

CAKES, CANDIES,
COOKIES, AND PIES—
OH, MY!

*T*radition is at its most delicious in this jam-packed book of Southern desserts by Belinda Smith-Sullivan. Every decadent sweet treat you need for brunches, parties, events, and lazy afternoons on the front porch is right here.

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Southern SUGAR



BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN



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Old-Fashioned Peach Pandowdy

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

8 medium ripe peaches, peeled,
pitted, and sliced
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon fresh-squeezed
lemon juice
Pinch of salt
1 (9-inch) Pie Crust Dough
(page 68)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut
into 1/2 teaspoon-size pieces

A pandowdy is a single-crust deep-dish pie with fruit on the bottom and the crust on top. Once out of the oven, the pastry is gently broken up to reveal the fruit and juices below the crust. Alternately, it is made with scraps of dough laid in freestyle patterns.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a large bowl, combine peaches, cornstarch, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon juice, and salt. Mix thoroughly and set aside. On a dry, well-floured surface, roll out dough into a 12-inch round. (It does not have to be perfect.)

Pour fruit mixture into a 9- or 10-inch cast iron skillet. Distribute the butter pieces over the top of the fruit. Gently place the dough over the top, tucking the hangover dough around the inside of the skillet. Bake 35–40 minutes or until golden brown on top and juices are bubbling. Remove from oven and, using the sharp sides of a large spoon, break dough in several places.

Mississippi Mud Cake

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

CAKE

1 cup unsalted butter,
room temperature
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 cup hot water
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon espresso powder
1/2 cup sour cream,
room temperature
2 large eggs, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 (10-ounce) bag miniature
marshmallows

GANACHE

1 cup bittersweet or semisweet
chocolate chips
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
or walnuts

This dense chocolate cake, smothered in marshmallows, chocolate ganache, and nuts, is said to resemble the thick mud found along the banks of the Mississippi River.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 13 x 9-inch cake pan with nonstick spray.

In a medium bowl, melt butter in the microwave. Stir in cocoa and hot water. In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, and espresso powder. Lower mixer speed and gradually add cocoa mixture. Add sour cream, eggs, and vanilla; increase mixer speed and beat until nearly smooth. Pour batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 35–45 minutes or until a cake tester comes out clean. Remove from oven and sprinkle all over with marshmallows, completely covering the cake. Return to oven for 2–3 minutes longer until marshmallows are puffy and soft. Let cool completely before drizzling ganache.

Place the chocolate chips in a medium bowl. Set aside. Heat the cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to just before a boil. Immediately pour the hot cream over the chocolate and allow to stand for 5 minutes. Stir with a whisk until smooth. Drizzle over cake and top with nuts.





Sweet Cushaw and Pecan Cheesecake

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

CRUST

1³/₄ cups gingersnap crumbs
2 tablespoons sugar
4 tablespoons unsalted butter,
melted
1/4 cup finely chopped pecans

FILLING

3 (8-ounce) packages cream
cheese, room temperature
2 cups cooked and puréed
cushaw squash (or butternut
squash, pumpkin, or white
sweet potatoes)*
1 cup light brown sugar
3 large eggs, room temperature
1/4 cup sour cream,
room temperature
1/4 cup heavy cream,
room temperature
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
or allspice
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Cushaw is a winter crookneck squash that grows abundantly in the southern states and Appalachia. Also known as sweet potato pumpkin, it is naturally sweet, moist, and perfect for both sweet and savory dishes, just like sweet potatoes. Found mostly in farmers' markets, it is recognizable by its green and white stripes. The squash left over from roasting this massive gourd for this recipe can be turned into soup, pies, or sides.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a medium bowl, blend crumbs, sugar, butter, and pecans and press into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Wrap the bottom and outside of the pan with foil.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat cream cheese and squash until fluffy. Gradually add brown sugar, then add in eggs, 1 at a time. Add sour cream and heavy cream and continue to beat. Add cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and vanilla and beat until smooth. Fold in pecans and pour batter into prepared pan. Place cheesecake pan in another larger pan and place in preheated oven. Fill the larger pan halfway with hot water. Bake for 60–70 minutes or until slightly firm in the center. Turn off oven, leaving door ajar about 8 inches, and allow to cool in oven for 1 hour. Remove from oven and remove from water bath and cool completely in pan.

continued

Kentucky Bourbon Balls

MAKES ABOUT 40 BOURBON BALLS

BOURBON BALLS

20 ounces bittersweet chocolate
¾ cup unsalted butter,
room temperature
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup Kentucky bourbon

TOPPINGS

Confectioners' sugar
Chopped pistachios
Shredded coconut
Ground chocolate

This is Kentucky's version of the truffle, which adds significantly more alcohol—specifically Kentucky bourbon—to the mix. You may choose to not allow younger family members to partake of these. But not to worry! Just whip up a batch of Chocolate Truffles (page 122) and everyone will be happy.

Chop the chocolate finely with a sharp knife. Place chocolate and butter in a medium heat-proof mixing bowl.

In a medium saucepan, add cream, syrup, and salt and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Pour through a fine sieve over the chocolate and butter. Slowly stir until blended; add bourbon and stir until smooth. Chill chocolate mixture until set or overnight.

Using scoop size of preference, spoon round balls of the chocolate mixture onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Roll each ball of chocolate in your hands to make it round. Return to refrigerator and chill 1 hour longer before coating with topping of your choice—confectioners' sugar, chopped nuts, coconut, or ground chocolate.





Chunky Peach

MAKES 1½ QUARTS

4 large ripe peaches, peeled and chopped, divided
1½ tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice
2 tablespoons sugar
1½ cups heavy cream, divided
1½ cups whole milk
1 vanilla bean
4 large egg yolks
½ cup sugar

When you live in Edgefield County, South Carolina—the peach capital of the South—peach ice cream is naturally your favorite! With an endless supply of peaches at our disposal all summer, our freezers are overloaded with them throughout the year. There is never an excuse for not being able to enjoy peach ice cream year-round.

In a medium bowl, mash half the peaches and sprinkle with lemon juice and sugar. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

In a heavy-bottom medium pan, combine 1 cup cream, milk, and remaining peaches. Halve and scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and add to the milk mixture along with the bean. Cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes until bubbles start to form around the inside edges of the pan. Strain through a fine sieve, pressing on the peaches with the back of a spoon. Discard the vanilla bean and solids. Pour liquid back into the pan.

In another medium bowl, combine egg yolks, sugar, and remaining cream, whisking until smooth. Gradually add ½ cup of the hot milk mixture into the egg mixture, and then pour back into the pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly to keep at a simmer, until the custard is thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon, about 5 minutes. Do not let the custard boil.

Strain custard through a sieve into a medium bowl. Discard the solids. Place the bowl into a larger bowl filled halfway with ice and water. Stir occasionally to cool. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly on the top of custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate at least 3 hours or overnight.

Pour custard into ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Add reserved peaches the last 10 minutes of the churning process. Transfer to a clean freezer-safe container, and then cover and freeze until firm.