

# JoAnn's CHICAGO

## STREET FOOD

### RECIPES

Chicago



Bold Flavors.  
Big City.  
Made at Home.



TODAY'S  
SPECIAL

Italian Beef  
Gyros  
Elote  
Polish Sausage  
Deep Dish Bites



THANK YOU  
COME AGAIN



Chef  
JoAnn



JOANN AMATO

# Classic Chicago-Style Garden Dog



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 10 mins

**Total Time:** 25 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 340 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 16g | Carbs 38g | Protein 12g | Fiber 3g

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 whole Premium beef hot dogs (with natural casings for that signature "snap")
- 4 whole Poppy seed hot dog buns
- 4 tbsp (60ml) Yellow mustard
- 4 tbsp (60ml) Sweet pickle relish (ideally neon green)
- 1/2 cup (120ml / 75g) White onion, finely chopped
- 1 whole Medium tomato, cut into 8 thin wedges
- 4 whole Dill pickle spears
- 8 whole Sport peppers
- 1 tsp (5ml) Celery salt

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Water Bath]:** Bring a medium pot of water to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Do not let the water reach a rolling boil, as this can split the casings and ruin the juicy texture.
2. **[Step 2: Plump the Dogs]:** Place the beef hot dogs into the simmering water. Heat them through for about 5 to 7 minutes until they are plump, hot, and slightly expanded.
3. **[Step 3: Steam the Buns]:** While the dogs are heating, steam the poppy seed buns. Place them in a steamer basket over boiling water for 1 to 2 minutes until they are soft and warm, but not soggy.
4. **[Step 4: Assembly Foundation]:** Place each hot dog into a steamed poppy seed bun. Drag a thick ribbon of yellow mustard directly onto the hot dog, then spoon the bright green relish and chopped onions generously along the sides.
5. **[Step 5: Load the Garden]:** Tuck two tomato wedges on one side of the dog, and wedge one dill pickle spear on the opposite side. Place two sport peppers right on top for that authentic Chicago kick.
6. **[Step 6: Finishing Touch]:** Dust the entire assembled dog with a generous pinch of celery salt. Serve immediately while warm, and enjoy your messy, flavor-packed masterpiece!

# Deep-Dish Sausage and Hot Giardiniera Pizza



**Prep Time:** 25 mins | **Cook Time:** 35 mins

**Total Time:** 60 mins

**Servings:** 6

**Calories:** 480 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 26g | Carbs 42g | Protein 21g | Fiber 3g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (13.8 oz / 391g) Refrigerated pizza dough (or homemade deep-dish cornmeal dough)
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Olive oil (for coating the pan)
- 2 tbsp (30g) Unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups (226g) Low-moisture mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/2 lb (227g) Sweet or spicy Italian sausage, casing removed and crumbled raw
- 1/2 cup (120g) Chicago-style hot giardiniera, drained and chopped
- 1 cup (240ml) Thick, crushed tomatoes mixed with a pinch of dried oregano and garlic powder
- 1/4 cup (25g) Grated Parmesan cheese

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** Preheat your oven to 425°F (218°C). Generously coat the bottom and sides of a 10-inch (25cm) cast-iron skillet or deep-dish cake pan with the olive oil to ensure the crust browns beautifully and slides out easily.
2. **[Step 2: Pressing the Crust]:** Press the pizza dough into the prepared skillet, working it up the sides of the pan about 1.5 inches (4cm) to form a high collar. Brush the inside of the dough with melted butter for a rich, flaky, pastry-like texture.
3. **[Step 3: Layering the Cheese and Sausage]:** Layer the shredded mozzarella cheese directly on the bottom of the dough to protect the crust from getting soggy. Scatter the raw crumbled Italian sausage evenly over the cheese, followed by the chopped hot giardiniera.
4. **[Step 4: Saucing the Top]:** Spoon the crushed tomato sauce evenly over the fillings, spreading it out to the edges of the dough collar. This inverted order—cheese on bottom, sauce on top—is key to the perfect Chicago deep-dish style.
5. **[Step 5: Baking & Sensory Check]:** Bake for 30 to 35 minutes on the lower oven rack. The crust should be deep golden brown, and the sauce should be bubbling gently in the center. Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese over the hot sauce during the last 5 minutes of baking.
6. **[Step 6: Cooling & Serving]:** Remove the pizza from the oven and let it rest in the pan for 10 minutes. This setting period keeps the cheese and fillings from running everywhere when sliced. Enjoy your ultimate Chicago comfort meal!

# Slow-Cooker Italian Shaved Beef Sandwich



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 240 mins

**Total Time:** 255 mins

**Servings:** 6

**Calories:** 480 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 22g | Carbs 34g | Protein 36g | Fiber 2g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 lbs (680g) Shaved beef sirloin
- 1 cup (240ml) Low-sodium beef broth
- 0.5 cup (120ml) Pepperoncini juice (from the jar)
- 0.5 cup (100g) Sliced pepperoncini peppers
- 1 packet (28g) Italian dressing seasoning mix
- 1 tsp (5ml) Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp (15g) Butter
- 6 large French rolls or hoagie buns, split
- 6 slices Provolone cheese
- 0.5 cup (80g) Hot or mild giardiniera (optional, for serving)

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** Turn on your slow cooker. Place the butter at the bottom of the slow cooker insert to prevent the beef from sticking and to add richness to the base of the broth.
2. **[Step 2: Mixing & Layering]:** Lay the shaved sirloin into the slow cooker, gently separating the layers of meat so they cook evenly. Pour the beef broth, pepperoncini juice, and Worcestershire sauce directly over the beef, then sprinkle the Italian dressing seasoning mix evenly across the top.
3. **[Step 3: Slow Cooking]:** Cover with the lid and cook on LOW for 4 to 5 hours (or on HIGH for 2 to 3 hours). The meat should become incredibly tender and easily pull apart in the savory, seasoned juices.
4. **[Step 4: Toasting & Assembly]:** Preheat your oven broiler to high. Split the French rolls and place them cut-side up on a baking sheet. Using tongs, lift the juicy beef from the slow cooker, letting the excess broth drip back in, and pile the meat generously onto the bottom halves of the rolls.
5. **[Step 5: Melting the Cheese]:** Top each beef-filled roll with a slice of provolone cheese and a few sliced pepperocinis. Place the baking sheet under the broiler for 1 to 2 minutes, watching closely, until the cheese is melted, bubbly, and slightly golden.
6. **[Step 6: Serving]:** Crown with the top buns and serve hot with a side of giardiniera for a spicy kick, alongside small bowls of the warm leftover broth from the slow cooker for dipping. Enjoy your classic Chicago-style creation!

# Crispy Cornmeal-Battered Pizza Puffs



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 15 mins

**Total Time:** 30 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 320 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 16g | Carbs 34g | Protein 11g | Fiber 2g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (120g) All-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (60g) Yellow cornmeal
- 1 tsp (5g) Baking powder
- 1 tsp (5g) Italian seasoning
- 3/4 cup (180ml) Whole milk
- 1 large Egg
- 1 cup (115g) Shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup (50g) Pepperoni, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup (60ml) Pizza sauce (for dipping)
- 2 cups (480ml) Vegetable oil (for shallow frying)

## PREPARATION

- 1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** Pour the vegetable oil into a deep skillet until it reaches about 1 inch (2.5cm) in depth, and heat over medium heat to 350°F (175°C) so the batter seals instantly without absorbing excess oil.
- 2. **[Step 2: Mixing & Texture]:** In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and Italian seasoning. Whisk in the milk and egg until a thick, smooth, scoopable batter forms; it should have the thick consistency of muffin batter to hold the fillings inside.
- 3. **[Step 3: Forming/Cooking]:** Gently fold the shredded mozzarella and chopped pepperoni directly into the cornmeal batter until they are evenly distributed throughout the mixture.
- 4. **[Step 4: Timing & Cues]:** Drop the batter by rounded tablespoons (about 45ml) into the hot oil, working in batches of 4 to 5 so you do not overcrowd the pan. Fry for 3 to 4 minutes, turning once, until they are beautifully puffed and deep golden-brown all over.
- 5. **[Step 5: Cooling & Removal]:** Carefully remove the pizza puffs with a slotted spoon and let them drain on a paper towel-lined plate or wire rack for 2 minutes to lock in their crispy exterior and prevent sogginess.
- 6. **[Step 6: Serving]:** Serve the pizza puffs warm on a platter alongside a bowl of warm pizza sauce for dipping. Enjoy your crispy, cheesy creations while they are hot!

# Authentic Maxwell Street Grilled Polish Sausage



**Prep Time:** 10 mins | **Cook Time:** 25 mins

**Total Time:** 35 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 580 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 42g | Carbs 28g | Protein 22g | Fiber 2g

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 Polish sausages (Kielbasa), about 6 oz (170g) each
- 2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp (30ml) vegetable oil
- 4 poppy seed hot dog buns (or standard hot dog buns)
- 4 tbsp (60ml) yellow mustard
- 4 sport peppers (optional, for authentic heat)
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) salt

## PREPARATION

- 1. **[Step 1: Prep & Caramelization]:** Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add the sliced onions and salt, stirring to coat. Cook slowly for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are deeply caramelized, sweet, and golden brown.
- 2. **[Step 2: Prep the Sausages]:** While the onions cook, butterfly the Polish sausages by slicing them lengthwise down the center, but not all the way through, so they open up like a book. This ensures maximum surface area for a beautiful crispy char.
- 3. **[Step 3: Grilling to Perfection]:** Heat a grill or cast-iron griddle over medium-high heat. Place the butterflied sausages cut-side down first, cooking for 4 to 5 minutes until deeply browned and slightly charred. Flip and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes until heated through.
- 4. **[Step 4: Toasting the Buns]:** During the last minute of cooking the sausages, place the buns split-side down on the grill or griddle for about 30 seconds until they are lightly toasted and warm.
- 5. **[Step 5: Assembly]:** Spread a generous tablespoon of yellow mustard down the center of each warm bun. Place one grilled sausage inside, then pile a heavy helping of the sweet caramelized onions directly on top.
- 6. **[Step 6: Serving]:** Top each sandwich with a sport pepper if you desire a kick of heat. Serve immediately while hot and juicy. Enjoy this timeless Chicago classic!

# Chicago-Style Cheddar and Caramel Popcorn Mix



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 35 mins

**Total Time:** 50 mins

**Servings:** 8

**Calories:** 280 kcal

**Calories:** Fat 14g | Carbs 36g | Protein 4g | Fiber 2g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup (100g) Popcorn kernels (unpopped)
- 2 tbsp (30ml) Coconut oil (for popping)
- 1 cup (200g) Light brown sugar (packed)
- 1/2 cup (115g) Unsalted butter (divided)
- 1/4 cup (60ml) Light corn syrup
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Baking soda
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup (60g) Cheddar cheese powder
- 1/4 tsp (1.25ml) Mustard powder (optional, for zest)

## PREPARATION

- 1. **[Step 1: Prep & Pop]:** Pop the popcorn kernels using your preferred method (air-popper or stovetop with the coconut oil). Carefully remove any unpopped kernels to protect your teeth, then divide the popped corn equally into two large, heat-proof bowls.
- 2. **[Step 2: Caramel Simmering]:** In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the brown sugar, 1/4 cup (55g) of butter, and corn syrup. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, then let it boil for 5 minutes without stirring so it reaches the perfect candy stage.
- 3. **[Step 3: Creating the Glaze]:** Remove the saucepan from the heat. Quickly stir in the baking soda and vanilla extract; the mixture will foam up vigorously, which ensures a light, airy caramel texture that won't break your teeth.
- 4. **[Step 4: Coating the Caramel Corn]:** Pour the hot caramel mixture over one bowl of popcorn. Toss rapidly with a spatula until every kernel is evenly coated, then spread it onto a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake at 250°F (120°C) for 30 minutes, tossing every 10 minutes, until crisp.
- 5. **[Step 5: Coating the Cheddar Corn]:** While the caramel corn bakes, melt the remaining 1/4 cup (60g) of butter. Drizzle it over the second bowl of popcorn, tossing to coat, then sprinkle the cheddar cheese powder and mustard powder over it, tossing until the kernels are a vibrant, uniform orange.
- 6. **[Step 6: Combining & Serving]:** Let the caramel popcorn cool completely for 10 minutes until it is hard and glassy. Gently break up any large clumps of caramel corn, then combine it in a large serving bowl with the cheddar popcorn, tossing lightly. Enjoy this ultimate sweet-and-salty treat immediately!

# Griddle-Seared Rib Eye Steak Sandwich



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 15 mins

**Total Time:** 30 mins

**Servings:** 2

**Calories:** 780 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 46g | Carbs 42g | Protein 48g | Fiber 3g

## INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz (340g) Rib eye steak, shaved thin or sliced into thin strips
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Olive oil
- 1 large (150g) Yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 slices (60g) Provolone cheese
- 1 large (120g) Baguette or hoagie roll, split lengthwise
- 2 tbsp (30g) Unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tbsp (15g) Garlic mayonnaise (aioli)
- 1 tsp (5g) Coarse sea salt
- 1/2 tsp (2.5g) Freshly cracked black pepper

## PREPARATION

- 1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** Place the rib eye steak in the freezer for 15 minutes before slicing. This firms up the meat, allowing you to easily slice it into paper-thin strips for maximum tenderness.
- 2. **[Step 2: Caramelizing the Onions]:** Heat half of the olive oil in a heavy cast-iron skillet or griddle over medium heat. Add the sliced onions and cook, stirring frequently, for 8 to 10 minutes until they are soft, translucent, and turn a deep golden-brown hue. Transfer the onions to a side plate.
- 3. **[Step 3: Toasting the Bread]:** Spread the softened butter evenly over the cut sides of the baguette. Place the bread butter-side down on the hot griddle for 2 minutes until it becomes beautifully golden brown and crispy, which prevents the bread from getting soggy later. Set aside.
- 4. **[Step 4: Searing the Steak]:** Turn the griddle heat up to high and add the remaining olive oil. Spread the thin steak slices in a single, flat layer. Season generously with sea salt and black pepper, and let sear undisturbed for 1 to 2 minutes until a deep brown, caramelized crust forms.
- 5. **[Step 5: Melting the Cheese]:** Flip the steak slices over, pile them into a shape that matches the length of your baguette, and top immediately with the caramelized onions and provolone cheese. Cover with a heatproof bowl or lid for 1 minute until the cheese is completely melted and gooey.
- 6. **[Step 6: Assembling & Serving]:** Spread the garlic mayonnaise on the toasted baguette. Use a wide spatula to lift the cheesy steak and onion pile directly into the bread. Cut the sandwich diagonally in half and serve immediately while hot and juicy!

# Baked Greek Town Spinach Pie Triangles



**Prep Time:** 25 mins | **Cook Time:** 20 mins

**Total Time:** 45 mins

**Servings:** 6

**Calories:** 280 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 18g | Carbs 22g | Protein 8g | Fiber 2g

## INGREDIENTS

- 10 oz (280g) Fresh spinach, chopped and steamed
- 1 cup (150g) Feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/2 cup (120g) Ricotta cheese
- 2 tbsp (8g) Fresh dill, finely chopped
- 2 Green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/4 tsp (1.25g) Nutmeg, freshly grated
- 1 Egg, beaten
- 8 sheets Phyllo dough, thawed
- 1/2 cup (115g) Unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Olive oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. **Prepare the Oven & Spinach:** Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Squeeze the steamed spinach thoroughly in a clean kitchen towel to remove all excess moisture. This crucial step ensures the pastry base stays crisp and doesn't get soggy.
2. **Mix the Savory Filling:** In a medium bowl, combine the squeezed spinach, crumbled feta, ricotta, fresh dill, green onions, nutmeg, beaten egg, olive oil, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Stir the mixture well until it forms a cohesive, creamy, and herb-fragrant filling.
3. **Prep the Phyllo Sheets:** Lay one sheet of phyllo on a clean work surface and brush it lightly with melted butter. Place a second sheet on top and brush with butter again. Cut the stacked sheets lengthwise into 3 equal strips (each about 3 inches / 7.5cm wide). Keep the unused phyllo covered with a damp towel so it does not dry out.
4. **Fold the Triangles:** Place 1 tablespoon (15ml) of the spinach mixture at the bottom end of each strip. Fold one corner over the filling to form a triangle, then continue folding diagonally (like a flag) all the way up the strip. Repeat with the remaining sheets and filling.
5. **Bake to Golden Perfection:** Place the folded triangles seam-side down on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Brush the tops generously with the remaining melted butter. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the pastry is puffed, flaky, and a deep golden-brown color.
6. **Cool and Serve:** Transfer the triangles to a wire rack and let them cool for 5 minutes to prevent the hot filling from burning your mouth and to let the pastry set. Serve warm and enjoy your crispy, savory Greek treats!

# Crispy Golden Corned Beef Hash Patties



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 15 mins

**Total Time:** 30 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 310 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 18g | Carbs 22g | Protein 15g | Fiber 3g

## INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz (340g) Cooked corned beef, finely shredded or minced
- 2 cups (300g) Russet potatoes, peeled, boiled, and coarsely mashed
- 1/2 cup (75g) Yellow onion, very finely diced
- 1/2 cup (60g) All-purpose flour (for binding and dusting)
- 1 large (50g) Egg, beaten
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 tsp (1.25ml) Black pepper, freshly cracked
- 3 tbsp (45ml) Vegetable oil or butter (for pan-frying)

## PREPARATION

- 1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** In a large mixing bowl, combine the shredded corned beef, coarsely mashed potatoes, and finely diced onion. Ensure the mashed potatoes have cooled slightly before mixing so they do not cook the egg prematurely.
- 2. **[Step 2: Mixing & Texture]:** Add the beaten egg, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper, and 2 tablespoons (15g) of the flour to the bowl. Thoroughly mix the ingredients using your hands or a sturdy spatula until the mixture is cohesive, uniform, and holds together easily when pressed into a ball.
- 3. **[Step 3: Forming/Cooking]:** Divide the mixture into 4 equal portions and shape them into round, flat patties about 3/4-inch (2cm) thick. Lightly dust the outside of each patty with the remaining flour; this creates an extra-crispy outer crust during frying.
- 4. **[Step 4: Timing & Cues]:** Heat the vegetable oil or butter in a heavy-bottomed skillet or cast-iron pan over medium-high heat. Carefully place the patties in the hot pan, leaving space between them. Fry undisturbed for 5 to 7 minutes on the first side until a deep, golden-brown crust forms.
- 5. **[Step 5: Cooling & Removal]:** Gently flip the patties using a wide spatula and fry the other side for another 5 to 6 minutes until equally crispy and heated through. Carefully transfer the hot patties to a plate lined with paper towels to drain excess oil for 2 minutes to maintain their crunch.
- 6. **[Step 6: Serving]:** Serve the patties hot, ideally alongside sunny-side-up eggs or with a splash of hot sauce. Enjoy your hearty, comforting breakfast creation!

# Crispy Pork Chop Sandwich with Spicy Mustard



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 10 mins

**Total Time:** 25 mins

**Servings:** 2

**Calories:** 620 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 28g | Carbs 48g | Protein 39g | Fiber 3g

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 bone-out (approx. 5 oz / 140g each) Pork chops, pounded to 1/2-inch (1.25cm) thickness
- 1/2 cup (60g) All-purpose flour
- 2 large Eggs, beaten
- 1.5 cups (90g) Panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp (5ml) Garlic powder
- 1 tsp (5ml) Smoked paprika
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup (60ml) Vegetable oil, for shallow frying
- 2 Brioche buns, split and toasted
- 2 tbsp (30ml) Spicy brown mustard
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Mayonnaise
- 1 cup (70g) Iceberg lettuce, finely shredded
- 4 Dill pickle slices

## PREPARATION

1. **[Prep & Seasoning]:** Pat the pork chops dry with paper towels. Season both sides generously with salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and smoked paprika to ensure the flavor penetrates the meat.
2. **[Dredging Station Setup]:** Set up three shallow bowls. Place the flour in the first bowl, the beaten eggs in the second, and the panko breadcrumbs in the third to create an efficient breading station.
3. **[Coating for Maximum Crunch]:** Dredge each pork chop in the flour, shaking off the excess. Dip completely into the egg wash, then press firmly into the panko breadcrumbs until fully and thickly coated; the crumbs should cover every spot to guarantee a perfect crunch.
4. **[Frying to Golden Perfection]:** Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Carefully slide the pork chops in and fry for about 3 to 4 minutes per side, or until the crust is a deep golden brown and the internal temperature reaches a safe 145°F (63°C).
5. **[Draining & Resting]:** Transfer the crispy pork chops to a wire rack set over a baking sheet to drain. Let them rest for 3 minutes to keep the meat incredibly juicy and prevent the bottom crust from getting soggy.
6. **[Assembly & Serving]:** Whisk the spicy mustard and mayonnaise together, then spread it evenly onto the toasted buns. Layer the bottom buns with shredded lettuce, pickles, and the warm crispy pork chop before topping with the remaining bun halves. Serve immediately while hot!

# Sticky Sweet and Savory Barbecue Chicken Wings



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 45 mins

**Total Time:** 60 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 385 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 22g | Carbs 16g | Protein 29g | Fiber 5g

## INGREDIENTS

- 2.2 lbs (1 kg) Chicken wings, split into flats and drumettes
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) Baking powder (for ultimate crispiness)
- 1 tsp (5 ml) Garlic powder
- 1 tsp (5 ml) Onion powder
- 0.5 tsp (2.5 ml) Smoked paprika
- 1 pinch (0.5g) Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste
- 1 cup (240 ml) Smoky barbecue sauce
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) Honey
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) Apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce

## PREPARATION

- **1. Prep & Dry:** Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a large baking sheet with aluminum foil, placing a metal wire rack on top. Thoroughly pat the chicken wings dry with paper towels; removing excess moisture is crucial so the skin can crisp up beautifully in the oven.
- **2. Seasoning Coat:** In a large bowl, toss the wings with the baking powder, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Ensure every wing is evenly coated with a dry, dusty layer, which helps mimic a deep-fried texture during baking.
- **3. Bake to Crisp:** Arrange the wings on the prepared wire rack in a single layer, ensuring they do not touch so the hot air can circulate freely. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, turning them halfway through, until the skin is deeply golden-brown and crackly-crisp.
- **4. Glaze Creation:** While the wings bake, whisk together the barbecue sauce, honey, apple cider vinegar, and Worcestershire sauce in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Let it simmer gently for 5 minutes until the mixture is warm, fragrant, and slightly thickened.
- **5. Sauce & Caramelize:** Transfer the baked, crispy wings into a clean, large bowl. Pour the warm sweet-and-savory glaze over the top and toss vigorously until every wing is completely coated in a glossy, sticky layer.
- **6. Rest & Serve:** Let the sauced wings rest for 2 to 3 minutes to allow the glaze to set slightly and adhere to the crispy skin. Pile them high on a platter, serve warm, and enjoy your messy, delicious creation!

# Crispy Deep-Fried Tamale Chili Casserole



**Prep Time:** 25 mins | **Cook Time:** 35 mins

**Total Time:** 60 mins

**Servings:** 6

**Calories:** 580 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 32g | Carbs 48g | Protein 24g | Fiber 6g

## INGREDIENTS

- 6 whole (approx. 450g) Pre-cooked beef or pork tamales, husks removed and sliced into 1-inch (2.5cm) rounds
- 1 cup (120g) Yellow cornmeal, for dredging
- 4 cups (950ml) Vegetable oil, for deep frying
- 1 lb (450g) Lean ground beef
- 1 medium (150g) Yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp (15g) Chili powder
- 1 tsp (5g) Ground cumin
- 1 can (15 oz / 425g) Crushed tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz / 425g) Red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1.5 cups (150g) Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup (15g) Fresh cilantro, chopped for garnish

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Sauce Base]:** Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef, chopped onion, and minced garlic, cooking until the beef is browned and onions are translucent, about 6 to 8 minutes. Drain any excess grease so the casserole base doesn't become soggy.
2. **[Step 2: Simmering the Chili]:** Stir the chili powder, ground cumin, crushed tomatoes, and rinsed kidney beans into the beef mixture. Reduce the heat to low and let the chili simmer gently for 15 minutes, allowing the flavors to meld and the sauce to thicken into a rich, hearty consistency.
3. **[Step 3: Preparing the Tamales]:** While the chili simmers, heat the vegetable oil in a deep, heavy-bottomed pot to 375°F (190°C). Lightly dredge each sliced tamale round in the yellow cornmeal, pressing gently so the meal adheres. This creates an extra-shatteringly crispy crust when fried.
4. **[Step 4: Frying to Golden Perfection]:** Carefully lower the tamale slices into the hot oil in batches. Fry for 3 to 4 minutes until they turn a deep golden-brown and feel firm and crispy to the touch. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels to keep them crisp.
5. **[Step 5: Assembling the Casserole]:** Preheat your oven's broiler to high. Transfer the simmered chili to a 9x13-inch (23x33cm) baking dish. Arrange the crispy fried tamale slices in a single layer over the hot chili, then evenly scatter the shredded cheddar cheese across the top.
6. **[Step 6: Broiling & Serving]:** Place the casserole under the broiler for 3 to 4 minutes, watching closely, until the cheese is melted, bubbling, and slightly browned. Garnish with fresh cilantro and serve immediately while the tamales are still wonderfully crunchy!

# Classic Lemon Italian Ice



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 5 mins

**Total Time:** 240 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 135 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 0g | Carbs 36g | Protein 0g | Fiber 5g

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (480ml) Water
- 1 cup (200g) Granulated sugar
- 1 cup (240ml) Freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 5-6 large lemons)
- 1 tbsp (6g) Fresh lemon zest (finely grated)

## PREPARATION

- 1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** Wash your lemons thoroughly before zesting to remove any wax or residue. Set aside a shallow, freezer-safe metal baking pan (such as an 8-inch square pan) in the freezer to chill; a cold pan helps the mixture freeze much faster.
- 2. **[Step 2: Mixing & Texture]:** In a medium saucepan, combine the water and sugar. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly until the sugar is completely dissolved to create a clear, smooth simple syrup.
- 3. **[Step 3: Forming/Cooking]:** Remove the syrup from the heat and stir in the fresh lemon juice and finely grated lemon zest. Allow the mixture to cool completely at room temperature, then pour it into the pre-chilled metal baking pan.
- 4. **[Step 4: Timing & Cues]:** Place the pan in the freezer for about 30 to 45 minutes, or until icy needles begin to form around the edges. Use a fork to vigorously scrape and mash the frozen edges back into the center, breaking up any large chunks.
- 5. **[Step 5: Cooling & Removal]:** Repeat the freezing and scraping process every 30 minutes for about 3 hours. The mixture should gradually transform from a liquid into a beautifully snowy, fluffy, and glistening heap of micro-crystals.
- 6. **[Step 6: Serving]:** Scoop the fluffy lemon ice into chilled dessert bowls or paper cups. Serve immediately with a spoon and enjoy your wonderfully refreshing, frosty creation!

# Smoky Char-Grilled Garlic Shrimp Skewers



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 6 mins

**Total Time:** 21 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 240 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 14g | Carbs 3g | Protein 25g | Fiber 0g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 lbs (680g) Large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 4 tbsp (60ml) Olive oil, divided
- 4 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 tsp (5ml) Smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Onion powder
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Fine sea salt
- 1/4 tsp (1.2ml) Black pepper
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp (30ml) Unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tbsp (30ml) Fresh parsley, finely chopped

## PREPARATION

- **1. Prep & Safety:** If using wooden skewers, soak them in water for at least 20 minutes to prevent them from burning on the grill. Preheat your grill or grill pan to medium-high heat (about 400°F / 200°C) and lightly oil the grates to ensure the shrimp do not stick.
- **2. Mixing & Texture:** In a large bowl, whisk together 3 tablespoons (45ml) of olive oil, minced garlic, smoked paprika, onion powder, red pepper flakes, salt, black pepper, and lemon juice until it forms a emulsified, fragrant marinade.
- **3. Forming & Coating:** Pat the shrimp dry with paper towels so the marinade adheres properly. Toss the shrimp in the marinade until every piece is thoroughly and evenly coated, then thread 4 to 5 shrimp onto each skewer, piercing them through both the tail and the head end so they lie flat.
- **4. Timing & Cues:** Place the skewers on the hot grill. Cook undisturbed for 2 to 3 minutes per side. Watch for the flesh to turn from translucent to a pearly, opaque pink, and look for beautiful, caramelized dark grill marks on both sides.
- **5. Cooling & Glaze:** Remove the skewers from the grill and place them on a serving platter. Immediately brush the hot shrimp with the melted butter to create a rich, glossy glaze that locks in the moisture, then let them rest for 2 minutes.
- **6. Serving:** Garnish the skewers with freshly chopped parsley and serve alongside grilled lemon halves for squeezing. Enjoy your smoky, succulent creation while warm!

# Ultimate Double-Patty Cheddar Smash Burger



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 10 mins

**Total Time:** 25 mins

**Servings:** 2

**Calories:** 820 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 58g | Carbs 28g | Protein 46g | Fiber 1g

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 (3 oz / 85g) balls Ground Beef (80/20 blend, kept ice cold)
- 2 tablespoons (30g) Unsalted Butter (softened)
- 2 Brioche Buns (split)
- 4 tablespoons (60g) Merkts Cheddar Cheese Spread (at room temperature)
- 1 teaspoon (5g) Coarse Kosher Salt
- 1 teaspoon (5g) Freshly Cracked Black Pepper
- 1 tablespoon (15ml) Neutral Vegetable Oil (for the skillet)
- 4 Hamburger Pickle Slices (drained)

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Toasting]:** Heat a heavy cast-iron skillet or griddle over high heat until smoking hot. Spread the softened butter onto the cut sides of the brioche buns and toast them in the dry skillet for 1-2 minutes until deeply golden brown; this creates a moisture barrier so the buns don't get soggy.
2. **[Step 2: Preparing the Beef]:** Divide your cold ground beef into four equal portions (approx. 3 oz / 85g each) and gently shape them into round balls. Do not overwork the meat or press it together too tightly; keeping it loose ensures a tender, juicy texture.
3. **[Step 3: The Smash]:** Lightly oil the hot skillet. Place two beef balls in the pan, leaving ample space between them. Immediately place a square of parchment paper over each ball and press down firmly with a heavy burger press or flat spatula for 10 seconds until the patties are paper-thin and the edges are beautifully jagged.
4. **[Step 4: Seasoning & Searing]:** Remove the parchment and season the patties generously with kosher salt and black pepper. Cook undisturbed for 2 minutes until the edges are deeply browned, caramelized, and look like a crispy lace.
5. **[Step 5: Flip & Cheese]:** Slide a sturdy metal spatula completely under the patties to scrape up all the caramelized crust. Flip the patties. Immediately spread 1 tablespoon (15g) of room-temperature Merkts cheddar cheese over each hot patty. Cook for 1 more minute until the cheese is beautifully melted and warm.
6. **[Step 6: Assembly & Serving]:** Stack one cheesy patty on top of another. Transfer the double stack onto the bottom half of a toasted brioche bun, top with two pickle slices, and cover with the top bun. Serve immediately while the cheese is gooey and the crust is perfectly crispy!

# Slow-Braised Golden Pierogies with Potato and Cheese



**Prep Time:** 45 mins | **Cook Time:** 40 mins

**Total Time:** 85 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 420 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 18g | Carbs 52g | Protein 12g | Fiber 3g

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (240g) All-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (120ml) Sour cream (for the dough)
- 4 tbsp (60g) Unsalted butter, divided
- 1 large Egg, room temperature
- 3 medium (450g) Russet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 cup (100g) Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 medium Yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup (120ml) Low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 1/2 tsp (2.5g) Salt
- 1/4 tsp (1.2g) Black pepper

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Filling]:** Boil cubed potatoes in salted water until fork-tender, about 15 minutes. Drain thoroughly and mash with cheddar cheese, 1 tablespoon (15g) of butter, salt, and pepper until completely smooth and free of lumps. Set aside to cool.
2. **[Step 2: Dough & Texture]:** In a large bowl, mix flour, egg, sour cream, and a pinch of salt. Knead on a lightly floured surface for 5 minutes until the dough feels soft, pliable, and elastic like bread dough. Wrap in plastic and rest for 20 minutes to relax the gluten.
3. **[Step 3: Rolling & Forming]:** Roll the dough to 1/8-inch (3mm) thickness. Cut out circles using a 3-inch (7.5cm) round cookie cutter. Place a rounded teaspoon of potato-cheese filling in the center of each circle, fold in half, and pinch the edges firmly to seal so they don't pop open during cooking.
4. **[Step 4: Onion Sauté]:** Melt the remaining 3 tablespoons (45g) of butter in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add sliced onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, translucent, and slightly golden brown, about 8 minutes.
5. **[Step 5: Braising & Cues]:** Arrange the pierogies in a single layer over the onions in the skillet. Gently pour in the broth, cover the skillet with a tight-fitting lid, and reduce heat to low. Let them slow-braise for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the pierogies are plump, tender, and the liquid has mostly absorbed.
6. **[Step 6: Browning & Serving]:** Remove the lid, turn the heat up to medium-high, and pan-sear the pierogies for 2 minutes on each side until they develop beautiful golden, crispy patches. Serve warm, smothered in the caramelized onions and a side of fresh sour cream.

# Crispy Southern Fried Chicken Gizzards



**Prep Time:** 20 mins | **Cook Time:** 25 mins

**Total Time:** 45 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 340 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 18g | Carbs 15g | Protein 28g | Fiber 1g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb (450g) Chicken gizzards, cleaned and trimmed
- 1 cup (240ml) Buttermilk
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Hot sauce (plus extra for serving)
- 1 cup (120g) All-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (60g) Cornstarch (for extra crunch)
- 1 tsp (5g) Garlic powder
- 1 tsp (5g) Paprika
- 1/2 tsp (2.5g) Cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp (5g) Salt
- 1/2 tsp (2.5g) Black pepper
- 2 cups (480ml) Vegetable oil (for frying)

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Tenderize]:** Thoroughly rinse the gizzards. In a medium bowl, whisk together the buttermilk and hot sauce. Submerge the gizzards in this marinade; this acid helps tenderize the naturally chewy muscle tissue. Let sit for at least 15 minutes.
2. **[Step 2: Mixing & Seasoning]:** In a separate shallow dish, vigorously whisk together the flour, cornstarch, garlic powder, paprika, cayenne pepper, salt, and black pepper. The cornstarch is key here as it guarantees a shatteringly crisp crust.
3. **[Step 3: Dredging & Coating]:** Remove each gizzard from the buttermilk, letting the excess drip off, and dredge thoroughly in the flour mixture. Press the flour firmly onto the meat so it forms a thick, textured coating that resembles rough sand.
4. **[Step 4: Heating the Oil]:** Heat the vegetable oil in a deep skillet over medium-high heat until it reaches 350°F (175°C). The oil must be hot enough so the coating seals instantly without absorbing excess grease.
5. **[Step 5: Frying & Timing]:** Carefully lower the gizzards into the hot oil in batches to avoid crowding the pan. Fry for 4 to 5 minutes, turning occasionally, until they are deeply golden-brown and the coating is completely firm and crispy.
6. **[Step 6: Draining & Serving]:** Transfer the fried gizzards to a wire rack or paper towel-lined plate to drain off excess oil. Serve immediately while piping hot, drizzled with your favorite hot sauce. Enjoy your crunchy, savory snack!

# Golden Garlic-Butter Toasted Pizza Bread



**Prep Time:** 10 mins | **Cook Time:** 12 mins

**Total Time:** 22 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 395 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 21g | Carbs 34g | Protein 17g | Fiber 2g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 loaf (approx. 12 oz / 340g) Italian or French bread, halved lengthwise
- 2 tbsp (30g) Unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cloves Garlic, finely minced
- 1/2 cup (120ml) Marinara sauce
- 1 1/2 cups (170g) Low-moisture mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup (60g) Pepperoni slices
- 1/4 cup (25g) Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1/2 tsp (1g) Dried oregano
- 1 tbsp (4g) Fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped (for garnish)

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Toast]:** Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut the loaf of bread in half lengthwise and place the halves, cut-side up, on the baking sheet so they toast evenly.
2. **[Step 2: Garlic Butter Base]:** In a small bowl, thoroughly mix the softened butter with the minced garlic until smooth. Spread this mixture evenly over the cut surfaces of both bread halves to create a flavorful, moisture-barrier shield.
3. **[Step 3: Initial Toasting]:** Bake the buttered bread in the preheated oven for 5 minutes, or until the edges begin to turn a light golden-brown. This crucial step prevents the bread from becoming soggy once the sauce is added.
4. **[Step 4: Layering the Pizza]:** Remove the bread from the oven. Spread the marinara sauce evenly over both halves, leaving a tiny border around the edges. Generously sprinkle the shredded mozzarella, top with the pepperoni slices, and dust with the grated parmesan and dried oregano.
5. **[Step 5: Baking & Melting]:** Return the loaded bread to the oven and bake for 7 to 8 minutes, until the cheese is completely melted, bubbly, and starting to brown in spots. For extra crispy pepperoni, turn on the broiler for the last 60 seconds, watching closely to prevent burning.
6. **[Step 6: Cooling & Serving]:** Remove the bread from the oven and let it rest for 3 minutes to allow the cheese to set slightly, preventing it from sliding off when cut. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley, slice into thick pieces, and serve immediately while hot and gooey!

# Baked Apple Cider Donuts



**Prep Time:** 15 mins | **Cook Time:** 10 mins

**Total Time:** 25 mins

**Servings:** 12

**Calories:** 185 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 6g | Carbs 31g | Protein 3g | Fiber 1g

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (240ml) Apple cider (reduced to 1/2 cup / 120ml)
- 2 cups (250g) All-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp (7g) Baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp (7g) Ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp (2.5g) Freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp (3g) Salt
- 1/2 cup (100g) Granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (100g) Light brown sugar, packed
- 2 tbsp (30g) Unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large Egg, room temperature
- 1/2 cup (120ml) Whole milk, room temperature
- 1 tsp (5ml) Vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup (115g) Unsalted butter, melted (for coating)
- 1/2 cup (100g) Granulated sugar combined with 1 tbsp ground cinnamon (for dusting)

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Safety]:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and generously grease two standard 6-cavity donut pans so the delicate baked donuts release effortlessly after baking.
2. **[Step 2: Reduce the Cider]:** In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, simmer the apple cider for 10-12 minutes until it reduces to exactly 1/2 cup (120ml); let it cool completely before using to ensure the heat doesn't curdle the wet ingredients.
3. **[Step 3: Whisk Dry Ingredients]:** In a large mixing bowl, thoroughly whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until uniform and completely free of large brown sugar lumps.
4. **[Step 4: Combine Wet & Dry]:** In a separate bowl, whisk together the cooled reduced apple cider, melted butter, egg, milk, and vanilla extract; gently fold this wet mixture into the dry ingredients until just combined, resulting in a thick, cake-like batter that should not be overmixed.
5. **[Step 5: Fill and Bake]:** Transfer the batter to a piping bag (or a zip-top bag with the corner snipped off) and pipe the batter into the prepared donut cavities, filling each about 2/3 full to allow room for the donuts to rise without losing their signature hole shape.
6. **[Step 6: Timing & Cues]:** Bake for 9-11 minutes, or until the donuts are springy to the touch and a toothpick inserted into the thickest part comes out clean; let them cool in the pan for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack.
7. **[Step 7: Coat and Serve]:** While still warm, brush each donut entirely with the melted coating butter, then immediately toss in the cinnamon-sugar mixture until fully coated. Enjoy your warm, aromatic autumn creation!

# Crispy Punjabi Potato & Pea Samosas



**Prep Time:** 30 mins | **Cook Time:** 25 mins

**Total Time:** 55 mins

**Servings:** 4

**Calories:** 280 kcal

**Macros:** Fat 12g | Carbs 36g | Protein 6g | Fiber 4g

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (250g) All-purpose flour
- 4 tbsp (60ml) Ghee or vegetable oil (for the dough)
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Carom seeds (ajwain)
- 1/2 cup (120ml) Cold water (adjust as needed)
- 3 medium (450g) Potatoes, boiled, peeled, and gently mashed
- 1/2 cup (75g) Green peas, fresh or frozen
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Vegetable oil (for the filling)
- 1 tsp (5ml) Cumin seeds
- 1 tsp (5ml) Garam masala
- 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) Amchur (dry mango powder) or lemon juice
- 1 cup (240ml) Fresh mint leaves (for chutney)
- 1/2 cup (120ml) Fresh cilantro leaves (for chutney)
- 1 tbsp (15ml) Lemon juice (for chutney)
- 1/2 inch (1.25cm) Fresh ginger (for chutney)
- Oil for deep frying

## PREPARATION

1. **[Step 1: Prep & Dough]:** In a large bowl, mix flour, carom seeds, and salt. Rub in the ghee with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Gradually add cold water and knead into a stiff, firm dough. Cover with a damp cloth and let it rest for 30 minutes to relax the gluten.
2. **[Step 2: Sauté Filling]:** Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a pan over medium heat. Toast the cumin seeds until they splutter. Add the mashed potatoes, peas, garam masala, and amchur. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring well to ensure the spices are evenly distributed and the mixture holds together, then let it cool completely.
3. **[Step 3: Blend Chutney]:** To make the mint chutney, combine the mint, cilantro, ginger, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt in a blender. Blend until smooth and vibrant green, adding 1-2 tbsp of water if necessary to help it process. Set aside in a serving bowl.
4. **[Step 4: Shape Samosas]:** Divide the rested dough into equal balls. Roll each ball into an oval shape about 6 inches (15cm) long, then cut it in half horizontally to make two semi-circles. Fold the straight edge of each semi-circle inward, overlapping slightly to form a cone, and seal the seam with a touch of water.
5. **[Step 5: Fill & Seal]:** Stuff the cone with 2-3 tablespoons of the cooled potato mixture. Brush the top open edges with water, make a small fold in the back edge to help the samosa sit upright, and pinch the edges firmly together to seal completely so no filling escapes during frying.
6. **[Step 6: Fry & Serve]:** Heat frying oil in a deep pan over low-medium heat. Carefully slide a few samosas in; they should sizzle gently, not rapidly. Fry slowly for 10-12 minutes, turning occasionally, until they turn a deep golden brown and the pastry is incredibly crisp. Drain on paper towels and serve hot alongside the cool mint chutney!