



# **American Cuisine for the New Home Cook**

**Liam Monningham**



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This book is dedicated to  
McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken,  
Wendy's, and all the other giants  
who have had a hand in shaping  
the hellscape that is American food  
culture.

***This is your fault.***





# A Note from the Author

22 years. For 22 years I ran the culinary world. My restaurants rarely dipped below full capacity, my kitchen never once got an order incorrect. I was a king. Critics from around the world would travel to my restaurants, looking for even the most miniscule aspect of their experience to critique, and come up with nothing. I trained in the most grueling of kitchens, honing my craft to an edge far sharper than any of my knives. I built a legacy based on precision, efficiency, and culture. And all it took to bring it toppling down, was the simple public spanking of a Saucier with a wooden spoon. All was taken from me because I operate upon precision and higher standards than most.

Here I am, fallen from my throne and out of contact with my community. Out of pure desperation, I accepted to create this book in hopes that I may gather a new audience and begin to rebuild my empire. However, what I had thought was going to be a book covering technique and recipes for classic, world renown dishes, has been diluted down to a beginner's guide to American cuisine. Does such a thing exist? Could there be a physical representation of such an oxymoron? "Cuisine" and "American" are two terms that do not come face to face often, save for maybe when Americans venture out of their land. To stoop so low to even consider studying such a regions' provisions sent a chill down my spine, one that I had not felt since the night my Boucher missed a centimetre's worth of silverskin on a tenderloin that was heading off to a Rotisseur. I digress, I simply wish to welcome you to the book. I have conducted a study on American Cuisine, and I have come to the conclusion that 'cuisine' is far from the correct word, and 'food' still falls far short of the mark. Thus, I've given you recipes, but rest assured that I have spared no critique when it comes to the provisions of the land of the brave.

Happy cooking, and don't burn anything!

Liam Monningham

# Diner Burgers

**A true icon of American 'culture.'**

The classic American Hamburger. What exactly is it that has created the immense hype and culture surrounding this sandwich? That was not a rhetorical question for me to introduce this dish, I genuinely cannot understand it. What we have here is typically the cheapest ground beef possible, adorned with tasteless cheese, wilted lettuce, and wet tomatoes. Oh, and how could I forget? No burger is complete without a generous squirt of ketchup and mustard, which comes in colors that suggest they came from a Sherwin-Williams, as opposed to a kitchen. This sandwich was created out of need during the Depression, and should have stayed in the past with the Dust Bowl, Prohibition, and other concepts of the past. Instead, this sandwich has persisted to this day, to the point that even some of my former colleagues have begun to introduce the dish to their menus, with their own twists applied. Fire up your griddle and open up your gullet, it's time for some hamburgers.



## Ingredients

- 6 oz. ground beef
- 2 sesame seed buns
- 6 slices tomato
- 2 bun-sized pieces lettuce
- 2 slices American Cheese
- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Salt
- Pepper
- Neutral Oil

**Yield: 2 Servings**

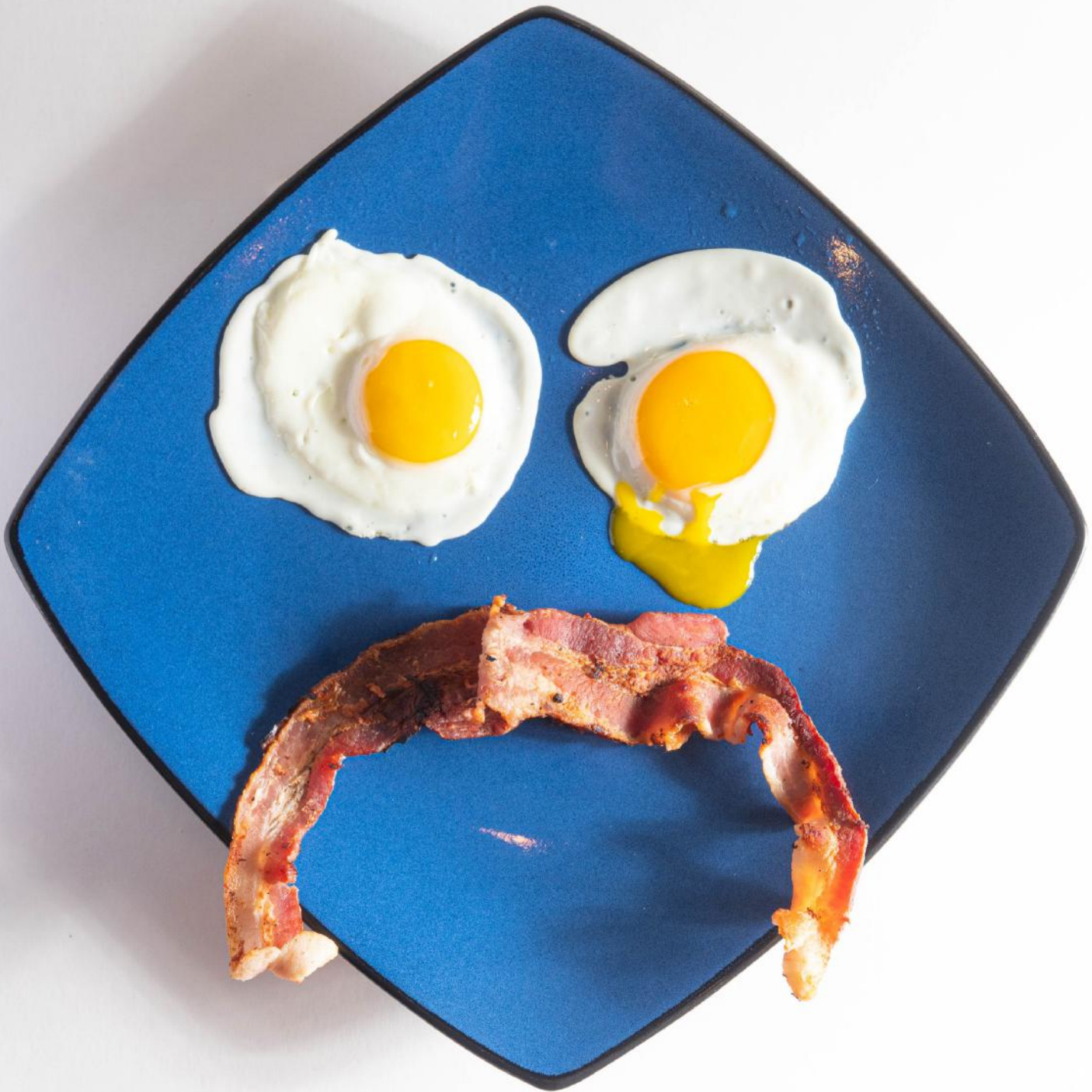
**Prep Time: 10-15 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 10 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Form 1.5 ounce meatballs with your ground beef. Apply salt and pepper to the top of the meatballs. Prep your lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese as well if needed.
2. Heat a cast iron skillet to high heat, and apply a neutral oil to the pan, enough to coat, until the oil is ripping hot.
3. Place your meatballs in the pan. Using a wooden dowel on top of a spatula greased on the bottom side, press firmly down on the meatball to form as thin a patty as possible.
4. Once the patty has become browned and crispy on the edges, flip the patty and apply salt and pepper to the other side. Immediately apply cheese to melt while the other side cooks.
5. Repeat the process with remaining meatballs. Cook as many patties at a time as the cooking surface allows.
6. Toast buns (refer to 'Toast' recipe for directions), and assemble in the following order: heel, lettuce, patty, patty, mustard, ketchup, lettuce, tomato slices, crown.
7. Enjoy your burger with a side of fries, a milkshake, and clogged arteries!





# Bacon and Sunny Side Up Eggs

## The Perfect Mother's Day Breakfast!

Oh look, it's Mother's Day again. Oh look even closer, you've forgotten again! That's okay, she didn't expect any less. Quick! run to the fridge and see what you've got! Fresh biscuits and gravy, made with extra love? No, there's no time! Waffles? But the batter gets so sticky and icky! Lord knows you don't want to spend too much time or effort on this meal, you've got to go to the store to get a card before you bring it upstairs. Grab that carton of eggs, that package of bacon, that bottle of fresh-bought orange juice and move it to the stove, junior! Today, we're gonna learn how to make perfectly crisp bacon and the simple yet elusive sunny side up egg. And don't worry, this recipe will cost you 20 minutes or less, so you'll have plenty of time to check the remaining stock of cards at the grocery store.

## Ingredients

- 2 Eggs
- 2 Slices thick-cut bacon
- Salt
- Pepper (Optional)
- Neutral Oil

## Directions

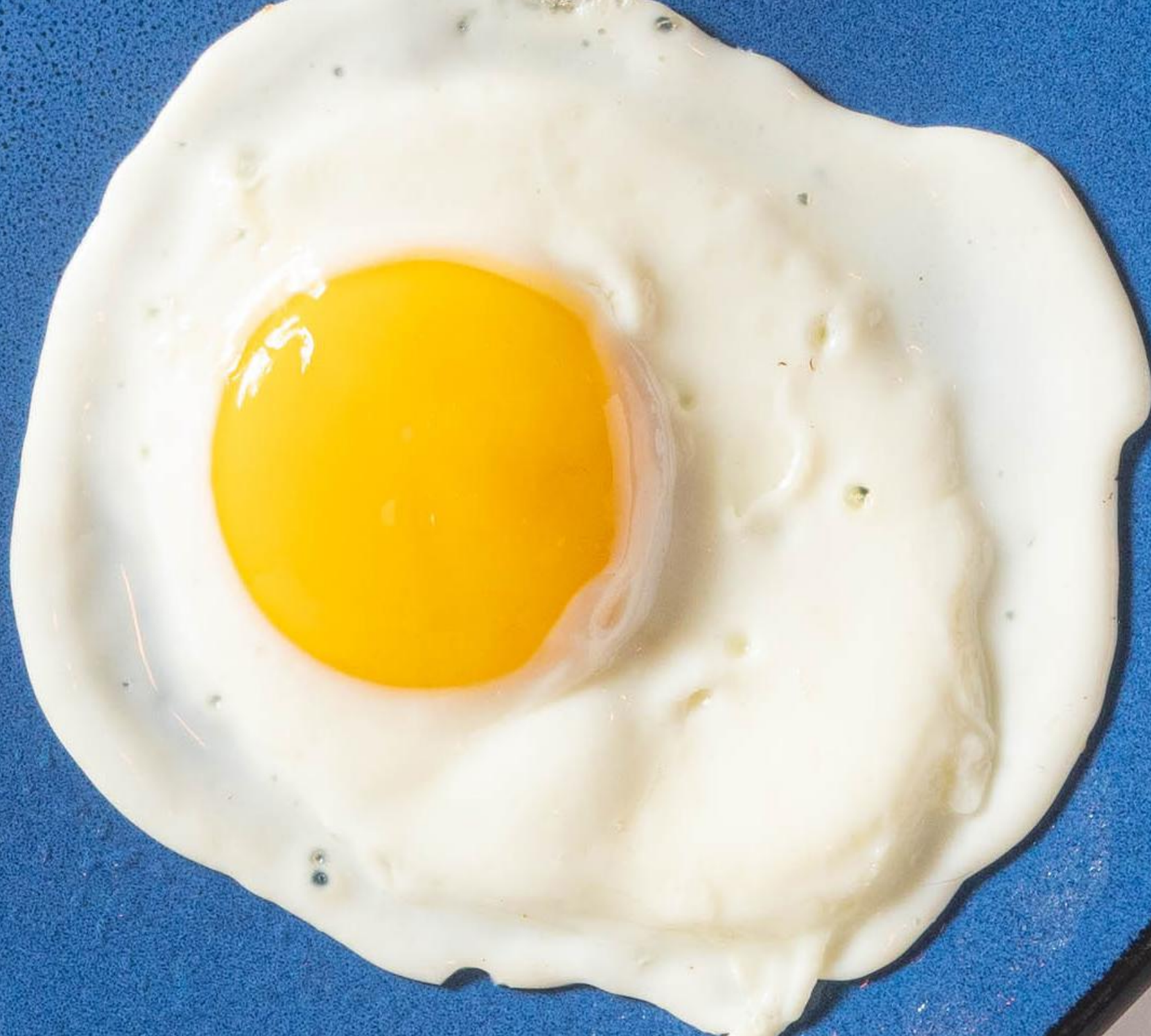
1. In a pan on medium heat, with 1-1.5 tablespoons of oil, gently crack 1 of your eggs into the center of the pan.
2. Once the whites on the edges of the egg have set, tilt the pan and use a spoon to baste the centers of the whites until set as well, be careful not to get oil on the yolk, or it will become cooked and cloudy.
3. Once cooked, remove to a plate and apply salt and pepper.
4. For the bacon, start with the bacon strips in a cold pan and turn to medium to medium-low heat. The gradual increase in heat will help the fat in the bacon render and give a more even cook.
5. Flip bacon occasionally until desired crispiness is achieved, and then remove to a paper towel, to drain excess grease (remember, bacon continues to cook briefly after being removed from the pan, so remember to remove a little earlier to account for this).
6. Plate the eggs and bacon, and take them to mother in bed! Be sure not to break the yolks, or you'll end up with a sad egg!

**Yield: 1 Serving**

**Prep Time: 0 Min**

**Cook Time: 15-20 Minutes**







# Taco Tuesday Tacos

These are simply not tacos.

I don't know what else to say about this. These are not tacos. To take one of the most respected street dishes in the world and bastardize it to the point that it is unrecognizable from its original form truly is the American way, isn't it? I do not know what one would call this dish, maybe a crunchy hamburger? I'm really not sure, but it certainly doesn't fall under 'taco'. Are you aware that cumin, one of the flavors you most associate with Mexican food, isn't an ingredient commonly used in Mexico? That is Taco Bell, Del Taco, and other chains warping your perspective on flavor and its regionality. Some brief research can truly broaden our horizons and enlighten us, can't it? Respecting food and its traditions is obviously not a priority in America though, so let's fire up the stove!



## Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 tomato
- ½ head lettuce
- shredded cheese
- 2 tbsp. onion powder
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1tbsp. ground cumin
- 1 tbsp. paprika
- 1 tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 tbsp. ground oregano
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- taco shells

**Yield: 6 Servings**

**Prep Time: 45 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 30 Minutes**

## Directions

1. In a bowl, combine the onion powder, chili powder, cumin, paprika, garlic powder, oregano, sugar, and salt.
2. Shred your lettuce, and dice your tomato.
3. In a pan on medium heat with a neutral oil, pour in ground beef. Use a spatula to break the meat up, and mix in desired amount of seasoning mix. This recipe makes a cup of seasoning, so save the rest for next time!
4. Continue to break the meat up and stir, until the entire pound is evenly browned and cooked through.
5. After warming your taco shells per manufacturer's instructions, assemble your tacos, as follows: Inside the shell, place a scoop of ground beef, top with shredded cheese, followed by shredded lettuce and diced tomatoes.
6. Plate your tacos and serve! Go ahead and prep some forks for the family, hardshell tacos disintegrate upon the first bite.

# Celebratory Steak Dinner

**Congratulations on whatever your achievement is!**

What's the occasion? Another birthday? A minor promotion? Learning how to cook a steak? However minor or small the occasion, it's time to learn to cook yourself a big, juicy steak and a big, fluffy loaded baked potato! This evening, we'll be using the reverse sear method, so make sure to mentally prepare for the oven and stove running at the same time! That's not too much to handle, right? The reverse sear is one of the best methods for getting a perfectly cooked steak. Nobody wants to cut into their 24 oz. porterhouse and have it be too raw or too done! While we're discussing the steak, if I see or hear of anyone putting A1 or ketchup in the same room as a steak, I will be paying them a personal visit. The loaded baked potato is another coveted delicacy. processed butter product, old bacon bits, hardly melted cheddar cheese and wilted chives? sign me up! Let's recreate this steakhouse namesake at home.



## Ingredients

- Your choice of steak (1 ½-2in thick)
- 1 potato
- 1 strip bacon
- Chives
- Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- Neutral Oil
- Salt
- Pepper

**Yield: 1 Serving**

**Prep Time: 10 Min**

**Cook Time: 60 Minutes**

## Directions

1. 2-24 hours before cooking your steak, heavily salt the meat. Just before cooking, apply pepper and place steak on a wire rack on a baking sheet. Preheat oven to 200-275°F.
2. Place steak in the oven for between 20 (rare) and 40 (medium-well) minutes. Use a thermometer to check internal temperature of meat, remove between 105 (rare)-135°F (medium-well). Transfer the steak immediately to a ripping hot skillet with oil.
3. Sear for 45 seconds to 1 minute, or until a nice crust has formed on the steak. Flip and repeat on opposite side. Slice and serve immediately.
4. For the baked potato, Use a fork to poke holes all over your potato, then coat the outside with oil and kosher salt.
5. Bake on a baking sheet for 45-60 minutes at 425°F.
6. Remove from oven, immediately cut and add your cheese, fried bacon bits, and sliced chives. Wait until the cheese melts and plate.
7. Pour a glass of whisky or red wine and enjoy the steak you probably earned!







# Quick Weeknight Orange Chicken

**Skip the takeout line!**

Tonight for dinner, we will be making one of the most classic examples of Americanization possible: Orange Chicken. You may know this as Chinese food, but I assure you, dear reader, this dish is about as American as you can get! Chinese cuisine usually denotes a world of beautiful flavors and aromas such as sesame, chilis, sichuan peppercorns, ginger, star anise, and many more, yet the United States has managed to bastardize it beyond recognition, and we are left with 4 slightly different flavors of candied fried chicken. One of the few ingredients that remains from the east is MSG, and I've been asked not to use that in this book. Why is there such a fear of MSG in America? Has no one learned in the last 40 years that MSG is not a devilish spice that will kill you, but is simply a beloved and delicious seasoning? Let me make you privy to something: All of the salty-savory snacks Americans enjoy are loaded with MSG, it's what makes them taste good to you. I've decided to omit the sugar sauce and include the oranges as a garnish for this recipe; enjoy some fruit instead of corn syrup sauce.

## Ingredients

- 2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup dark soy sauce
- ¼ cup oyster sauce
- 1 tsp. gochugaru
- 1 tsp. white pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 navel orange

**Yield: 4 Servings**

**Prep Time: 2-12 Hours**

**Cook Time: 30 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Prepare the chicken by cutting into bite size pieces. Combine the soy sauces, oyster sauce, gochugaru, white pepper, garlic powder, onion powder in a bowl and combine. Place the chicken in the bowl and stir for even coverage. Cover and fridge for between 2 and 12 hours.
2. 2 hours later (let's be honest with ourselves), remove the chicken from the pan and transfer to a pan on medium-high heat.
3. Cook Chicken until done, and transfer to a bowl of steamed rice.
4. Slice your orange and place in the bowl as a garnish. Eat the oranges, they're good for you!





# Charcuterie Board

## Make Your Friends Think You're Cultured!

Your friends are coming over and you don't want to cook a bunch of hors d'oeuvres, that would require getting your hands dirty and cleaning a bunch of dishes. Wait, what are those little boards of meat and cheese that you see all over Facebook and Instagram? Shark country boards? Smart foolery boards? Charred foodie boards? Ah, yes, charcuterie boards! These displays of meat and cheese rely heavily on quality of ingredients and presentation, so try to find a deli that- oh, you only have the lunchables for your child's lunch this week, and some loose grapes? Okay, let's try and make do. We'll rely heavily on technique only, so let's focus on how we're displaying our Jambon and sharp American cheese slices. It will be a real conversation starter! Let's start filling our nicest serving platter.





## Ingredients

- Coldcuts (nice italian cold cuts would be preferred here, but as discussed, we're going to make do)
- A variety of cheeses (see previous bullet)
- Variety of crackers and nuts
- Fruits (do some research on what compliments your other ingredients well, grapes, apples, and pears are common.
- Mix things up! Charcuterie boards are about a variety of choices!

**Yield: 8-10 Servings**

**Prep Time: 60 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 0 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Begin with your cheeses. Pre-slice them into different shapes and slices, and arrange them evenly but organically around your board or serving platter.
2. Next, move on to the meats. Experiment with different ways to fold and arrange the meats so that they each present differently and in a unique way.
3. Third, place your fruits in bunches and piles amongst your meats and cheeses.
4. Fill in some of the remaining spaces with nuts of your choice. With the nuts, try trails that outline other items on the board.
5. Populate your board further with some crackers. Extras can be served on another platter or in a basket alongside the board.
6. Finally, freestyle with some other ingredients that speak for you! Maybe some chocolates or other snacks will fit well on the board.
7. Take the board out to the living room and crack open that \$7 bottle of wine, it's time to party!

# The Sloppy Joe

## Put on your bib!

It was a busy Wednesday night in 1956 when Joseph Humphrey of Cincinnati, Ohio was unable to decide whether he wanted a hamburger or chili for dinner. His wife, tired of waiting on him to make his decision, combined the two and watched him drip it all over himself as he proceeded to scarf it down with joy. Thus, the Sloppy Joe was born. I'm not sure if that was truly what happened, but I can only imagine such a crude sandwich had a mundane origin like that. Seriously, what happened here? Is this to be eaten with hands or a spoon? I would prefer not to need instructions with my meal, personally. Thaw that ground beef from the back of the freezer, it's time for Sloppy Joes.





## Ingredients

- 1 onion
- ½ green bell pepper
- 1 tbsp. worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. yellow mustard
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- 15 oz. crushed tomatoes
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic
- 4 hamburger buns

**Yield: 4 Servings**

**Prep Time: 10 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 30 Minutes**

## Directions

1. In a bowl, combine worcestershire sauce, mustard, water, brown sugar, and crushed tomatoes.
2. In a skillet over medium-high heat, add oil, ground beef, salt, and pepper. Sauté for 5 minutes.
3. Add in the dice the pepper and onions, add to pan, and sauté for another 5 minutes.
4. Add garlic to pan and sauté 30 more seconds.
5. Pour the mixture from the bowl into the pan and bring to a light boil. Simmer until thick, and slop some onto a bun for your Sloppy Joe, you sloppy joe!



# Rich Dark Chocolate Brownies

## The Bare Minimum!

To learn to bake a pan of brownies is to baking as learning to ride a bike is to life: it is an essential yet simple skill that most people learn as children. Consider the boxed mix training wheels. Have you ever seen an adult on a bike with training wheels? Precisely, so let's learn a recipe from scratch to really meet the requirements for your friends and family. Whether they're an edge or middle piece person, these brownies are sure to make everyone raise their eyebrows slightly. Now, baking is truly a chemistry experiment more so than cooking, so be sure to follow this recipe to a tee, or you may have disastrous results.

## Ingredients

- 10 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
- ¾ cup plus 2 tbsp.  
unsweetened cocoa  
powder
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup all-purpose flour

**Yield: 16 Servings**

**Prep Time: 15 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 30 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Heat oven to 325°F, and lubricate a baking pan with cooking spray or butter.
2. Add water to a pot so that it is 1 to 2 inches deep. Heat to a bare simmer.
3. Combine butter, sugar, cocoa powder, and salt in a heat proof bowl over top of the simmering water. Stir until ingredients are well incorporated.
4. Remove bowl from heat and let cool slightly. Stir in vanilla and eggs, one at a time (cooling the mixture is important here, we don't want scrambled eggs in our brownies!)
5. Once well combined, finally add flour and stir until mixed. Once well combined, continue to beat for an additional 30 seconds to 1 minute in order to develop gluten and create a chewier brownie.
6. Pour batter evenly across pan and bake for 20-25 minutes.
7. Once a toothpick can be inserted into the center and be removed cleanly, remove the brownies from the oven and let cool for at least 1 hour.
8. After 15 minutes have passed, dig in and burn the roof of your mouth!







# A Hot Dog

This was a genuine recipe suggestion during a planning meeting.

Is a hotdog a sandwich? Is a hot dog a sausage?  
Is a hot dog meat? Is a hot dog food? A logical line of questions to ask yourself, but the answer to all four is simply no. Even I think the audience for this book would have the know-how to be able to heat up this tube of mystery protein, but I'll include it anyway just in case any of you burnt the house down the last time you turned a burner on. This dish is the redneck cousin of the Frankfurter, Bratwurst, and Knockwurst, who shows up to the reunion already drunk and doesn't bring a dish to contribute. Situated between a processed white bun and adorned with the same coat of paint as our hamburgers, let's make a hot dog.

## Ingredients

- 1 hot dog
- 1 hot dog bun
- 1-2 tsp. Mustard
- A distinct lack of ketchup

**Yield: 1 Servings**

**Prep Time: 0 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 5 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Put the hot dog in a pan or on a grill over medium heat.
2. Heat until the sausage has become warm throughout.
3. Put the hot dog inside the bun.
4. Apply a squirt of mustard to the hot dog.
5. Are you happy with yourself?



# Toast

## Think we can handle this one?

If I need to teach the masses how to cook a hot dog, I'm going to go out on a limb and say that they also don't know how to properly toast bread. Still eating croutons out of the toaster that always burns that one corner? Let's toss out the toaster and learn how to use a pan to toast bread. It may seem like one of the most simple techniques to learn, but an even toast can be quite evasive if you've never been taught to cook. Lubrication during toasting is important, choose either butter or mayonnaise, but don't sweat the choice too much, you'll burn the first few anyway. Let's toast some bread!



## Ingredients

- Slices of your favorite bread
- Butter or mayonnaise, enough to cover both sides of the bread

## Directions

1. Using a butter knife, spread butter or mayonnaise across both sides of the bread.
2. Heat a pan to medium low, and apply a small amount of your fat to the pan to lubricate its surface as well.
3. Using a spatula, or your fingers if you know how to be careful, constantly move the bread in circles around the pan. This constant movement grants even heat to the bread, and therefore an even toast.
4. Once you've reached your desired toast, don't forget to flip the bread and do the same to the opposite side!
5. Remove the bread from the pan, and place it burned side down, so as to pretend it is not there.

**Yield: 1 Servings**

**Prep Time: 5 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 5 Minutes**







# Perfect Pepperoni Pizza

**The most disappointing dish to cook at home!**

Pizza is another dish that has been heavily Americanized during its transition from its home to the land of the free, though it has retained many of its traditional characteristics (a moment of silence for Chinese cuisine, please.) yet we still see it bastardized in some locations such as Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. One of the main reasons you have failed to properly cook any pizza in the past is likely because your oven cannot possibly reach high enough temperatures to properly cook the dough and melt the cheese. If you want a satisfactory pie at home, you may need to return to the Red Baron, or Papa John. If you wish to continue to disappoint yourself or have a pizza oven collecting dust in your home, follow along with this recipe for the most wonderful pie. This recipe is a doozy, so if you're still here, buckle in.

## Ingredients

### Dough:

- 1 ½ cups warm water
- 1 pack active dry yeast
- 3 ¾ cups bread flour
- 2 tbsp. EV olive oil
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. sugar

### Sauce & Toppings:

- 1 can crushed tomatoes
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp. dried Italian seasoning
- ½ tbsp. crushed red pepper
- Fresh mozzarella cheese
- Pepperoni

**Yield: 2 Servings**

**Prep Time: 2 Hours**

**Cook Time: 30 Minutes**

## Directions

### Dough, Assembly, and Baking:

1. Place warm water (105°F-115°F) in the bowl of a stand mixer and sprinkle in yeast. Let sit for 5, then stir until bloomed.
2. Add flour, salt, olive oil, and sugar. Using paddle attachment, mix on low for approximately 1 minute before replacing paddle with a dough hook. Knead the dough for 7-10 minutes until tacky.
3. Coat a bowl with olive oil and transfer dough to bowl. cover and let rest in fridge for 24 hours, or on counter for 1 ½ hours. The longer the rest, the more complex the flavor of your eventual crust.
4. Preheat a pizza stone in the oven at 475°F for at least one hour.
5. After the rest is complete, deflate dough with your hands and divide into 2 balls. Place each in a separate bowl and cover. Rest on counter top for 15 minutes-2 hours.
6. After the second rest, dust your work surface with flour and place one ball of dough in the middle. Using your fingertips (cover them in oil so the dough doesn't stick), begin pressing and working the dough outward carefully, until you form a flat disc.
7. brush dough with olive oil and allow to rest another 15 minutes.
8. Dust a pizza peel with cornmeal and transfer your crust to the peel.

9. Once you tear a hole during the transfer, just use your fingers to seal the hole.
10. spread your sauce and topping across the crust, careful not to go too heavily on any of them, leaving you with a soggy pie.
11. Sprinkle some more cornmeal onto the pizza stone, and bake for 10-15 minutes.
12. Once cooked, slice, serve, and realize you probably should've just ordered delivery.

**Sauce:**

1. Mince garlic while bringing 1 ½ tbsp olive oil to medium heat in a pot.
2. Sauté garlic for 30 seconds before adding Italian seasoning and sautéing another 30 seconds, or until fragrant.
3. Add can of crushed tomatoes and bring to a bare simmer, stirring to incorporate oil, garlic, and seasoning.
4. Add kosher salt and black pepper to taste.
5. Stir frequently for 45 minutes-1 hour, or until reduced to desired consistency.
6. Use immediately or freeze for future forgetting.





# Fried Rice

**Let's get some veggies!**

Currently, I'm imagining the average American Fridge. I'm seeing lots of sauces, all of them taste like corn syrup and salt. Beer that tastes like water, a package of hot dogs, and spoiled cheese. Behind all that, though, there's a gold mine! White rice, never eaten from Tuesday's takeout, and veggies in a tupperware container, picked around with a chicken breast made on Monday. Fried rice is in the making! Things are going great, my recipe is perfect but, no! Someone ate almost all the rice! Worry not, those vegetables are very rich in nutrients and will make you nice and healthy, let's just continue with the stir fry. Note that if one does not have respect or care for depth of flavor, dark soy sauce and Shaoxing wine may be omitted.

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups day old white rice
- 1 head broccoli
- ¼ cup frozen peas
- ¼ cup frozen diced carrots
- ½ onion
- Dark soy sauce
- Soy sauce
- Oyster sauce
- White pepper
- Sesame oil

**Yield: 3 Servings**

**Prep Time: 10 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 20 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Begin by chopping the broccoli and onion, and mincing the garlic.
2. In a wok (but more likely a pan), put 3 tablespoons of oil in on high heat, followed by the onion.
3. Once the edges of the onion become translucent, toss the broccoli and garlic into the pan and begin to stir the vegetables vigorously.
4. After another minute or two, toss in the frozen peas and carrots. Continue stir-frying.
5. Put the cold rice into the pan and continue to stir fry, breaking up chunks of rice in the process and evenly incorporating the vegetables.
6. Finally, add soy sauce, dark soy sauce, oyster sauce, and white pepper to taste. Fried rice is a highly personalized dish, so really experiment with your ratios here.
7. Continue to stir fry until the rice becomes a gorgeous golden brown.
8. Finish with a drizzle of sesame oil across the pan.
9. Plate the rice in a bowl and go eat your veggies, just like your parents told you to!







# Cookies & Cream Birthday Cake

## Why did you let your uncle cut the cake?

A sight most are familiar with, a sad slice of birthday cake, in shambles compared to its original form due to aggressive handling in transfer from cut to plate. It still tastes like sugar though, so let's happily chow down. Skip the grocery store or bakery this time around, and let's test both your baking and structural engineering skills! Assembling and Frosting a cake is a daunting task that takes hours upon hours of practice to become decent at, but let's not get ahead of ourselves and worry about not burning our layers in the oven first. Same as with our brownies: baking is a chemistry experiment, so follow my directions closely, and you will not have any issues, and your cake will not taste awful!



## Ingredients

- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup all purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cocoa powder
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 stp. baking powder
- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 3 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup strong coffee
- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup unsalted butter
- 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups powdered sugar
- 3-5 tbsp. heavy cream
- 6-10 Chocolate sandwich cookies

**Yield: 12 Servings**

**Prep Time: 45 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 25 Minutes**

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F, and line cake pans with parchment paper and grease the insides
2. Whisk together flour, 1 teaspoon salt, cocoa powder, and baking powder in a large bowl. Set aside. In a separate bowl, combine oil, eggs and 2 teaspoons vanilla together until combined. Add buttermilk and stir again.
3. Combine the wet and dry ingredients, in addition to the coffee (This helps bring out the chocolate flavors in your coffee, I promise you it won't make it less sugary).
4. Divide batter between pans and bake for around 25 minutes, or until the cake layers can pass the toothpick test from 'Rich Dark Chocolate Brownies,' then remove from the oven to cool completely.
5. For the buttercream icing, beat butter until soft. Proceed to add crushed cookies, powdered sugar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, and 3 tablespoons of heavy cream and beat until well combined. Add additional powdered sugar or heavy cream to thicken or thin icing as needed.
6. To construct cake, top layers of cake with icing acting as glue and stack to desired height, then frost the outside of cakes. You'll notice the frosting melting, this means you didn't cool the cake long enough. Slice and serve anyway!



# The B.L.T.

## A revolution against the sandwich regime.

Why have I presented you with a sandwich this ridiculous?  
I wish to teach you a lesson. Bacon itself is not a meat.  
What is bacon listed as at the diners you go to? A side  
item. How is it used in practically any other dish? As  
a compliment to something else. Bacon is the side character  
of the food world, and should remain in its place. Where  
this sandwich came from I'm not quite sure, and it may be  
even lazier than the ham and cheese sandwich that has plagued  
lunchboxes for decades. I thank the heavens every day that the  
bacon fad of the early 2010s have passed, and that we as a  
society have moved on. The Bacon, Lettuce, & Tomato, however,  
persists. I want to dismantle this sandwich once and for all and  
I present to you my equally ludicrous candidate for replacement:  
the Baloney, Lemon, & Tuna.

## Ingredients

- 2 slices of bread
- 2-3 slices baloney
- 1 lemon
- ½ can tuna
- mayonnaise or butter

## Directions

1. Begin by using the method described in 'Toast' to toast your bread.
2. Slice your lemons into ¼ inch slices.
3. Assemble your sandwich with the following method: slice of bread, baloney slices, lemon slices, a few scoops of tuna, top slice of bread.
4. Question what you've created, and dig in!

**Yield: 1 Servings**

**Prep Time: 5 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 5 Minutes**





# Chocolate-Chocolate-Chocolate-Chocolate-Chocolate-Chocolate Sundaes

## Diabetes in a bowl!

Why is there such a craze of adding as many chocolate flavored things as possible into a single dish, and calling it a dessert? People are aware that there are other flavors that go along with chocolate besides itself, right? There's Vanilla, Cinnamon, Citrus, Berries, Rum, and numerous other pairings, yet many make the lazy decision to add chocolate to chocolate. Ice cream may be one of the worst culprits of this crime. I've lost track of the number of restaurants in which I've dined whose dessert menus have featured Nothing but Chocolate-Chocolate something, or Nutella-Chocolate something else. It's boring, it's lazy, and I cannot stand for it any longer. In what I hope will scare some off of the endless chocolate layering, but will likely stand as more of a litmus test for my respect, I have put the most chocolate possible into a single ice cream sundae. Again, I hope that this may display the true absurdity in working so much chocolate into a single dish, but my intuition says this may be the most popular recipe in this book.





## Ingredients

- 3 scoops chocolate ice cream
- 1 double chocolate cookie
- ½ chocolate bar
- 1 tbsp. chocolate syrup
- 1 tbsp. Nutella

## Directions

1. Dunking an ice cream scoop into warm water, move 3 scoops of ice cream into a bowl. Alternatively, you could skip this step and put all of the toppings straight into the tub and go at it with a spoon, like an animal.
2. Using approximately 1 tables spoon or to taste, apply chocolate syrup to the ice cream.
3. Using the same ratio, drizzle Nutella spread over the ice cream. This becomes a lot easier if the hazelnut spread is melted beforehand.
4. Break off a piece of your half chocolate bar, and use a microplane zester or grater to shave chocolate on top of the ice cream. Garnish with remaining piece of chocolate bar.
5. Garnish the opposite side of the bow with a double chocolate cookie (a brownie from the previous recipe works great as well!)
6. Grab some napkins and enjoy your goulash of chocolate!

**Yield: 1-2 Servings**

**Prep Time: 5 Minutes**

**Cook Time: 0 Minutes**

# Tonkatsu Ramen

**Just make the packaged version, this will be too much of a challenge.**

Tonkatsu Ramen is a tried and true Japanese dish, but has seen an explosion in America in recent years with various noodle shops popping up across the country, the variety of instant noodles in stores expanding rapidly, and recipes showing up all over the internet. This dish takes patience, respect, and technique, something the American deep-fry and microwave culture would lead me to believe my readers may not have. Allow me to make my official suggestion now: pull the Maruchan from the cupboard and boil some water, you don't really want this. If you're still reading, please go back to the previous sentence and read it again. If you've made it to this sentence, Get ready for a long grocery list and car ride to that international grocery store you've never been to, I can assure you do not have the ingredients necessary for this. Let's begin.







## Ingredients

- 2 quarts pork broth
- 1 onion
- 6-8 scallions
- 4 in. knob ginger
- Vegetable oil
- 1 ½ cups dried Anchovies
- 1 ½ cup Soy Sauce
- 1 cup mirin
- Bonito
- Sake
- 1 lb. Pork Belly
- 3 Cloves Garlic
- 2 green onions
- ¼ cup fish sauce
- ½ cup sugar
- Fresh or premade ramen noodles

**Yield: 2-4 Servings**

**Prep Time: 24 Hours**

**Cook Time: 12 Hours**

## Directions

1. The night before, Peel and rough chop 1 inch of ginger, 3 cloves of garlic, and 2 green onions. Mix ½ cup soy sauce, ½ cup mirin, fish sauce, and sugar in a bowl and dump in aromatics.
2. Place pork belly in a bag and ensure all surfaces are covered in marinade. Marinate 24 hours.
3. Early in the day, begin to simmer your broth on very low heat with the onion, quartered, and the scallions and ginger, roughly chopped. The longer a simmer you can do, the richer and more flavorful your broth.
4. For the Tare soup base, heat enough vegetable oil to coat your pan over medium high heat and add dried anchovies. Let cook for 4 minutes without touching.
5. Add ½ cup of soy sauce and ½ cup mirin and stir everything together. Remove from heat and let bonito soak in the mixture.
6. Add a splash of sake and cook off the alcohol, Strain and set aside.
7. While cooking noodles as needed by type, thinly slice pork and cook until done under a broiler.
8. To construct your meal after nearly 2 days of cooking, place a few tablespoons of the tare into a bowl followed by a few ladles of hot tonkatsu broth. 2-3 slices of chashu pork and a serving of noodles are followed by your choice of classic ramen toppings!



# Chicken and Waffles

**With chicken appropriately prepared for the dish's target age group**

This is one of the most confusing trends to arise from American cuisine, to me. It appears to be possibly the most adolescent combinations of food possible, fried chicken and a waffle with maple syrup. This combination of sweet and salty makes sense in theory, but conceptually, this dish could have been invented by a fifth grader whose parents were out of town, and whose baby sitter overslept after stealing from the liquor cabinet. As such, I have tuned this dish to be more appropriate for its intended audience, using frozen waffles so as to remove the hazard of a waffle iron, and preparing the fried chicken in dinosaur shapes. These adjustments serve to bring out the true essence of the dish, in what I believe to be its ultimate form.

## Ingredients

### Waffles:

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 ½ cups whole milk
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 1 stick salted butter
- 3 large eggs

### Fried Chicken:

- 2 lbs. chicken breast
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. thyme
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- salt
- pepper
- 2 large eggs

**Yield: 4 servings**

**Prep Time: 30 minutes**

**Cook Time: 35 minutes**

## Directions

### Waffles:

1. I want to reiterate: If you are the target age group for this dish, please get the Eggos from the fridge, I don't want you hurting yourself. If not, mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and a pinch of salt in a bowl while preheating a waffle iron.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together milk, vanilla, and eggs. Slowly add to dry ingredients until a batter forms, stopping half way to add in the butter, melted.
3. Scoop the batter into your iron per manufacturer's instructions. Remove once you have a gorgeous, golden-brown waffle!

### Fried Chicken:

1. Begin by cutting your chicken into dinosaur shapes, and seasoning with salt while bringing 2 inches of a neutral oil to 365°F.
2. In a shallow pan, combine flour, cornstarch, paprika, thyme, cayenne pepper, salt, and pepper. In a bowl, beat both eggs together.
3. Going from egg to dry mix, back to egg, back to dry mix, thoroughly coat your chicken for frying.
4. Fry chicken in batches for 3-4 minutes, or until golden brown.
5. Plate chicken on top of waffles, drizzle with your favorite topping, and hurry to the TV, Saturday morning cartoons are almost over!







Well, dear reader, you've made it to the end of the book! Are your knives dull now, did you end up in the hospital? Unfortunately, it is time for us to say goodbye. I can't quite say I've enjoyed the ride, but it has certainly been interesting. I hope you will now go on to expand your horizons, learning techniques and pairings far beyond the scope of the American lens. There's a world of food out there, and you've merely licked the doormat.

Liam Monningham





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