Ginger Salmon Bowls	90
Strawberry, Lemon Curd & Mint Pavlova	144

The day before Cook the adobo; refrigerate it promptly. Make the curd and pavlova shell.

An hour ahead Prepare the sinigang vegetables, rice, and salmon sauce. Set out bowls for sharing.

At dinner Serve small bowls of sinigang first. Reheat adobo thoroughly and finish the coconut salmon close to serving.

For a smaller table Choose either adobo or salmon as the main course and make a generous pot of rice.

FOR THE GLASSES

Try off-dry Riesling through the savory courses, or compare a dry Chenin Blanc with the sour broth. Pour a sweeter sparkling wine with the pavlova.

Wine and little bites

An evening that does not need a main course



Fresh Fig & Goat Cheese Crostini	18
Prosciutto-Wrapped Mango with Basil & Blue Cheese	22
Seared Scallops with Strawberry Salsa	30
Chicken & Vegetable Summer Rolls	32
Tomato, Mozzarella & Basil Bites	36
The Just-One-More-Bite Cheese Board	146

The day before Toast the nuts, mix the peanut sauce, and prepare crostini components.

An hour ahead Arrange the cheese and fruit. Prepare salsa and tomato bites. Keep chilled components refrigerated until needed.

As people settle in Begin with crostini and tomato bites. Cook scallops in small batches so they arrive warm.

Keep the rhythm easy Replenish small platters rather than setting out everything at once. Save the cheese for a slower final round.

FOR THE GLASSES

Choose three styles to explore: sparkling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Noir. Offer water alongside and let guests compare small tastes at their own pace.

A rainy night at home

Something slow and a generous spoon



Mussels with Bacon, Cider & Scallions	72
Red Wine Short Ribs & Buttery Mash	126
Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Basil	52
Cloud-Soft Espresso Tiramisu	142

The day before Braise the short ribs and refrigerate promptly. Make the tiramisu so its layers can settle.

An hour ahead Skim and reheat the ribs. Prepare the carrots and potatoes. Put out deep bowls for the mussels.

Just before dinner Steam the mussels and toast the bread. Roast the carrots while the main course warms.

After the main course Let the table slow down. Slice dessert into modest pieces; seconds can always happen.

FOR THE GLASSES

Start with a crisp white beside the mussels, then choose a medium-bodied red such as Syrah with the short ribs. A small sweet wine can accompany the tiramisu.

A slow Sunday morning

Blueberries warm bread and nowhere to rush



Blueberry Buttermilk Pancakes 138

Golden-Top Banana & Pecan Bread 136

Peach, Tomato & Burrata Salad 44

The night before Bake the banana bread and cool it completely. Set out the pancake tools.

Before the first coffee Wash the blueberries and slice the fruit for the salad.

At the griddle Keep pancakes warm on a rack in a low oven while finishing the batch.

At the table Put the syrup in a little jug, slice the bread thickly, and let everyone build a plate.

FOR THE GLASSES

Coffee, tea, or sparkling water with citrus is entirely at home here. If the occasion calls for a toast, a lightly sweet sparkling wine suits the pancakes better than a very dry style.

What shall we cook with it

A few promising starting points by wine style

Sparkling and celebratory

Fresh Fig & Goat Cheese Crostini **18** • Mini Yorkshire Puddings with Roast Beef **26** • Seared Scallops with Strawberry Salsa **30** • Tomato, Mozzarella & Basil Bites **36** • Jalapeño & Cheddar Skillet Cornbread **56** • Cheese Fondue & the Seafood Party Board **132** • Blueberry Buttermilk Pancakes **138** • Strawberry, Lemon Curd & Mint Pavlova **144**

Sauvignon Blanc and fresh herb driven whites

Roasted Pear, Goat Cheese & Pecan Crostini **20** • Prosciutto-Wrapped Mango with Basil & Blue Cheese **22** • Chicken & Vegetable Summer Rolls **32** • Peach, Tomato & Burrata Salad **44** • The Big Platter Cobb Salad **46** • Creamy Cucumber & Tomato Salad **48** • Watermelon & Tomato Gazpacho **50** • Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Basil **52** • Warm New Potato & Fiddlehead Salad **54**

Riesling and aromatic whites

Garlic-Butter Prawns with Lime **68** • King Crab, Lemon Butter & Grilled Corn **70** • Seared Scallop Pad Thai **74** • Filipino Fish Sinigang **86** • Coconut-Ginger Salmon Bowls **90** • Coconut Squash & Prawn Curry **92** • Filipino-Style Sweet & Sour Pork **94** • Pork & Cabbage Dumplings **96** • Ginger Beef Noodle Bowls **98** • Salmon Onigiri, Two Ways **100** • Avery's Choose-Your-Own Hot Pot **102** • Roasted Squash & Black Bean Tacos **112**

Coastal whites and dry rosé

Watermelon, Mozzarella & Chorizo Party Skewers **24** • Avery's Backyard Seafood Paella **60** • Mussels with Bacon, Cider & Scallions **72** • The Grand Seafood Boil **76** • Seaside Prawn & Scallop Tacos **110** • Mango Chutney Chicken Burgers **120**

These groupings offer additional combinations to explore. The individual recipe notes give the featured pairing.

What shall we cook with it

A few promising starting points by wine style

Chardonnay and rounder whites

Orange & Dill Cedar-Planked Salmon **62** • Maple-Dijon Planked Salmon **64** • Rosemary, Lemon & Cedar Salmon **66** • Sesame Salmon with Snap Peas & Cucumber **78** • The Big-Table Roast Turkey **130** • Cheese Fondue & the Seafood Party Board **132**

Pinot Noir and lighter reds

Parmesan-Stuffed Mushrooms **28** • Pear, Goat Cheese & Pecan Flatbread **34** • Maple-Dijon Planked Salmon **64** • The Double Smash Cheeseburger **114** • Seared Tuna Burgers with Pesto Mayo **118** • Slow Pulled Pork & Purple Slaw **122** • The Big-Table Roast Turkey **130** • The Just-One-More-Bite Cheese Board **146**

Malbec Syrah and richer reds

Chicken Adobo & Garlic Rice **88** • Bacon, Avocado & Cheddar Burgers **116** • Smoky Ribs & Jalapeño Cornbread **124** • Red Wine Short Ribs & Buttery Mash **126** • Steak, Prawns & Chimichurri **128**

A sweeter finish

Golden-Top Banana & Pecan Bread **136** • Blueberry Buttermilk Pancakes **138** • Plum & Almond Clafoutis **140** • Cloud-Soft Espresso Tiramisu **142** • Strawberry, Lemon Curd & Mint Pavlova **144** • The Just-One-More-Bite Cheese Board **146**

These groupings offer additional combinations to explore. The individual recipe notes give the featured pairing.

Another way to find dinner

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Avery's Choose-Your-Own Hot Pot	102
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Filipino Fish Sinigang	86
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Mini Yorkshire Puddings with Roast Beef	26
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The Just-One-More-Bite Cheese Board	146
Tomato, Mozzarella & Basil Bites	36
Warm New Potato & Fiddlehead Salad	54
Watermelon & Tomato Gazpacho	50
Watermelon, Mozzarella & Chorizo Party Skewers	24

A few kitchen essentials

Measures in this book

Use US measuring cups and spoons. One cup is 240 mL, one tablespoon 15 mL, and one teaspoon 5 mL. One ounce is about 28 g and one pound about 454 g. Oven settings are conventional unless stated otherwise.

Cook with a thermometer

Poultry and reheated leftovers: 165°F / 74°C. Ground beef and pork: 160°F / 71°C. Whole cuts of beef or pork: at least 145°F / 63°C, followed by a 3-minute rest. Fish: 145°F / 63°C. Shellfish should be fully cooked; discard shellfish that do not open during cooking.

Keep the gathering comfortable

Keep cold perishables at 40°F / 4°C or colder and hot food above 140°F / 60°C. Refrigerate cooked food promptly in shallow containers, within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 90°F / 32°C. Keep raw proteins separate from food ready to eat.

Rice and fiddleheads deserve attention

Chill cooked rice promptly; do not leave it on the counter to cool for hours. Use properly identified edible ostrich-fern fiddleheads. Remove the papery husk, wash well, boil for 15 minutes in generous fresh water, and discard the water before further cooking.

REFERENCE NOTES

FoodSafety.gov Safe minimum internal temperatures

FoodSafety.gov Keep cooked food properly chilled

Health Canada Food safety tips for fiddleheads

What would you make yours

The best additions will be the details only Avery knows.

The dish I most want to share

The ingredient I would change

The wine I would pour

The place or person behind this recipe

The story that belongs on these pages



The next chapter is yours.

A new recipe. A remembered place. A bottle that makes dinner sing. There is a beautiful book here, and plenty of room for Avery to make every page her own.

Created for Avery, with love from Rob.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Private concept edition • October 2026

54 original photo-inspired recipes and pairing ideas. Personal background draws on the Avery Trent Perfect Wine Pairings project. Photographs were supplied by Rob; original faces and scenes are preserved. Recipe development, narrative, and book design were assisted by AI. Recipes and personal details await Avery's review and kitchen testing.



THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM AT AVERY'S TABLE

A little curiosity. A generous appetite. Something lovely in the glass.

From Filipino-inspired comfort to seafood on the grill, colorful little bites, and a pavlova worth making an occasion for, this is a celebration of the way Avery cooks: with skill, warmth, and a sense of fun.

54 recipes • Wine pairings • Travel stories • Menus to share

Avery Cooks, Pairs and Sips