

Southern Comfort Food

A Menu by Chef Dom Ruane

Table for 12 by 12 Tomatoes

Hot Pepper Cornbread & Whipped Honey Butter

Southern-Style Mac & Cheese

Smokey Black Eyed Peas & Collard Greens with Crispy Bacon

Brined & Fried Chicken

Grilled Peaches & Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

Hot Pepper Cornbread & Whipped Honey Butter

A simple but tasty take on the classic necessity of Southern cooking—cornbread, of course!

Prep/Cook: 45/15 min | Serves: 10-12

- 1 1/3 cup cornmeal
 - 1 cup all purpose flour
 - 1/2 cup granulated sugar
 - 2 tablespoons baking powder
 - 2 teaspoons kosher salt
 - 6 whole eggs
 - 8 oz. butter, melted
 - 1 (14.75 oz.) can creamed corn
 - 2 jalapenos, diced
 - 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- For honey butter:
- 8 oz. unsalted butter, softened
 - 3 tablespoons honey
 - 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F alongside a cast iron pan to create a firm crust.
2. Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl and whisk together.
3. Mix together the wet ingredients in a separate bowl until combined, then mix both the wet and dry ingredients together.
4. Remove the preheated cast iron pan and spray pan with cooking spray. Pour the batter into the cast iron and bake for 25 - 30 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean from the center.
5. Using a kitchen-aid mixer, whisk softened butter, honey and salt until pale yellow in color and fluffy. It should be salty with a sweet background.

Southern-Style Mac & Cheese

Can't do Southern Soul Food without Mac & Cheese. Combining three amazing melting cheeses and common household spices, you too can make great mac & cheese.

Prep/Cook: 15/30 min | Serves: 12

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1.5 lb. elbow pasta
- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoon onion powder
- A pinch of nutmeg & white pepper
- 4 cups sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 cups english white cheddar, grated
- 2 cup gruyere cheese, grated
- 1 cup Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup green onions, sliced thin
- Kosher salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400 F, and prepare a 9x13 casserole pan
2. In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook the rotini pasta until al dente. Drain pasta and set aside.
3. For the cheese sauce, use a wide saucepan over medium high heat to melt the butter and add flour. Mix with a wooden spoon until the flour and butter create a wet sand-like consistency. Cook for 1 - 2 minutes.
4. Add in heavy cream and milk to the roux, and whisk the roux into the milk as the bechamel starts to thicken. Season with salt, white pepper, nutmeg, onion powder, and garlic powder. The sauce should be nappe, or coat the back of the spoon.
5. Lower the heat to low, and add in all the grated cheeses handful by handful whisking between each handful. Use those muscles for an extra smooth sauce! Taste for seasoning.
6. Combine cooked pasta into cheese sauce with sour cream.
7. Scoop pasta into a casserole pan and top with grated sharp cheddar cheese, then bake until cheese is golden and bubbly.
8. Garnish with green onions
9. Enjoy!

An underutilized dark leafy green that with a little tender loving care, can evolve into a masterpiece. Crispy bacon for additional smokey flavor. Yum!

Prep/Cook: 15/45 min | Serves: 12

- 4 bunches collard greens, stems stripped and leaves chopped
 - 4 tablespoons olive oil
 - 8 oz. thick - cut bacon, diced
 - 2 cups yellow onion, diced
 - 10 garlic cloves, minced
 - 1/2 teaspoon crushed chili flake
 - 4 cups chicken stock
 - 64 oz. cans black eyed peas, drained
 - 1 lemons, juiced & 1 teaspoon zest
 - *optional hot sauce*
 - Kosher salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
1. Rinse collard greens in a large bowl of cold water and let the dirt set toward the bottom. Skim leaves from the top of the water into a colander. Don't pour water into the colander.
 2. Blend 2 cups of black eyed peas using a hand blender or food processor with 1/4 cup of water. Pour puree over remaining peas.
 3. In a large sauce pot over medium heat, add bacon and cook until bacon is crispy. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve on a paper towel lined plate.
 4. Add olive oil, onion, garlic and chili flakes to the pot with bacon fat. Cook veg for 4 - 6 minutes or until garlic starts to brown.
 5. Add broth and black eyed peas then bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper. Let the mixture simmer for 10 minutes.
 6. Add the collard green stems to the beans. Let them cook for 3 - 4 minutes before adding remaining collard greens leaves.
 7. Cook greens in bean broth until they turn a bright green. Finish with lemon juice, zest and optional hot sauce.
 8. Garnish with crispy bacon and enjoy!

Brined & Fried Chicken

Buttermilk chicken who? We are doing Fried Chicken today where we create a juicy interior and crispy exterior. How hard can that be?

Prep/Cook: 90/15 min | Serves: 12

- For buttermilk brine:
- 2 split breasts, halved
 - 6 bone-in chicken legs
 - 6 bone-in chicken thighs
 - 1 quart buttermilk
 - 1/4 cup salt

- 2 tablespoons white sugar

For spice blend:

- 3 tablespoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoon paprika
- 4 teaspoons cajun seasoning

- 4 teaspoons onion powder
- 2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

For flour breading:

- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1.5 cup cornstarch
- 4 tablespoons baking powder
- 12 cups vegetable oil

1. In a small bowl, combine your spice blend ingredients together and reserve 2 tablespoons of the spices in a separate bowl.
2. Make the brine by whisking the buttermilk, sugar, salt, and reserved 2 tablespoons of the spice blend.
3. Add the chicken pieces to brine and let sit for at least 30 minutes, or up to 48 hours.
4. Preheat a large dutch oven with 12 cups of vegetable oil with a thermometer to 325 - 350 F.
5. Mix the breading flour in a large mixing bowl combining the flour, cornstarch, baking powder and remaining spice blend then dredge the chicken in the flour and pat flour into every crevice. Shake excess flour off .
6. Prepare a parchment-lined sheet tray to plate the raw breaded chicken.
7. Fry chicken in preheated oil for 10 - 12 minutes. DO NOT OVERCROWD.
8. Let chicken drain on a wire rack lined sheet tray and keep warm in a 200 F oven while you fry remaining chicken.
9. Adjust heat for oil at a higher temperature (375) and fry a 2nd time for 3 minutes. Remove from oil and season with salt.
10. Enjoy!

Grilled Peaches & Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

Buttermilk chicken who? We are doing Fried Chicken today where we create a juicy interior and crispy exterior. How hard can that be?

Prep/Cook: 15/5 min | Serves: 12

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 6 peaches, halved and pit removed
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, torn
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/4 cup amaretti cookies, crushed
- Vanilla bean ice cream
- Maldon salt for finishing

1. Preheat a grill or grill pan over high heat for 3 - 4 minutes for maximum sear.
2. Brush the interior of the peaches lightly with vegetable oil.

3. Grill peaches for 3 minutes, then rotate 90 degrees to create a crosshatch grill pattern and let cook for 3 - 4 additional minutes. The peaches should feel softened. Turn off heat and let peaches cool on grates for 5 - 7 minutes.
4. Remove from grill and drizzle with honey, maldon salt, fresh mint, and lemon juice.
5. Top each peach with ice cream and crushed amaretti cookies.
6. Enjoy!