

*YANKEE*

# *Comfort Food*

**Editors' Picks & Readers' Favorites**



# Comfort Foods

Selected by the Editors of *Yankee Magazine*



**O**h my goodness! Meatloaf, mac and cheese, clam chowder —folks can pretty much agree on what makes great comfort food. These recipes get rave reviews from our readers and are hearty enough to fill your belly while feeding your soul.

MACARONI AND CHEESE

CRUNCHY HAMBURGER  
CASSEROLE

OLD FASHIONED CHICKEN  
AND DUMPLINGS

DOWNEAST CLAM CHOWDER

FAST AND FANCY CHICKEN

MOM'S MEATLOAF

FIREHOUSE CHILI

CHICKEN POT PIE

BLUEBERRY BOY BAIT

WHOOPIE PIES

## MACARONI AND CHEESE

*This recipe is delicious. I doubled the amount of Panko and used more crushed red pepper than the recipe called for and it was great. –Jacqueline Cebik*

**TOTAL TIME: 25 MINUTES • YIELD: 4-6 SERVINGS**

**7 tablespoons salted butter, divided**  
**3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs**  
**1 8-ounce package ziti, macaroni, or your favorite pasta**  
**4 tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**2 cups milk**  
**1/4 teaspoon kosher or sea salt**  
**1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**Pinch crushed red-pepper flakes**  
**1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**  
**8 ounces (about 2 cups) extra-sharp Vermont cheddar cheese, shredded**  
**1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese**

- Preheat oven to 350°. Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a large, heavy skillet. Add panko and stir until coated; set aside.
- Cook pasta according to package, stopping 2 minutes shy of suggested cooking time. Drain and set aside.
- Meanwhile, melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter in a large, heavy saucepan over low heat; whisk in flour until smooth. Cook, whisking continuously, about 1 minute; don't let mixture brown. Add milk gradually and cook over medium heat, whisking continuously, until mixture is thickened and bubbly, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat; add salt, pepper, red-pepper flakes, mustard, and cheeses, whisking until melted.
- Add pasta; then spoon mixture into a lightly greased 2-quart casserole or four lightly greased 2-cup baking dishes. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Bake 20-25 minutes, or until bubbly.



Credit: Aimee Seavey

## CRUNCHY HAMBURGER CASSEROLE

*A casserole classic with noodles, ground beef, cream of mushroom soup, and French-fried onions. Quick, easy, and really good.*

YIELD: 6-8 SERVINGS

**2 cups uncooked egg noodles**  
**1 pound ground beef**  
**1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of mushroom soup**  
**1 can (14-1/2 ounces) tomatoes, drained**  
**3/4 cup shredded cheese (Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, etc.)**  
**3/4 cup diced green bell pepper (optional)**  
**salt and pepper to taste**  
**1 can (2.8 ounces) French-fried onions**

- Cook the noodles according to package directions. Drain well. In a nonstick skillet, brown the meat. Drain off any excess fat. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Combine the noodles, beef, soup, tomatoes, cheese, and green pepper. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour into a greased 9-inch by 13-inch baking dish. Cover and bake for 40 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle the onions on top. Bake for an additional 5 minutes. Serve hot.



## MOTHER'S OLD-FASHIONED HOMEMADE CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS

*Shirley Wollard Woodlock learned to make homemade chicken and dumplings the old-fashioned way from watching her mother, Jennie Wollard Nunn. "Hers were made to perfection," recalls Shirley. "She would always say, 'Don't forget the bay leaves and the pepper.'" Now Shirley always makes her mother's chicken and dumplings to bring to Wollard family reunions. The recipe was passed down from Shirley's grandmother.*

YIELD: 8-10 SERVINGS

**1 whole fryer chicken or hen**  
**4 to 5 bay leaves**  
**salt and pepper, to taste**  
**4 to 6 tablespoons butter**  
**pepper, to taste**

**Dumplings:**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1/2 cup oil**  
**3/4 cup water**  
**2 small eggs**  
**3 cups flour**



- Wash the chicken and place into a large Dutch oven. Cover well with plenty of water and add bay leaves. Add salt and pepper, and the butter (the more butter, the richer the dish). Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, and cook, uncovered, until the chicken is well done, about 1 hour.
- Remove the chicken from the broth. Discard the bay leaves. When the chicken has cooled, remove the meat from the bone and return the deboned chicken to the broth. About 1/2 to 3/4 pot of broth should remain.
- For dumplings: In a large bowl, mix together the salt, oil, water, and eggs. Slowly add the flour to the mixture, blending it constantly with a fork. Stir only long enough to mix the dough.
- Turn the dough out onto a floured board. Pinch the dough in half, and roll out until thin, about 1/4 inch. Slice the dough into 1/2-inch-wide strips, and cross-slice into pieces 4 to 8 inches long, for ease in handling.
- Bring the broth and chicken back to a boil, and pepper well to taste. Drop the dumpling strips into the boiling stock. Boil approximately 20 minutes, uncovered, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, until the dumplings are done (they'll be puffy). Most of the broth will be absorbed. Serve with red pinto beans and corn bread.

## DOWN EAST CLAM CHOWDER

*The best way to make it is with clams you have dug yourself after dropping anchor in a secluded bay, but it is awfully good with fresh clams purchased at a local marina.*

YIELD: 4-6 SERVINGS

**4 dozen hard-shell clams, scrubbed, or 1 quart shucked  
cooked clams with their broth**  
**1/4 pound cubed salt pork or 6 slices bacon**  
**1 onion, coarsely chopped**  
**6 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes**  
**2 cups milk**  
**2 cups half-and-half or evaporated milk**  
**6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter**  
**salt**  
**freshly ground pepper**

- Pour clams into a large pot with 1 cup water. Cover, bring to a boil, and cook until shells open, about 10 minutes. Allow to cool, then shuck clams and set aside. Pour off broth and reserve, taking care not to disturb any sediment in the bottom of the pan.
- Cook salt pork in a large saucepan over medium heat until the fat runs. Add onion and cook, stirring, until tender. Pour off half the fat.
- Add potatoes to the pan and stir well. Add clam broth and just enough water to cover the potatoes. Simmer until potatoes are tender.
- Add milk and half-and-half; bring to a simmer. Add clams and butter; simmer a few minutes until clams are heated through and butter is melted. (Do not boil or clams will be tough.) Season with salt and pepper.



Credit: Brenda Darroch

## FAST AND FANCY CHICKEN

*Topnotch! Very good flavor, moist, and just downright good. The mushrooms are optional, but they make a delicious addition. This chicken dish is perfect for a family dinner or a small party.*

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

**3 whole chicken breasts, boned, skinned, and split**  
**6 slices Swiss cheese**  
**4 ounces mushrooms, sliced (optional)**  
**1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of chicken or cream  
of mushroom soup**  
**1/2 cup white wine (or 1/4 cup milk and 1/4 cup water)**  
**2 cups herb stuffing mix**  
**1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted**

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a 9-inch by 13-inch baking dish.
- Place the chicken in a single layer in the baking dish. Top each piece with a slice of cheese. Sprinkle the mushrooms over the cheese. Mix together the soup and wine and pour over the chicken. Spread the dry stuffing mix over the top. Drizzle the melted butter over the stuffing. Bake, uncovered, for 50 minutes. Serve hot.



## MOM'S MEATLOAF

*For some people, meatloaf is the food they ate when there was nothing left in the house, or when there was a babysitter, or when there had been a crisis and a neighbor had sent over food. At my house, though, it was a very special treat.*

YIELD: 9 SERVINGS

**3 slices white bread, crust removed**  
**1 cup milk**  
**1 pound ground beef**  
**1/2 pound ground pork**  
**1/2 pound raw chorizo sausage, casing removed**  
**1 cup finely chopped onion**  
**3 large eggs, lightly beaten**  
**1 teaspoon kosher or sea salt (approximately)**  
**1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley**  
**1 tablespoon dried sage**  
**2 teaspoons dried thyme**  
**2 teaspoons dried rosemary**  
**1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**  
**1/2 cup ketchup**  
**3 bacon strips, uncooked**

- Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place bread in a small bowl. Pour milk over it and let the bread soak up as much liquid as it will hold.
- In a large bowl, knead together beef, pork, and chorizo. Add bread, any milk left in the bowl, onion, eggs, salt, herbs, nutmeg, and ketchup. With super-clean hands, knead until ingredients are uniformly distributed.
- Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. On the lined sheet, mold the meat into a loaf shape, about 9 inches long. Lay bacon strips lengthwise on top. Bake 1 hour. Remove and let rest 20 minutes on a cooling rack. Transfer to a cutting board; slice and serve.





## FIREHOUSE CHILI

*Dennis Carr grills the beef for his chili, then breaks the patties up into the mixture. This method cuts the amount of fat in the final dish and also results in bigger chunks of meat. However, you may also just brown the meat in the pot before adding the vegetables.*

*Note: You may increase or decrease the amounts of jalapeno, chili powder, and cayenne pepper, depending on how much heat you prefer.*

**TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES • YIELD: 12–14 SERVINGS**

- 4 pounds ground beef**
- 3 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil**
- 3 large onions, coarsely chopped**
- 1 medium-size carrot, peeled and grated**
- 2 green bell peppers, cored, seeded, and chopped**
- 1-2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and finely chopped**
- 1/4 cup loosely packed light-brown sugar**
- 3-4 tablespoons chili powder**
- 3 tablespoons cumin**
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon**
- 1/4-1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- 4 28-ounce cans crushed tomatoes**
- 1 15-ounce can each kidney beans, black beans, and chickpeas**

- Preheat your grill to medium, about 350°. Shape ground beef into large, flat patties. Grill patties until centers are medium rare, about 5 minutes on the first side and 3 on the second. As an alternative, you may cook the patties in a skillet, or just brown the meat in the chili pot over medium-high heat, breaking it up into smaller pieces with a wooden spoon.
- In a large (at least 7-quart) Dutch oven or stockpot over medium heat, warm oil. Add onions, carrot, bell peppers, jalapeno, brown sugar, chili powder, cumin, cinnamon, cayenne, salt, and black pepper. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables soften, about 10 minutes.
- Stir in crushed tomatoes, kidney beans, black beans, and chickpeas. If you grilled the beef, add patties now and use a large spoon to break them up into bite-size chunks. Reduce heat to low and cook uncovered, stirring often, 1 hour. If mixture seems too thick during cooking, thin it with a bit of water.
- Check seasoning and add more salt or black pepper if you like. Serve hot.



## CHICKEN POT PIE WITH VEGETABLES

*To many people, chicken pie with vegetables is a travesty, but this pie is so good that even purists will love it.*

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

**1 3-pound chicken, cut up**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1-1/2 cups chopped carrots**  
**5 small onions, quartered**  
**1 cup fresh or frozen peas**  
**1 cup chopped fresh mushrooms**  
**1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning**  
**salt and pepper to taste**  
**1/3 cup flour**  
**1/2 cup milk**  
**pastry for a single-crust 9-inch pie**  
**1 egg yolk, beaten with 1 tablespoon water**

- Place chicken, bay leaf, salt, and 2 cups water in a 4-quart Dutch oven. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Strain broth, discard bay leaf, and return to Dutch oven. Cool chicken, remove meat, and cut into large chunks; set aside. Add carrots and onions to broth and cook, covered, until tender. Drain broth, add enough water to make 2-1/2 cups liquid, and return to Dutch oven. Stir in peas, mushrooms, seasonings, and chicken. Combine flour and milk and mix until smooth. Stir flour mixture into broth and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils and thickens. Pour hot mixture into 2-quart casserole.
- Roll out pastry to fit top of casserole. Cut slits in top. Place crust over chicken mixture and trim edge, leaving enough to form a ridge. Flute edge and brush with egg wash. Bake at 400 degrees F for 30 to 35 minutes, until crust is golden and filling is bubbly.



## BLUEBERRY BOY BAIT

*In 1954 a 15-year-old Chicago teen named Renny Powell submitted a blueberry coffee cake recipe to the Pillsbury \$100,000 Recipe & Baking Contest (precursor to today's Pillsbury Bake-Off). Renny took second place in the youth division for her creation, named in honor of its powers with the opposite sex. The recipe has been in circulation for nearly 60 years now, including on YankeeMagazine.com, where our adaptation is one of the most popular recipes in our archive.*

**TOTAL TIME:** 20 MINUTES • **YIELD:** 18 SQUARES

### For the Cake:

#### Butter for the pan

**2 cups all-purpose flour**

**1 cup granulated sugar**

**2 teaspoons baking powder**

**1/4 teaspoon table salt**

**2/3 cup vegetable oil**

**1 cup milk**

**2 large eggs**

**3 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen**

■ Preheat oven to 350° and butter a 9x13-inch baking pan.

■ In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add the oil, milk, and eggs. Mix with an electric mixer for 3 minutes.

■ Pour the batter into the prepared pan, then evenly sprinkle the blueberries on top.

#### ■ Additional Notes:

If using large frozen blueberries 2 cups works best. If using small (wild) fresh or frozen blueberries, use up to 3 cups.

### For the Topping:

**3 tablespoons sugar**

**1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**

■ In a small bowl, combine the sugar and cinnamon, then sprinkle over the blueberries. Bake until a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean, about 50 minutes.



Credit: Aimee Seavey

## HOMEMADE WHOOPIE PIE RECIPE WITH REAL MARSHMALLOW FLUFF

*A classic homemade whoopie pie recipe for this favorite old fashioned New England dessert. Soft chocolate cookies with Marshmallow Fluff cream filling never had it so good.*

YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

### For the Cakes:

**2 cups all-purpose flour**  
**1/2 cup cocoa powder**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda**  
**1/2 teaspoon table salt**  
**1/2 cup vegetable shortening**  
**1 cup granulated sugar**  
**1 cup buttermilk**  
**1 large egg**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

### For the Filling:

**1 cup vegetable shortening**  
**2 cups powdered sugar**  
**2 cups Marshmallow Fluff**  
**2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and line two baking sheets with parchment. Set aside.
- In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.
- In a large bowl, cream together the shortening and sugar. Add the egg and vanilla and mix until combined.
- Continue to mix on low speed while alternately adding the buttermilk and flour mixture. Stop to scrape the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.
- Spoon about 1/4-cup of batter roughly 3 inches apart onto the prepared baking sheets (a scoop works well here). Bake for 12-15 minutes or until the tops are puffed and a toothpick inserted into the center of one of the cakes comes out clean. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- In a large bowl, blend together all of the ingredients until smooth.
- Spread the flat side of half the cakes with filling. Top with the remaining cakes to form a sandwich, then wrap individually in plastic wrap until ready to serve.



Credit: Aimee Seavey