

FOOD

Grilled cauliflower steaks with poached eggs and truffle oil D2	Greek baked fish D2
White bean chili D2	Lemon curd D6
Cast-iron roasted red potatoes with rosemary and onion D2	Best angel food cake D6
	Crab cakes with herb sauce D6 »



GREEK BAKED FISH

Guests will gush over light, healthy dish.

MENUPLANNER » D2

THIS WEEK'S RECIPES » D2, D6

BAKING » BE SURE TO FOLLOW RECIPE CLOSELY

Angel food cake turns out heavenly on second try

BY KATIE THISDELL
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Throwing out eight egg whites seemed like a waste.

I was making chocolate truffle tartlets a few months ago, but the recipe called for only the yolks.

But why throw out perfectly good ingredients when I could put them to use at another time?

As I do with all sorts of odds and ends, I threw the whites in the freezer and forgot about them. Until I was watching the Food Network one day during my lunch break.

Those TV personalities always makes their dishes look delicious and effortless. And many are, unless you screw up the key steps.

In this episode, a lemon angel food cake accompanied a light, healthy lunch.

I remembered the egg whites in an ice cube tray in the packed freezer I share with two roommates, and I decided they would be perfect for this low-fat springtime cake.

I have whipped up plenty of semi-challenging desserts in my time. But I had yet to attempt an angel food cake.

"At its heavenly best, an angel food cake should be tall and perfectly shaped, have a snowy-white center tender crumb, and be encased in a thin, delicate golden crust," according to America's Test Kitchen, the know-it-all of test kitchens, based in Boston. (The



Free Lance-Star reporter Katie Thisdell works diligently to create a nearly perfect angel food cake.

PHOTOS BY SUZANNE CARR ROSSI / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

ONLINE » Watch video of the cake making process at fredericksburg.com

research before I whipped up my cake.

Once out of the pan, it was short and squat, lumpy and dense.

As my housemate's mother remarked, it had the texture of a "devil's" food cake. Not exactly what I was going for.

Since then, I've spent quite a bit of time researching food blogs and cooking websites, and I've learned a lot about the importance of following every step when trying to make the perfect angel food cake.

When I geared up for a second

SEE ANGEL FOOD, BACK PAGE

crumb, by the way, is the inside part of the cake.)

Too bad I hadn't done a little



Don't cut corners when baking. If the recipe says to sift the flour and sugar before pouring in bowl, do it. The result will be worth it.



FORTUNE COOKIE FACTS

- Some 3 billion fortune cookies are consumed annually around the world.
- The largest fortune cookie maker, New York's Wonton Food Inc., produces about 4.5 million cookies per day.
- Wonton Food attempted to expand its cookie business into China in 1992, but gave up after discovering that fortune cookies were considered "too American."
- Early fortune cookies in the United States tended to contain biblical Scripture and

aphorisms attributed to Confucius, Ben Franklin, Aesop and others.

■ Up until the late 1960s, when Edward Louie invented the first fortune cookie folding machine, most fortune cookies were folded by hand.

■ The world's first fully automated fortune cookie baking and wrapping machine was invented in 1981 by Yongsik Lee of Holliston, Mass.

—Smithsonian Magazine, wontonfood.com, foodtimeline.org, sanfranciscochinatown.com.



Fortune cookies are fun, fearless

MEDIOCRE COOKIE MESSAGES SPUR MAN TO PUT HIS FUTURE IN OFFBEAT BUSINESS

BY MIKE HALE
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

David Fenton's kung pao chicken was always followed by a disappointment.

He would unwrap the fortune cookie and sigh at the mindless drivel written on the slip of paper tucked inside.

So, more than a century after San Francisco conceived this quaint Chinese-restaurant tradition, Fenton launched his own, fearless fortune cookie company—iLLFortune—in Union City, Calif., and began stuffing boldly wicked fortunes in the

"CLEVER, ORIGINAL THINKERS HAVE NO INTEREST IN PREDICTABLE FORTUNES. THEY CRAVE SURPRISE AND WIT."

—DAVID FENTON,
iLLFORTUNE

tasty treats.

The New York native calls them "fortune cookies for the brave." And if those irreverent, mean-spirited or hilariously inappropriate messages spark conversation and bring people together in unpredictable ways, all the better.

"Clever, original thinkers

have no interest in predictable fortunes," Fenton says. "They crave surprise and wit."

Imagine breaking these open:

"Diapers will be part of your daily regimen and you won't be the one changing them." Or, "The voices in your head think you're an idiot."

These edgy fortunes—rated PG and profanity-free, according to Fenton—are a far cry from the trite platitudes or vague prophecies inside traditional cookies.

And by most historical accounts, fortune cookies are rooted in Japan not China.

As far back as the 19th century, temples in and around Kyoto served large

SEE FORTUNE, PAGE D3



MATTHEW MEAD / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Purple cauliflower with poached eggs looks tastier than a basic veggie dish.

'Steak' by way of the garden

VEGETABLES CUT INTO THICK SLABS ARE SATISFYING SUBSTITUTE FOR RED MEAT

BY J.M. HIRSCH
AP FOOD EDITOR

Much as I love a big, beefy steak, sometimes I need something on the lighter side.

Which doesn't mean I'm willing to sacrifice the delicious char of the grill or the satisfaction of something big and boldly flavored on my plate.

So I started playing around with the idea of vegetable "steaks"—produce that is cut into thick slabs, then slowly grilled over medium heat until tender and seared.

Of course, the cast of vegetable characters with which

SEE CAULIFLOWER, PAGE D2

FOOD BITES

technology

IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky.—A new application for smart phone users now provides waiting time information for area restaurants.

The app was recently created in beta form with help from some Western Kentucky University students and graduates.

WhyWait CEO Eric Littleton said in a statement that Kentucky is the debut state for the app, which is available in the App Store or Android Market.

WhyWait has plans to expand to Louisville and Lexington in the next month, and hopes to release the app in other states eventually.

—Associated Press

ANGEL FOOD: Getting height and texture just right means no improvising

FROM PAGE D1

try, I used a recipe from the Cook's Illustrated Cookbook.

The bottom line is this: Being precise while baking pays off.

Cooking and baking are two different culinary animals.

Liberties can be taken when cooking. A dash of this here, a dash of that there. It really won't matter.

But don't bring that casual attitude to baking. As the adage goes, baking is more of a science, while cooking can be a chance to flex one's creative muscles.

I labored over preparations on my second version of the cake. I followed exactly what the recipe demanded, and *voilà!* I had a winner.

My parents gave the cake their stamp of approval last week during a visit from Roanoke.

Topped with homemade lemon curd (a delicious way to use extra yolks!) and the spring's first strawberries, the cake was a perfect pre-dinner dessert.

We enjoyed it with glasses of bubbly, and the best compliment: "I don't know if I could go back to ever buying one from the store again," gushed Mom.

BEATING THE EGG WHITES

Separating eggs may gross some people out, but it can also be fun. It's a challenge: Keep all yellow specks out of the bowl of whites.

Bits of yolk will contaminate the whites and prevent them from whipping up into a light foam, which ultimately makes an angel food cake what it is.

You can separate the eggs either in your hands, or by pouring the yolk back and forth between halves of the cracked shell, letting the white spill into a bowl.

To add another layer of protection against yolks, use three bowls. Separate the eggs over one, then pour the



SUZANNE CARR ROSSI / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Free Lance-Star reporter Katie Thisdell figured out baking the hard way.

whites into the largest bowl and keep the yolks in another.

When the eggs are at room temperature, it's time to mix. You have to be patient here and keep a close eye on the bowl.

If you undermix, the whites won't form the soft, glossy peaks that make this airy cake stand tall. But if you overmix, the whites can lose air, and down come the peaks you've slaved over.

It's a fine line.

The acid of the cream of tartar, however, will help stabilize the egg whites.

SIFTING AND FOLDING

This is where things went sideways the first time around. OK, you have a bowl full of fluffy egg whites that have quadrupled in size. The goal is to keep them that way! The goal is not to dump the rest of the ingredients on top and say a little prayer that big clumps of sugar and flour will miraculously cook out.

They don't.

Avoid this deflating—both literally and figuratively—situation by adding the dry ingredients very gradually.

In batches, gently sift the cake flour and either finely ground white sugar or confectioner's sugar over the

LEMON CURD

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes one pint

5 egg yolks
1 cup sugar

4 lemons, zested and juiced
1 stick butter, cut into pats and chilled

Directions:

1. Add enough water to medium saucepan to come about 1-inch up side.
2. Bring to simmer over medium-high heat.
3. Meanwhile, combine egg yolks and sugar in medium-size metal bowl and whisk until smooth, about 1 minute.
4. Measure citrus juice and if needed, add enough cold water to reach $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Add juice and zest to egg mixture and whisk smooth.
5. Once water reaches simmer, reduce heat to low and place bowl on top of saucepan. (Bowl should be large enough to fit on top of saucepan without touching the water.) Whisk until thickened, approximately 8 minutes, or until mixture is light yellow and coats the back of a spoon. Remove promptly from heat.
6. Stir in butter a piece at a time, allowing each addition to melt before adding the next.
7. Remove to clean container and cover by placing a layer of plastic wrap directly on the surface of curd. (Can be refrigerated up to 2 weeks.)

Recipe adapted from: The Food Network's Alton Brown

bowl.

Using a spatula, gently fold the ingredients in until the mixture is just combined.

Remember: Don't overmix. And don't stir. Just fold. Nice and easy.

DON'T PREP THE PAN

This is where I really screwed up: I sprayed the pan.

I'm so used to always giving my baking pans a quick spritz of nonstick spray that I didn't think it might be harmful.

But with angel food cake, you want it to stick to the sides of the pan. This gives the cake support, keeping it tall and proud rather than stubby and squat.

With all that hard work, the last thing you want is for this last and final step to end up being your downfall!

I used a Bundt pan the first time, but because of the other screw-ups, I'm not sure it made a difference one

way or the other.

For my second attempt, I found, hidden away in my grandparents' pantry, an angel food cake pan with a removable bottom.

It worked splendidly—especially without the spray. (I've seen nonstick angel food cake pans at kitchen and other stores, but these are really nothing more than regular tube pans.)

Moving on, be sure not to take the cake out of the pan right away. It should actually stay trapped within its confines for a few hours, while upside down.

My mom says she remembers my now 92-year-old grandmother flipping her angel food cakes on top of a soda bottle. As it turns out, it's a perfect fit for the cake pan's center hole. I used a beer bottle (no judgments, please).

Seeing your cake upside down is a little unsettling. Again, all the angst that went

BEST ANGEL FOOD CAKE

Prep time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour
Cooling time: 2 hours
Makes 12 servings

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cake flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
12 large egg whites, room temperature

1 teaspoon cream of tartar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla extract
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract

Directions:

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat to 325 degrees.
2. Line a 16-cup tube pan with parchment paper but do not grease. (If your pan has a removable bottom, you do not need to line it.)
3. Whisk flour and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar together in small bowl.
4. Place remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar in second small bowl.
5. Using stand mixer fitted with whisk (or hand mixer), whip egg whites, cream of tartar, and salt on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute.
6. Increase speed to medium-high and whip to soft, billowy mounds, about 1 minute.
7. Gradually add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and whip for several minutes until soft, glossy peaks form.
8. Add vanilla, lemon juice and almond extract and beat until just blended.
9. Sift flour mixture over egg whites, about three tablespoons at a time, gently folding mixture into whites using large rubber spatula after each addition.
10. Gently scrape batter into prepared pan, smooth top with rubber spatula, and gently tap pan on counter to release air bubbles.
11. Bake cake until golden brown and top springs back when pressed, 50 to 60 minutes.
12. If cake has prongs around rim for elevating cake, invert pan. If not, invert pan over neck of bottle or funnel so that air can circulate all around it. Let cake cool completely, 2 to 3 hours.
13. Run knife around edge of cake to loosen, gently tap pan upside down on counter to release cake.
14. Peel off parchment, turn cake right side up onto serving platter, and serve.

Recipe adapted from: "The Cook's Illustrated Cookbook"

into it is just dangling there, waiting to fall flat on the table.

But because the golden crust is stuck to the side of the pan—you didn't use spray, remember—the cake should stand tall.

After it has cooled for at least two hours, run a knife carefully along the edge of the pan to ease the cake out.

Cutting with a serrated

knife will produce clean pieces and prevent the cake from getting squished.

When you realize you're out of the woods and you've actually conquered the beast, slice the cake and serve with fresh strawberries, lemon curd, whipped cream—and above all—a smile on your face.

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CRAB CAKES WITH HERB SAUCE

Prep time: 20 minutes
Total time: 35 minutes
Makes 8 servings

$\frac{1}{4}$ pounds lump crabmeat (or mix of lump, special and claw meat)
1 large egg
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely chopped red pepper, optional
 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup cracker meal or plain panko breadcrumbs
Crabcake Sauce (see cook's note)

Cook's note: To make a simple sauce, mix 2 tablespoons minced favorite herb, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise and 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Season with a little sea salt and black pepper if desired.

Directions:

1. Preheat broiler. Pat crab meat dry and set it aside.
2. In large mixing bowl, mix together egg, salt, pepper, Old Bay seasoning, Dijon, mayonnaise, parsley and, if using, red pepper.
3. Fold in crab meat, trying not to break up any of the chunks.
4. Add cracker meal or panko crumbs. Mixture should be sticky but not too moist. Add additional cracker meal or panko crumbs as needed.
5. Shape mixture into patties about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick and about 3 inches in diameter.
6. Place on broiler pan and broil about 6 inches from heat element until just lightly browned on top, about 4 minutes.
7. Turn over, broil second side 4 minutes until lightly brown.
8. Remove from broiler; serve with sauce.

Recipe from and tested by: Susan Selasky in the Detroit Free Press Test Kitchen.

Crab cakes make ideal dinner or snack

BY SUSAN M. SELASKY
DETROIT FREE PRESS

If you ask 10 people for the best recipe for crab cakes, you'll likely get 10 different answers.

One person I know uses the recipe on the can of Old Bay Seasoning—called a classic Maryland-style crab cake.

It's a mix of crab meat, mayo, mustard, Old Bay, an egg and parsley flakes.

Some recipes call for a few drops of hot red pepper sauce (Tabasco), Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, salt and pepper. To bind the cakes together, use an egg and mayonnaise, but mix these in a separate bowl and then add to the crab cake mixture.

Some recipes also call for dredging the crab cakes in bread crumbs, cracker meal or panko before pan-frying or broiling.

What to serve with crab cakes is another issue. Some purists say crab cakes need no sauce or perhaps just some lemon wedges.

Many recipes call for serving them with a Cajun remoulade—just don't make it too spicy. You don't want the



WILLIAM ARCHIE / DETROIT FREE PRESS

Delicate crab cakes with herb sauce will work as the main course or as an appetizer.

crab to compete with many other flavors.

Crab cakes are pretty simple to prepare and are great to have on hand when you need something quick and easy for dinner or an appetizer.

The best ones use good-size pieces of crab, so use lump crab if you can. Lump crab is the most expensive—about \$16 for an 8-ounce container.

Crab labeled "special" and claw meat is about \$8 for an 8-ounce container.

To cut cost, you can use a mix of all three.

To prepare ahead, make, shape and freeze the crab cakes without cooking. If you cook and then freeze them, they may get soggy.

Once you've mixed all the ingredients together, shape the crab cakes into desired size.

Use an ice cream scoop to make dinner portion size crab cakes, about 3 ounces each. Shape the mixture gently and don't press it. Crab cakes should be about a

half-inch thick.

To make small ones for appetizers, use small measuring cups or tablespoon measures.

Place crab cakes on a tray lined with parchment or wax paper and place in the freezer. Once frozen, put them in a freezer bag (label and date the bag) and store in the freezer. You also can place them in a container layered and separated by wax paper.

I prefer broiling crab cakes. You can pan-fry them, too, but use an oil like canola so it doesn't compete with the crab flavor. Or for a richer flavor, pan-fry in clarified butter.

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