

It's hard to believe it's already December, so your schedule may be filled to the brim with holiday parties and planning.

Don't be afraid to take shortcuts where you can. If Monday's clam sauce just feels too ambitious for the beginning of the week, swap out a simple tomato sauce. Or if you don't feel like stirring polenta on Wednesday, look for a good-quality quick-cooking variety.

PREP AHEAD

To make your week easier, check through this prep list on Sunday to get ahead of the game.

Make the sauce and prep the Brussels for Tuesday.
Make the mac and cheese up to the final bake.



MONDAY

Linguine with Clams

TUESDAY

Honey-Lime Chicken Thighs with Brussels Sprouts

WEDNESDAY

Polenta with Sopressata and Vinegar Sauce

THURSDAY

Classic Mac and Cheese



FRIDAY

Prosciutto and Egg Pizza



LINGUINE WITH CLAMS

Leeks tend to be very dirty and gritty. To clean, slice them, then drop them in a large bowl of water. Toss them in the water to rinse, then leave them for about 10 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to remove the leeks, leaving the grit at the bottom of the bowl.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 medium leeks, sliced and cleaned
 - 5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided use
 - 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 3 dozen Manila clams or littlenecks, scrubbed
 - 1/2 cup dry white wine
 - 1 bay leaf, broken
 - Kosher salt, as needed
 - Ground black pepper, as needed
 - 1 lb linguine
 - 4 tsp coarsely chopped flatleaf parsley
 - 2 tbsp unsalted butter (optional)

1. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the leeks and cook, stirring frequently, until the leeks are tender and softened without any browning, 5 to 6 minutes. Lift the leeks out of the pan with a slotted spoon, transfer them to a plate, and set aside.

2. Return the skillet to medium-high heat. Add enough of the remaining oil to liberally coat the pan. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic is aromatic and translucent, about 1 minute. Add the clams, wine, and bay leaf. Cover the skillet and cook until the clams are completely opened, about 8 minutes. Add the reserved leeks, taste the sauce, and adjust with salt and pepper if needed.

3. Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the linguine and stir to separate the pasta. Cook until the pasta is al dente, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer a few ladlefuls of pasta water from the pot to a bowl or cup to have ready for finishing the sauce. (You may need up to 1/2 cup.)

4. Drain the pasta through a colander. Shake well to remove any water clinging to the pasta. Pour the drained pasta into a large serving bowl.

5. Add the clam sauce, the parsley, and 1/4 cup of the pasta cooking water to the linguine and toss them together until the pasta is evenly coated. The sauce should cling slightly; if it does not, you may wish to stir in the butter.



HONEY—LIME CHICKEN WITH BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Add more chile-garlic sauce if you love spice, since as written, the sauce is not very spicy at all. We like this sauce for chicken wings, grilled shrimp, on a roasted pork loin, or as a glaze for crispy tofu, feel free to swap out any protein you prefer.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup lime juice
 - 6 tbsp olive oil
 - 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp chile-garlic sauce,
 - like Sriracha
 - 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
 - 4 bone-in chicken thighs
- 3 tbsp canola oil, divided use
- 2 lb Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
 - 4 cups cooked white rice, for serving (optional)

1. In a small food processor, combine the garlic, lime juice, oil, honey, chile-garlic sauce, salt, and pepper; blend until smooth to make a marinade. Reserve 1/4 cup of the marinade and set aside.

2. In a zip-top bag or shallow baking dish, combine the chicken with the remaining marinade. Toss to coat, cover, and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or up to overnight. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove the chicken from the marinade and pat dry (discard the used marinade).

3. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken to the pan, skin-side down, and cook until well-browned and crisp, about 6 minutes. Flip and cook until browned on both sides. Transfer the chicken to a baking sheet and place in the oven to finish cooking.

4. Meanwhile, add the remaining 1 tablespoon canola oil to the pan and add the Brussels sprouts. Saute, stirring occasionally, until the sprouts are beginning to brown, about 7 minutes. Add the reserved marinade plus 2 tablespoons of water, stir to combine, and cover. Cook until the sprouts are tender, but still firm, about 4 minutes. Remove the lid and cook until the water has evaporated completely and the sprouts are well-browned, about 5 minutes.

5. Serve the Brussels sprouts with the chicken and rice, if you like.



POLENTA WITH SOPRESSATA AND VINEGAR SAUCE

Some deli counters and specialty stores will carry larger tubes of sopressata that you can have sliced, but if not, you can use the smaller appetizer-sized tubes and just serve more slices per serving.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 quarts water
- 2 tbsp kosher salt
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 oz (1 3/4 cups) cornmeal
- 6 thick slices sopressata,
- sliced 1/4-inch thick (about 12 oz)
 - 1/2 cup white wine vinegar

1. Bring the water to a simmer in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the salt and oil, and then slowly add the cornmeal, whisking continuously. Let simmer gently until the polenta is done, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon to make sure the polenta does not stick, 30 to 40 minutes. (The cooking time may vary depending upon the coarseness of your cornmeal.) Remove the polenta from the heat, adjust the seasoning with salt, and keep warm.

2. Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat (you will not need any fat in the pan since the sopressata is quite fatty on its own). Add the sopressata to the pan, working in batches to cook it in a single layer. When the fat begins to melt and the sopressata is browned on both sides, remove it from the pan. Drain on paper towels.

3. Add the vinegar to the fat in the pan and simmer very briefly over medium heat, just long enough to make a thick sauce, about 1 minute. If the sauce appears too greasy, add a few teaspoons of water and mix well to thicken the sauce.

4. Spoon the hot polenta onto heated plates and top each serving with a slice of the fried sopressata. Pour the pan sauce over the sopressata and polenta and serve at once.



MAC AND CHEESE

We use Cheddar cheese in our classic mac and cheese, but you can substitute a little mozzarella, some shredded Swiss, or even a spicy pepper Jack. Add diced pimientos, sun-dried tomatoes, or blanched broccoli florets, if you like.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tbsp plus 2 tsp kosher salt
 - 2 quarts water
 - 8 oz elbow macaroni
 - 3 tbsp unsalted butter
 - 5 tbsp all-purpose flour
 - 3 cups whole milk
 - 1/2 tsp paprika
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 5 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
 - 1/4 tsp Tabasco sauce
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup panko bread crumbs

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.

2. Bring 3 tbsp of the salt and the water to a boil. Add the pasta and boil until tender but not completely cooked, 7 to 9 minutes. Drain the pasta in a colander.

3. While the pasta is cooking, melt the butter in a separate pot over medium heat. Stir in the flour, and cook, stirring, until there are no lumps and the mixture has cooked through, about 5 minutes. Be careful not to develop any brown color. Stir in the milk, paprika, and bay leaf. Increase the heat to establish a simmer, and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until the sauce has thickened. Discard the bay leaf.

4. Add 4 1/2 cups of the cheese to the sauce in batches, 1 cup at a time, waiting until most of the cheese has melted before adding the next batch. Do not allow the sauce to boil. Add the Tabasco, pepper, and remaining 2 tsp salt.

5. Combine the macaroni with the cheese sauce and mix well to coat. Pour the mixture into a 2-quart baking dish, and sprinkle with the remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Sprinkle the bread crumbs over the cheese and transfer the baking dish to the oven. Bake until the cheese is bubbling around the edges and the bread crumb crust on top has become golden brown and crunchy, 20 to 30 minutes. Allow the mac and cheese to set for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.



SERVES 6 TO 8

PROSCIUTTO AND EGG PIZZA

If you're nervous about the egg portion, you can cook them in a pan and add them to the pizza at the end. For a variation, replace the red pepper jelly with fig jam or sun-dried tomato or basil pesto.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb prepared pizza dough
- 1/4 cup red pepper jelly
- 6 oz thinly sliced prosciutto
 - 6 eggs

1. Preheat an oven to 525°F. Preheat a pizza stone, if you like.

2. Stretch or roll the pizza dough into a 16-inch circle and place on an oiled pizza pan (if using a pizza stone, place on a well-floured pizza peel).

3. Spread the dough all over with the red pepper jelly. Top with prosciutto and transfer to the oven. Bake until browned around the edges, about 10 minutes.

4. Remove from the oven and crack the eggs directly onto the pizza, spacing them evenly apart. Return to the oven and bake until the eggs are cooked to your desired doneness (about 7 minutes for runny yolks). Slice and serve right away.

SERVES 4 TO 6



DINNER SHOPPING LIST

PROTEIN

- □ 4 bone-in chicken thighs
- 3 dozen Manila or littleneck clams
- □ 12 oz sopressata (6 thick slices)
- □ 6 oz thinly sliced prosciutto

DAIRY

- □ 3 cups whole milk
- □ 5 cups shredded
 - Cheddar cheese
- □ 5 tbsp unsalted butter
- 🗆 6 eggs

PANTRY

- □ 1 cup olive oil
- 🗆 3 tbsp canola oil
- □ 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- \Box 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 🗆 8 oz elbow macaroni
- 🗆 1 lb linguine
- □ 8 oz cornmeal
- □ 5 tbsp all-purpose flour
- □ 1 tbsp chile-garlic sauce
- □ 1/4 tsp Tabasco sauce
- \Box 1/4 cup red pepper jelly
- □ 1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
- □ 2 tbsp honey
- □ 2 cups white rice
- □ 1 lb prepared
- pizza dough
- □ 1/2 tsp paprika
- 2 bay leaves
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper



PRODUCE

- □ 4 garlic cloves
- □ 2 leeks
- □ 2 lb Brussels sprouts
- □ 1 bunch flatleaf parsley
- □ 4 limes

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