



Serve up classic recipes and new favorites from a Southern perspective.

In *The Southern Entertainer's Cookbook*, Courtney Whitmore shares her party go-tos for appetizers, salads, entrees, drinks, and desserts. Consider this your Southern primer on party food. In addition to sharing modern twists on classic favorites and beloved recipes from her own family's archive, Courtney also provides tips throughout to make the most of your food's presentation such as suggested edible flower petals and mini versions of traditional favorites. Courtney, creator of Pizzazzerie.com, is a trusted resource for creating delicious, party-friendly food to enhance any meal and every party.



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Courtney
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THE
Southern Entertainer's Cookbook



Heirloom
Recipes
for
Modern
Gatherings

THE Southern Entertainer's Cookbook

Courtney Dial Whitmore
WITH PHRONSIE DIAL





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Jalapeño & Bacon Deviled Eggs

Yield: 12 deviled eggs

- 6 eggs, hard-boiled and peeled
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish
- 4 slices cooked bacon, chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and sliced
- Chives and paprika, for garnish

You won't attend a picnic down South without finding at least one variety of this classic appetizer. Deviled eggs are one of the first party bites to disappear right off the platter. Kick the typical deviled eggs up a notch with this jalapeño and bacon version.

Cut eggs in half and remove the yolks. Add yolks to mixing bowl and mash together with mayonnaise, mustard, red pepper, salt, Worcestershire sauce, and pickle relish until well combined. Add additional mayonnaise if needed.

Be sure each egg half rests nicely on your serving platter. If necessary, carefully slice a bit off the bottom so it rests evenly. Spoon yolk mixture into the egg halves. Top with bacon, a jalapeño slice, chives, and a dash of paprika.

Poppie's Fig Jam & Prosciutto Crostini

Yield: 24 crostini

POPPIE'S FIG JAM

2 cups figs, stems removed
and sliced in half

2 cups sugar

1 lemon, thinly sliced and
seeds removed

¼ cup Grand Marnier

I have fond memories of picking figs off my grandparent's fig tree in Belton, South Carolina. My grandfather "Poppie" could make this fig jam in his sleep, and we always left their house with jars and jars of fig jam every summer. Poppie taught my mother and she taught me. Fig jam is absolutely divine spread on toast, waffles, baked brie, or crostini.

POPPIE'S FIG JAM

Wash figs in cold water and drain. Place figs in a large saucepan and cover with sugar. Allow figs to sit overnight.

The next day, add lemon slices to the fig pan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stir often. After mixture begins to boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 hour, stirring often. Remove from stove and allow to cool to room temperature. Add fig mixture to blender and blend until pureed. Stir in Grand Marnier and pour fig jam into sterilized jars with tops. Keep refrigerated.

ASSEMBLING THE CROSTINI

24 slices baguette (1 to 2
loaves)

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 teaspoons sea salt

8 ounces soft goat cheese
(chèvre)

8 ounces Poppie's Fig Jam

12 slices prosciutto

ASSEMBLING THE CROSTINI

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Place baguette slices on a baking sheet and brush with olive oil. Sprinkle with sea salt. Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly toasted.

Spread each slice with goat cheese. Top each with a generous spread of fig jam. Cut each slice of prosciutto in half and fold one on top of each crostini.

TIP: *Set up a mouthwatering display of cheeses, meats, and jams and let your party guests create their own crostini combinations.*



Fried Green Tomato Caprese Salad

Yield: 6–8 servings

“It’s difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato.”—LEWIS GRIZZARD

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

4 to 6 medium green tomatoes
1 teaspoon salt plus extra, divided
2 eggs, room temperature
1 cup self-rising cornmeal
½ cup all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon black pepper
Peanut oil for frying

When all you have in your garden are firm, green tomatoes, what else do you do but salt them, batter them, and sizzle them in oil? If you’ve never tried fried green tomatoes, you’re in for a treat. Serve them up in a layered caprese salad for a dish that’s as beautiful as it is delicious.

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

Slice tomatoes ⅓ inch thick and place on paper towels. Press the tomatoes with additional paper towels to get most of the moisture out. Sprinkle with salt, flip the tomatoes over, and then salt again. Beat the eggs in a small bowl. In another shallow bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, cayenne, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper.

Heat 1–2 inches oil to 350 degrees F in a large frying pan or Dutch oven. Dip the tomatoes in the egg wash and then dredge in cornmeal mixture. Fry the slices in the oil for 3–4 minutes on each side or until golden. Place on paper towels to drain and sprinkle with a little more salt.

CAPRESE SALAD

4 medium vine-ripe red tomatoes
1 pound fresh mozzarella
1 bunch fresh basil leaves
Extra virgin olive oil
Balsamic vinegar
Coarse sea salt and ground black pepper

CAPRESE SALAD

Slice tomatoes and mozzarella into ⅓-inch-thick slices. Assemble salad in a shallow wide bowl or a platter by layering alternating slices of fried green tomatoes, red tomatoes, and mozzarella slices in a circle. Scatter fresh basil leaves throughout. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Sprinkle with sea salt and black pepper. Top with petite heirloom tomatoes and mini mozzarella balls for a fun serving option.



Buttermilk Fried Chicken

Yields: 4–6 servings

4 cups buttermilk
1 whole chicken, cut into
breasts, thighs, wings, and
drumsticks
2 cups self-rising flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
Peanut oil for frying

Fried chicken was a staple at my grandparent's house in Palestine, Texas. We all looked forward to eating fried chicken in the formal dining room in our Sunday best. Frying chicken takes a little getting used to, but this chicken is well worth the fuss!

Pour the buttermilk into a large bowl then submerge the chicken pieces in the buttermilk. Cover bowl and place in refrigerator overnight, or at least 4 hours.

In a large shallow bowl, combine flour, salt, and peppers. Remove chicken from buttermilk and drain on paper towels. Dredge each chicken piece in the flour mixture, coating evenly.

In a deep fryer or Dutch oven, heat oil to 375 degrees F.

Carefully place the chicken into the hot oil. Fry until golden brown on all sides and a thermometer inserted inside chicken reads 165 degrees F. Large pieces of chicken may have to cook a little longer. Drain on a wire rack over a paper towel-lined baking sheet to keep chicken crispy. If you find your chicken is becoming too dark on the outside before cooking through (especially larger pieces), you can finish them by baking in the oven on a rack over an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet at 350 degrees F for 20–30 minutes.





Buttermilk Skillet Cornbread

Yield: 6–8 servings

“The best comfort food will always be greens, cornbread, and fried chicken.”

—MAYA ANGELOU

- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1 3/4 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 2 beaten eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup butter, melted plus 1 tablespoon butter to grease skillet
- Butter, honey, or molasses, to serve

We don't argue with Maya. Thank goodness we live in a world with buttermilk skillet cornbread. Top it with a slather of butter and a drizzle of honey.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

In a mixing bowl, combine baking soda and buttermilk. In a separate bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, salt, sugar, and baking powder. Stir in buttermilk mixture, sour cream, eggs, and butter to the dry mixture until blended, but do not overmix. Add 1 tablespoon butter into a 10-inch cast iron skillet, or 5-inch skillets, and place into the oven for about 5 minutes to heat the skillet. Carefully remove skillet then pour the cornbread batter into the hot, buttered skillet and bake 20–25 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve with butter, honey, or molasses.



Peach Lattice Cobbler

Yield: 6–8 servings

1 recipe double-crust
Perfect Pie Crust (page 162)
dough, divided into 2 equal-
size discs

5 cups ripe peeled and
sliced peaches

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1 teaspoon ground
cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

2 tablespoons cornstarch

3 tablespoons unsalted
butter

1 egg, lightly beaten

My maternal grandfather, Papa Horton, loved his sweets. Cobblers were at the top of his list. This is the dessert you serve someone right before you ask them for a favor.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Roll out 1 pie crust disc and fit into pan, extending edge beyond the rim of pan. Refrigerate until ready to fill.

In a large bowl, sprinkle peaches with lemon juice. In a separate bowl, stir together sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, and cornstarch. Pour sugar mixture over peaches, stir together gently, and spread onto pie crust. Slice butter in cubes and dot butter on top of peaches.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out second pie crust disc. Cut dough into 1/2-inch strips using either a straight or fluted edge. Lay out strips on pie filling, creating a lattice pattern. You can also top pie filling with a full pie crust cut with slits.

In a small bowl, whisk together lightly beaten egg with 2 tablespoons water. Brush pie crust top with egg wash. Place pie pan on a baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes then reduce the heat to 350 degrees F and bake for an additional 30–35 minutes or until crust is lightly golden. If the crust begins to brown too quickly, create a loose tent with aluminum foil to lay gently over the pie while baking. Remove from oven and allow to cool before serving.

Grapefruit Shoo-Fly Punch

Yield: 6–8 servings

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
2 1/2 cups bourbon
1 cup ginger liqueur (such as Domaine de Canton)
2 cups grapefruit juice
2 teaspoons bitters
Grapefruit slices, for garnish

If there's one thing Southerners often say, it's "shoo fly." We gave this summertime bourbon punch a grapefruit twist and garnished it with fresh mint from the backyard.

Begin by making a simple syrup. Add sugar and water to a saucepan and bring to a boil, whisking to dissolve sugar. Allow simple syrup to cool.

Combine bourbon, ginger liqueur, grapefruit juice, bitters, and simple syrup, stirring well. Fill glasses with ice and top with punch. Garnish with fresh grapefruit slices. **NOTE:** If you like a sweeter drink, add more simple syrup.





Watermelon Mint Juleps

Yield: 6–8 mint juleps

MINT SIMPLE SYRUP

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

12 mint leaves

There's no better way to celebrate the Derby than with a frosty mint julep cup in hand. Watermelon Mint Juleps give this classic cocktail a fruity, sweet taste.

MINT SIMPLE SYRUP

Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, whisking to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat and add mint leaves. Allow to cool completely and refrigerate for 24 hours. Strain to remove mint.

JULEPS

4 cups cubed fresh watermelon

1¼ cups Mint Simple Syrup

3 cups bourbon

Crushed ice

Watermelon wedges or balls, for garnish

Mint leaves, for garnish

JULEPS

Purée watermelon in a blender or food processor and pulse until smooth. Use a sieve to remove pulp and seeds, leaving about 2 cups fresh watermelon juice. In a pitcher, combine Mint Simple Syrup, bourbon, and watermelon juice. Stir to combine. Fill mint julep glasses with crushed ice and top with watermelon mixture. Garnish with fresh watermelon and mint.