



*Secrets for a great*  
**THANKSGIVING**  
*you will LOVE*



by Mary Frances



*Secrets for a great*  
**THANKSGIVING**  
*you will* **LOVE**

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# *Secrets for a great* **THANKSGIVING** *you will* **LOVE**

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**T**hanksgiving is my all-time favorite holiday. It revolves around food! But seriously, it's low key in our family. We are relaxed about dressing up, and it's all about being together. No presents are required, it's right near my birthday (the 26th) and you can be assured of a great four-day weekend, as it always falls on a Thursday. I also **LOVE** the weather this time of year, which lends itself perfectly to long walks before or after the big dinner and a fire in the fireplace. Then, we enjoy the big dinner that has been planned for weeks in advance and often play Scrabble afterwards. There are wonderful leftovers the next day. What's not to like?

In our family, we serve an early dinner around 6:30 p.m. We have friends in Italy who often fly in to celebrate this holiday with us. It's a meal good enough to fly for! Well, this is not an Italian holiday, so if they want it, they have to come.

But it's a lot of work and takes serious planning to pull off right. I remember my first Thanksgiving as a young live-in mate. It was just going to be the two of us, because he was returning home from business in Taiwan on Thanksgiving Day. I decided to do a duck. This was a

first for me. Someone had told me to boil the bird in order to reduce the fat before roasting. I'm very good at following instructions. I think it turned out pretty well. Either that, or we were just so happy to see each other, or the single malt Scotch he brought home was just that good! No matter, it was a fun and special meal. That is what it's all about. P.S. That live-in mate turned out to be my husband.

I have become rather elaborate with my Thanksgiving dinners, I'll admit. Maybe you don't want to do all of what's in this book, and you can pick and choose what you'd like to make, of course. But it's all presented here, with a preparation schedule, if you want to do the whole thing.

You see, I've been doing this now for some time and I've refined and chosen the very best recipes to make up my meal. If you choose to follow this I guarantee that you will not be disappointed. You will delight everyone, including yourself. Just remember to have fun during the process, keep your cool (a glass of wine helps) and always make and serve with **LOVE!**

Two important tips: Remember to enlist all the help you can. It makes the whole process a party and much less work for you. And be sure to order your fresh turkey a couple of weeks in advance, particularly if you are ordering from a local farm, as those sell out quickly.

**LOVE**, Mary Frances  
**LOVE** - *the secret ingredient*

# THE MENU

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## *Appetizers*

- *Pancetta Wrapped Mushrooms*
- *Smoked Salmon Tartare on Organic Blue Corn Chips*
- *Artichoke Dip with Crackers and Fennel, Celery and Carrot Sticks*



## *First Course*

- *Butternut Squash & Bourbon Soup*



## *The Dinner*

- *Organic, Free Range Turkey Roasted on a Vegetable Rack*
- *Cornbread Sausage Stuffing with Apples and Pecans*
  - *Giblet Gravy*
- *Sweet Potatoes with Maple Syrup and Ginger*
  - *Cranberries with Orange and Ginger*
- *Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Fish Sauce Vinaigrette*

(I know this sounds awfully weird but this is a great dish and works well with the meal – adds a clean complement.)



# *Dessert*

- *Mrs. Fowler's Pecan Pie*
- *Fresh Pumpkin Pie*
- *Lightly Sweetened Fresh Whipped Cream*



# *Denouement*

- *An After Dinner Walk*
- *Brandy and Scrabble in Front of the Fire*



# THE SCHEDULE

This meal is really not difficult, if you plan it out in a reasonable way. These are the steps you should take in the days leading up to the big Thursday, based on serving dinner around 6:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY

- ☐ **Make your grocery list, check it twice and do all your shopping on the Saturday before, or anytime up until early Tuesday morning.**
- ☐ The Brussels sprouts are a hardy vegetable, so they will hold up fine.
- ☐ The bread needs to be old for your stuffing anyway.
- ☐ Do not wait to do this on Tuesday evening or later as all stores will be a madhouse, with hordes of people who normally don't cook making the grocery stores extra chaotic.
- ☐ Just be sure to **at least have the ingredients to make your soup and cranberry sauce on Sunday.**
- ☐ **Buy a new baster.** There's nothing worse than having an ineffective baster on Thanksgiving. They're cheap, so buy a new one to be sure you won't be frustrated while basting your turkey on the big day.

## SUNDAY

**Make your cranberry sauce and soup** and place in the refrigerator. This is a great smart timesaver and there is no need to freeze and lose any flavor.



## MONDAY

- ❑ This day can be used to **polish any tarnished silver** and make sure your table linens and napkins are in good shape and pressed.

## TUESDAY

- ❑ In the evening, if the table you will eat at is available, go ahead and **set the table, along with arranging your centerpiece and place cards** if you're using them.

## WEDNESDAY

- ❑ Get your significant other to **pick up your fresh turkey and your fresh sausage.**
- ❑ **Make your pie crust dough** and place in the refrigerator.
- ❑ **Make the smoked salmon tartare and the artichoke dip** and place in the refrigerator.
- ❑ **Roast the pumpkin** and drain for the pie that you'll be making in the morning.
- ❑ **Bake your cornbread** and let cool.
- ❑ **Cut up your cornbread, white and whole wheat bread for the stuffing** and lay out on cookie sheets to dry out overnight.
- ❑ **Check your table** and make sure it's simple and gorgeous, as you'll have a lot of glorious food on top of it tomorrow.

# THANKSGIVING DAY

- ☐ Start at **8 a.m.** by making your pecan and pumpkin pies.
- ☐ **Boil your sweet potatoes** and let cool in their skins.
- ☐ **Make your dressing and let cool.**
- ☐ **Prepare the vegetables for your turkey rack.**
- ☐ Wash your bird, dry and stuff with cooled dressing.
- ☐ Prepare oil and butter soaked cheesecloth and **get the bird (if 17 lbs.) in the oven by 2 p.m.**
- ☐ **Then start cooking your giblets.** When they are cooked and cool, ask your significant other to **chop and remove the meat from the neck bone.**
- ☐ Clean and **cut the raw Brussels sprouts and make their sauce.**
- ☐ **At 4:30 p.m.:** Take out your cranberry sauce and soup from the refrigerator.
- ☐ **Prepare the pancetta-wrapped mushrooms and grill in a grill pan or outside grill;** also **stuff the smoked salmon tartare** onto the blue corn chips.
- ☐ **Bake the artichoke dip for 20 – 30 minutes.**
- ☐ Don't forget to **baste your turkey every 30 minutes!!**
- ☐ **At 5:30:** Serve cocktails with the mushrooms, salmon tartare and artichoke dip with crackers and veggie sticks and put your soup on low. Do not let it boil. Enjoy your cocktail. Still baste your turkey!
- ☐ **Likely at 6 or 6:15, your turkey will be done.** Place your sweet potatoes in the oven. Make your gravy. Start cooking your Brussels sprouts. Put the cranberry sauce in your prettiest bowl.
- ☐ **At 6:30:** Put finishing touches on the soup – salt, pepper, more bourbon and lemon juice and serve the soup with a touch of cream.



Remember, a small break between soup and the meal is fine while you are finishing up the gravy and putting finishing touches on the remaining dishes. Do not rush or fret, RELAX! You're almost done!

Remove the dressing from the turkey, place in a pretty covered bowl to serve and carve the bird. Serve with **LOVE** the sweet potatoes, cranberries, gravy and Brussels sprouts and savor the compliments!

When dinner is over, whip your cream and leave some space and time for the pies.

**You've done it!! You're a real American hero!**





# RECIPES

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# *Pancetta-Wrapped Mushrooms*

– MAKES 2 DOZEN HORS D'OEUVRES

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## INGREDIENTS

- *24 medium cremini or baby portobello mushrooms*
- *3 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced*
- *3 oz. thinly sliced pancetta, torn into thin strips*



## STEPS

1. Quickly wash and gently spin dry your mushrooms. Let air dry too.
2. Make a cut in the center of each mushroom stem down to the cap.
3. Insert a garlic slice in each stem. Wrap a pancetta strip around it.
4. Grill on a gas grill or in a grill pan on the stovetop on high heat until browned and crisp.
5. Transfer to a platter and serve with toothpicks.

# Smoked Salmon Tartare on Blue Corn Chips

– MAKES 3 DOZEN HORS D'OEUVRES



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 oil-packed, large anchovy fillets, drained and coarsely chopped
- 2 tsp. roasted garlic paste (roast 3 unpeeled garlic cloves with 1 teaspoon of olive oil in a foil packet in a preheated 350 degree oven for about 45 minutes. Let the garlic cool slightly, then mash it.)
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice, plus more to taste
- One ½-pound piece of skinless smoked salmon, cut into ¼-inch dice
- 1 small jalapeño, minced with seeds, if you like spice
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 tbs. capers, drained and coarsely chopped
- 1 tbs. finely chopped cilantro, plus 4 dozen cilantro leaves, for garnish
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3 dozen sturdy organic blue corn tortilla chips



## STEPS

1. In a medium bowl, using the back of a fork, mash the anchovies with the roasted garlic paste, cumin and extra-virgin olive oil. Stir in the sour cream and lime



juice. Fold in the smoked salmon, jalapeño, red onion, capers and chopped cilantro and season with salt and pepper.

2. Arrange the tortilla chips on a platter. Spoon a heaping teaspoon of the smoked salmon tartare onto each chip, top with a cilantro leaf and serve.

## ♥ LOVE NOTES

*The smoked salmon tartare can be refrigerated for up to 1 day. Bring to room temperature before serving.*



# Artichoke Dip

– SERVES 8-10



## INGREDIENTS

- One 14 oz. can of artichoke hearts, drained of juice
- One 4.5 oz. can of green chilies with the juice
- ½ cup fresh grated Parmesan cheese, packed
- ½ cup mayonnaise (I use Hellmann's)
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
- 1 tsp. Sriracha sauce (the hot sauce with the red rooster on the label)



## STEPS

1. Take each artichoke heart in your hand, hold upside down, squeeze the juice out of it (you don't need it) and place them in the food processor bowl fitted with a steel blade. Add all other ingredients and process until smooth. Place in an ovenproof dish and bake at 350 degrees for 20 – 30



## LOVE NOTES

*This has a nice spicy bite to it that most people love. If that doesn't suit your taste, skip the Sriracha sauce.*

minutes, until browned around the edges and a little bubbly.

2. This dish tastes great, but is not pretty, so top it with some chopped parsley leaves or snipped chives.



3. Serve with whole wheat pita chips, red pepper strips, fresh fennel strips and/or celery sticks.

## ♥ LOVE NOTES

*The nice thing is you can make this ahead of time, even the night before. Just cover it with plastic wrap to store in the fridge, and heat up before serving. Do not put a super cold dish in the oven, let it warm up a bit first, say 30 minutes on your counter.*



# Butternut Squash and Bourbon Soup

– SERVES 8 AS A FIRST COURSE



## INGREDIENTS

- *2 tbs, unsalted butter*
- *1 large onion, coarsely chopped*
- *1 large butternut squash (3 – 3.5 lbs.), cut in half, seeded and roasted*
- *Olive oil*
- *6 cups of homemade chicken stock or low sodium store-bought*
- *¼ cup Wild Turkey or other excellent bourbon plus additional for serving, if desired*
- *1 bay leaf*
- *Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste*
- *Fresh lemon juice to taste*
- *¼ cup of heavy cream*



## STEPS

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Wash butternut squash and slice in half, remove seeds and oil the cut edges with some olive oil. Fill a high-sided roasting pan or oblong cake pan with ½ inch of water and place oiled squash in, cut side down and roast for 35 minutes. Turn over and roast until fork-tender, anywhere from another 15 to 30 minutes. Cool and scoop out all the flesh. Discard the skins.
2. Melt butter in a medium sized stockpot over low heat. Add the chopped onion, cover and slowly sweat the onion, uncovering



- occasionally to stir, until soft and translucent but not browned, about 10 – 12 minutes.
3. Add the roasted butternut squash, chicken stock,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of bourbon and the bay leaf. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, about 25 minutes.
  4. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Use a hand blender to puree the soup until completely smooth.
  5. Let cool at this point and refrigerate for up to 5 days.
  6. Take the soup out an hour before serving. Then slowly heat on low, until soup is the consistency of heavy cream, about 30 minutes. Do not let it boil.
  7. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper and a squirt of fresh lemon juice. Just before serving, stir in 3 tbs. of bourbon. Serve soup in warm bowls and drizzle on a little cream over the top.





# *Cornbread Sausage Stuffing with Apples and Pecans*

– SERVES 12-14 PEOPLE OR MORE THAN  
ENOUGH STUFFING FOR A 20 LB. BIRD

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## INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ sticks of sweet butter (12 tbs.)
- 2 ¾ cups of finely chopped yellow onions (use your food processor for this)
- 3 tart apples, cored and chunked, not peeled (Jonathan are good)
- 1 lb. lightly seasoned bulk sausage (I use breakfast sausage with sage)
- 3 cups coarsely crumbled cornbread (bake a Jiffy cornbread mix for this)
- 3 heaping cups of crustless, cubed, day old whole wheat bread
- 3 heaping cups of crustless, cubed, day-old white bread

*(I prepare and cut my breads the night before so they can dry out a little)*

- 2 rounded tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tsp. dried sage
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ¾ cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1 ½ cups shelled pecan halves
- 1 raw egg
- Chicken broth to moisten

## ♥ LOVE NOTES

Many friends make my stuffing recipe. Just this week, a Hungarian friend who lives in Luxembourg said, “Oh I love Thanksgiving and I can’t wait to make your stuffing. It is the BEST stuffing ever – it’s sooo good!”



## STEPS

1. Melt half of the butter in a skillet. Add chopped onions and cook over medium to medium/low heat, partially covered, until tender and lightly colored, about 25 minutes. Scrape onions and butter into a very large bowl – the biggest one you have!
2. Melt remaining butter in the same skillet. Add apple chunks and sauté over high heat until lightly colored but not mushy. Transfer the apples and all of the butter to the same mixing bowl with the onions.
3. Squeeze the sausage out of the casing if necessary. Crumble it into the skillet and sauté over medium heat, continuing to break up the sausage into small pieces, stirring until no pink remains and it's lightly browned. With a slotted spoon, transfer the sausage to the mixing bowl and throw away the fat.
4. Add all remaining ingredients to your large bowl and fold together





with a large spatula, gently combining everything. Beat an egg in a separate small bowl and fold that in as well. Moisten with homemade or low sodium chicken broth. Salt and pepper to taste. Cool completely before stuffing the bird.

5. With leftover stuffing, or if you choose not to stuff your bird, spoon stuffing into a casserole dish, cover with a lid or aluminum foil, and set in a large, deeper pan. Pour enough hot water around the casserole dish so it comes halfway up the sides. Bake for 30 – 45 minutes at 325 degrees. You will **LOVE** it!





# *Best Roast Turkey Ever with Giblet Gravy*

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## INGREDIENTS

- One 14.5 – 17 lb. fresh turkey
- Sea salt – fine grind
- Pepper – fine grind, preferably TexJoy brand
- Paprika – sweet
- *Cornbread sausage stuffing with apples and pecans*
- 2 ½ sticks of unsalted butter, divided into 3 uses (20 tbs.), 1 ½ sticks should be thoroughly softened at room temperature
- 2 stalks celery, washed and cut into 3" long pieces
- 2 fat carrots, peeled and cut in half lengthwise and into 3" long pieces
- 3 small onions, cut in half or ¾" thick slices
- 4 tbs. canola oil
- Cheesecloth – enough to be 3 layers thick and cover the entire breast area
- Giblets and neck
- ⅓ cup tawny port
- 1 – 2 cups or more of homemade or low sodium chicken broth
- 4 tbs. flour
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tbs. chopped parsley



## ♥ LOVE NOTES

*For buttery, melt-in-your-mouth white meat and even no need for gravy, follow these instructions. This is a combination of recipes, from Julia Child, Sheila Lukins and my own ideas. I first put this together in 2005 and fortunately, wrote it all down.*

*But first, you must have a great quality fresh bird – never frozen and never*

*from a big producer. However, some local farm bred turkeys I have found are not so great either. Sometimes their dark meat is tough (they walk a lot!) and the breasts are small. My butcher, Bob, from Esposito's Pork Store in Manhattan, gets his from a farm in Pennsylvania. And in upstate New York, Mike and Cindy of Thunderhill Farms produce an excel-*

*lent bird. Mike is really proud of his turkeys and he sells out every year.*

*Also, I usually don't make recipes that have this much butter, but fear not. You will not be eating most of it, as you degrease the pan juices and only use 4 tbs. to make a lot of gravy.*



## STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Place the flat sides down of the carrots, celery and onions and arrange in a rectangle to create a vegetable rack in your roasting pan for the turkey to sit on.
3. Thoroughly wash and dry your turkey, inside and out. Sprinkle salt, pepper and paprika inside both cavities.

Fill each with the cooled stuffing and seal closed with skin and metal skewers. Do not stuff too tight as the stuffing will expand while cooking.







4. Remove the wing tips from the bird and reserve. Skewer the remaining wings to the body with small metal skewers.
5. Take 1 ½ sticks of the softened butter and smear all over your bird. Then sprinkle salt, pepper and paprika all over. Place the bird on the vegetable rack in your roasting pan. Tie the legs together with kitchen twine.
6. Melt 4 tbs. butter in a small saucepan and add 4 tbs. canola oil. Place your cheesecloth in this mixture to soak up all the liquid and arrange the soaked cheesecloth on top of the whole breast area. Save any leftover liquid.
7. Place in your oven to roast at 325 degrees.
8. Baste every 30 minutes, without fail, to keep your breast meat juicy and moist. Baste under and over the cheesecloth and use any remaining butter and oil left from soaking the cheesecloth originally. When basting, take the pan



out of the oven, close the oven door and baste quickly on top of the stove so your heat stays constant in the oven.

9. Meanwhile, take your giblets, neck and wing tips and place in a small saucepan and cover with cold fresh water. Bring to a boil and simmer slowly for one hour.
10. Remove all giblets and neck from the liquid. Discard the liquid. Remove meat from neck, chop all finely and reserve for your gravy.
11. Roast the turkey until the thickest part of the thigh registers 180 degrees and the thickest part of your breast registers 160 degrees.
12. During the last 30 – 40 minutes of roasting your turkey, remove the cheesecloth and discard and brush on the  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup tawny port.

13. For me, a stuffed 17 lb. bird took 4 hours and 45 minutes. A stuffed 14.5 lb. bird took 3 hours and 55 minutes. Your oven may vary, but figure on 15 – 16 minutes per pound.
14. Let the bird rest for one hour and let all those juices re-circulate back into the meat. Serve your soup or first course.



**15.** Meanwhile, back to the gravy. Smash the vegetables from the roasting pan through a strainer into a bowl. Degrease the pan juices and add enough broth to make 2 cups.

**16.** Melt 4 tbs. butter in a saucepan. Add 4 tbs. flour and whisk together on medium heat, letting it brown slightly for 2-3 minutes. You are making a roux here! Whisking constantly, slowly pour in the 2 cups of reserved juices and broth. Whisk

until smooth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, add the smashed vegetables, 1 tsp. thyme, salt and pepper to taste (it may need more salt than you think – taste it), 1 tbs. chopped parsley and reserved chopped giblets and neck meat. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Add more chicken broth if you think it's too thick or you know you have a lot of gravy lovers and need to stretch it.

# Sweet Potatoes with Maple Syrup and Ginger

– SERVES 8



## INGREDIENTS

- *5 medium sized sweet potatoes*
- *Salt*
- *Paprika*
- *1/3 cup maple syrup*
- *1/4 tsp. powdered ginger*
- *2 tbs. butter*



## STEPS

1. Put sweet potatoes in a pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil and turn down to a simmer, and cook until nearly tender. Check with a skewer.
2. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
3. Pare and cut the potatoes lengthwise into 1/2 inch slices. Place in a shallow buttered baking dish. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle them with the maple syrup and ginger.
4. Dot with the 2 tbs. butter.
5. Bake uncovered for about for about 20 minutes, until glazed.



# Cranberry Ginger Sauce

– SERVES 10



## INGREDIENTS

- *12 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and rinsed*
- *1 ¾ cups granulated sugar*
- *½ cup water*
- *½ cup fresh orange juice – yes, please squeeze some juice oranges. It makes a difference!*
- *1 tbs. finely chopped fresh ginger*
- *Finely grated zest from one orange*



## STEPS

1. Combine all ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat until the berries pop open, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.
2. Skim foam off the top with a metal spoon and discard. Cool to room temperature. Refrigerate, covered, for up to 3 months.



## ♥ LOVE NOTES

*Once again, over the years I have tried many different cranberry sauces and relishes. One year, I even did a version of Martha Stewart's cranberry sauce, mounded on top of poached pear halves. It looked gorgeous, but the taste was mediocre.*

*This gingered version, from Sheila Lukins of Silver Palate fame, is the best. If made properly, the little cranberries look jewel-like and glisten! People who don't even like cranberries like this. This is also delicious as a sauce for sautéed or grilled duck*

*breasts. It is easy to make and it will keep for a long time, if sealed in a tight container and refrigerated. You probably could even freeze it.*

*I hope you enjoy it!*





# *Momofuku's Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Fish Sauce Vinaigrette*

*from* **FOOD 52**

– SERVES 6 AS A SIDE

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## Roasted Brussels Sprouts



### INGREDIENTS

- *2 tbs. very thinly sliced cilantro stems, plus ½ cup leaves*
- *3 tbs. chopped mint*
- *2 lbs. Brussels sprouts (smaller ones are better)*



### STEPS

1. Combine the vinaigrette (next page), cilantro stems, and mint in a bowl, and set aside.
2. Peel away any loose or discolored outer leaves, trim the dry end of the



stems with a knife and cut the sprouts in half. Cut any especially large ones in quarters. Wash and dry very well.

3. To roast the Brussels sprouts, heat the oven to 400 degrees. Heat 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil (or just enough to evenly coat the bottom of the pan) in 2 oven-safe wide skillets (12 to 14 inches) over medium heat. When the oil slides easily from side to side of the pan, add

the Brussels sprouts cut-side down. When the cut faces of the sprouts begin to brown, transfer the pan to the oven to finish cooking, about 15 minutes. The sprouts are ready when they are tender but not soft, with a nice dark brown color.

4. Serve warm or at room temperature. When ready to serve, place the Brussels sprouts in one big bowl, top with the dressing to taste and cilantro leaves, and toss once or twice to coat.

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## Fish Sauce Vinaigrette



### INGREDIENTS

- *1/2 cup fish sauce (adjust to taste — some fish sauce brands are saltier)*
- *1/4 cup water*
- *2 tbs. rice wine vinegar*
- *Juice of 1 lime*
- *1/4 cup sugar*
- *1 garlic clove, minced*
- *1 to 3 red bird's-eye chiles, thinly sliced, seeds intact (or substitute dried red chile pepper flakes to taste)*





## STEPS

1. Combine the fish sauce, water, vinegar, lime juice, sugar, garlic and chiles in a jar. Cover and shake. Taste; if too salty, add more water and/or lime juice. This vinaigrette will keep for up to a week in the refrigerator.

## ♥ LOVE NOTES

*I have a confession to make. I saw this recipe over the summer on Amanda Hesser and Merrill Stubbs' food blog, Food 52. My first thought was, "Brussels sprouts with fish sauce, that sounds gross!"*

*Well, the recipe stuck in my head, maybe because it sounded so weird. Fish sauce is only anchovies in a liquid of water, sugar and salt, and I do love anchovies. So I went back to it a few days later, read the whole thing for the first time and thought, you know, this could be very good. The Momo-fuku restaurants are fantastic, always showcasing unusual combinations. I have never eaten in any of them, but my older son has been at the Noodle Bar several times and would often bring me home desserts to taste. So one night, I decided to give this Brussels sprouts recipe a whirl.*

*It was delicious!! And unusual. And perfect for a Thanksgiving dinner side dish. The vinaigrette makes it light and refreshing, instead of an additional heavy dish with the typical bacon or chestnuts. You don't even have to serve this hot – it can be at room temperature, which is perfect for all the commotion that accompanies a Thanksgiving Day feast. I think it's the perfect side dish.*

# Basic Pie Crust

– FOR TWO 9” SINGLE CRUSTS  
(CUT IN HALF FOR ONE BOTTOM CRUST)



## INGREDIENTS

- *2 cups flour*
- *1 scant tsp. salt*
- *2/3 cup of Crisco*
- *6 or less tbs. ice water*



## STEPS

1. Whisk together flour and salt. Cut in Crisco until it forms “peas,” using a fork or two knives or a pastry cutter. Sprinkle on ice water one tablespoon at a time, tossing lightly with a fork, combining after each addition. Press dough together with your



## LOVE NOTES

*Everyone thinks making a pie crust is a super big deal. It isn't! You do need to practice a little. Follow instructions closely – this is baking, which is much more exacting than cooking. But, boy, do it, and everyone loves you!*

*Here's the recipe and hopefully some helpful photos.*







hands and form 2 flattened rounds. Wrap each in plastic wrap and chill for several hours or overnight. Roll out quickly and lightly on a floured pastry cloth or floured board and then fold into thirds and place and shape into pie pan. Refrigerate overnight for a flakier crust, if you have time.

2. Line crust with parchment paper and fill with dried peas or beans. Bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes, until lightly browned.
3. Carefully remove parchment filled with peas. Let cool for

15 minutes before filling. You just made a crust from scratch!

4. Now my friend Margaret says to take out  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the flour-salt mixture and mix it with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of ice water to make a slurry and then add that back in gradually to everything. I do like this method. Margaret comes from German heritage and you know they know everything about making great pastries!



# Mrs. Fowler's Pecan Pie

– SERVES 8 – 10



## INGREDIENTS

- *3 eggs beaten (take out early to be at room temperature)*
- *1 scant cup of packed light brown sugar*
- *1 scant cup of Karo light syrup (I know it's high fructose corn syrup – close your eyes, just this once)*
- *½ cup unsalted butter, melted*
- *¼ tsp. salt*
- *1 tsp. vanilla*
- *1 cup pecan halves*
- *½ recipe pie crust*



## STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Beat eggs with a whisk, add in all remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into a 9" pie crust, which has not been pricked, but has been baked for 5 – 10 minutes, weighted with beans or rice in parchment paper.
3. Bake for 40 – 50 minutes. Test with a knife or toothpick in the middle – it should come out clean and the center slightly set. Cool completely before cutting and serving. Bake this in the morning before your feast.
4. Serve with whipped cream.





## Whipped Cream

1. Whip heavy cream with a touch of powdered sugar and some vanilla. I use ½ pint of heavy cream, 1 tbs. powdered sugar and 1 tsp. vanilla and beat until soft peaks form.

## ♥ LOVE NOTES

*Pecan pie is my all-time favorite dessert! My father was a correspondent banker for a large bank in St. Louis, and his territory was the Southeast U.S. He traveled all over doing business with smaller banks in the region. And as he became close friends with many of these folks, we used to visit them on family vacations.*

*I learned to water ski on Lake Norfolk in Mountain Home, Arkansas, at Powers and Louise Fowler's weekend lake house. They had a really fast power-*

*boat (Powers liked speed) as well as a pontoon party barge (Louise loved a party). One time, when I was about 12 years old, for some reason I was with my parents alone. None of my 5 brothers were with us, and we visited the Fowlers.*

*So my mom says, "Louise, you make the best pecan pie and it's Mary's favorite. I wondered if we could have your recipe."*

*Mrs. Fowler said in her lovely Southern drawl, "Well honey, why don't we just go and make Mary one right now, and of course*

*you can have the recipe!"*

*Cocktail in hand, she got up, went straight into the kitchen and made me a pecan pie right then and there.*

*And I have been making them for years. These days I use less sugar and Karo syrup as I like things less sweet. If you like it really sweet, go with the full cup measurements.*

# Pumpkin Pie

– SERVES 8 – 10



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup light brown sugar
- 2 cups canned or fresh roasted and drained through cheesecloth pureed pumpkin
- 1 tsp. ginger
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. ground cardamom
- pinch of salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of heavy cream
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of half and half
- *$\frac{1}{2}$  pie crust recipe*
- Pecan halves



## STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Beat eggs and both sugars together until light. Stir in pumpkin puree, spices and salt and mix thoroughly. Stir in cream and half-in-half.
3. Roll out pastry on a lightly floured work surface or pastry cloth and line a 9-inch pie pan with it. Trim and crimp edges. Pour in the filling.
4. Bake at 450 degrees for 8 minutes, then reduce the heat to 325 and bake for another 40 – 45 minutes or until filling is set. A knife inserted into the center will come out clean.



5. Arrange pecan halves decoratively around the edge, pressing them lightly in to the warm filling. Arrange another 5 pecans in a flower pattern in the center of the pie. Cool completely before cutting. Now you have just made and served the most amazing Thanksgiving feast!!
6. Take a walk in the cool night air – hopefully you'll have a star-filled night. And

then come back and put your feet up in front of the fire, play some Scrabble and sip a cognac!

### ♥ LOVE NOTES

*This is the best version of a pumpkin pie. It is light and delicious, even if you use canned pumpkin, but I prefer to use fresh. Your choice. Having a little piece of pecan and pumpkin pie is the perfect end to a Thanksgiving meal. Top it with slightly sweetened whipped cream and it's heaven on a plate!*





A warm, cozy interior scene. In the foreground, several orange pumpkins are arranged on a dark surface. To the right, a lamp with a textured, light-colored shade is visible, casting a warm glow. Next to the lamp is a light-colored ceramic vase with a floral pattern. The background is dark, making the illuminated objects stand out.

*I'm sure your home  
is brimming with*

**LOVE**

*and all warm and fuzzy feelings.*

*See you again around  
Christmas and New Years!*