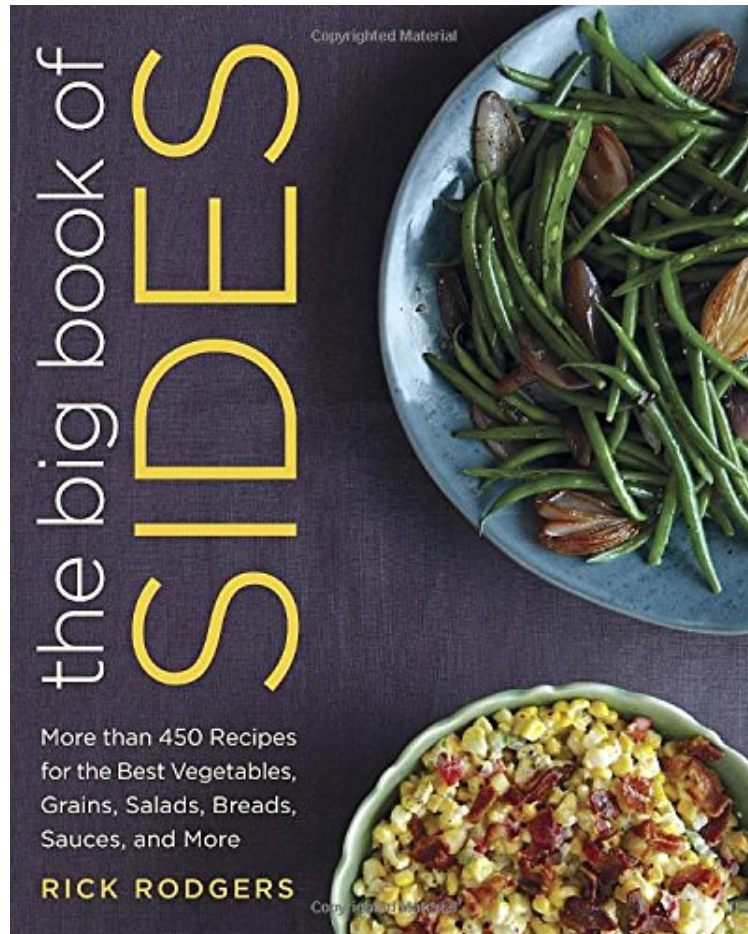


[Ebook pdf] The Big Book of Sides: More than 450 Recipes for the Best Vegetables, Grains, Salads, Breads, Sauces, and More

The Big Book of Sides: More than 450 Recipes for the Best Vegetables, Grains, Salads, Breads, Sauces, and More

Rick Rodgers

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#193932 in Books Rodgers Rick 2014-10-28 2014-10-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.43 x 1.25 x 7.70l, 1.25 #File Name: 0345548183480 pages The Big Book of Sides More Than 450 Recipes for the Best Vegetables Grains Salads Breads Sauces and More | File size: 35.Mb

Rick Rodgers : The Big Book of Sides: More than 450 Recipes for the Best Vegetables, Grains, Salads, Breads, Sauces, and More before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Big Book of Sides: More than 450 Recipes for the Best Vegetables, Grains, Salads, Breads, Sauces, and More:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Overall happy with book, good but not great By Bonnie D. I am a cookbook addict, I love to cook and I'm always looking for new ideas. I had very high hopes for this book after reading reviews and seeing the page count, it really is a big book, and after trying recipes from all areas of the book I would say it's good book but not great. Some dishes have been fabulous while others left me questioning if I had left an ingredient out due to the bland result. Overall I am happy I purchased the book, having some new favorites like the

Balsamic-Orange glazed beets, angel biscuits and sweet potato meringue pie; but also wanted to mention it isn't all great since many reviews read as if it was the holy grail of cookbooks with nothing but fabulously delicious recipes inside. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Love, love this book By Linda L. Clayton Love, love this book, have made several things, Broccoli i with lemon-butter sauce, coconut lime rice, rice and vermicelli pilaf with pine nuts, brussel sprouts with bacon and maple syrup. I am pretty sure I will cook my way through this entire book. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Good source if one is looking for different side dishes ... By Carolyn M. Nassar Just received this; checked off many side dishes I will try. Good source if one is looking for different side dishes for variation.

Whether planning a quick dinner after work or a holiday meal for a crowd, you will never be stumped for a side dish again. Side dishes make the meal. Think about it: What's a burger without fries, turkey without stuffing, or barbecue without coleslaw, baked beans, or macaroni and cheese or all three? The Big Book of Sides contains more than 450 delicious recipes to complement any dish. Award-winning cooking teacher and author Rick Rodgers has carefully compiled a variety of wonderful options, from traditional to inspired, Americana to ethnic, Southern fare to California cuisine. Sections include Eat Your Vegetables, From the Root Cellar, A Hill of Beans, Righteous Rice and Great Grains, and Pasta and Friends. The Big Book of Sides shares more than 100 information-packed entries on vegetables alone, from artichokes to zucchini, including root vegetables and grains tutorials on the cooking techniques you need to know, such as grilling and deep-frying at-a-glance charts for a variety of perfectly roasted vegetables and freshly cooked beans carefree menu planning, with a complete list of special-occasion meals and suggested side dishes Home cooks of all levels will delight in preparing Roasted Summer Squash with Pepitas and Cilantro; Chard Puttanesca; Parsnip, Apple, and Bacon Hash; Smoked Gouda Mashed Potatoes; Quinoa with Carrot and Mint; Farro, Cherry, and Feta Salad; and Butternut Squash and Potato Gratin. Rodgers also shares recipes for relishes, chutneys, pickles, baked goods (from biscuits to foccacia), and even sauces. With helpful tips on how to stock your pantry, easy-to-follow cooking techniques, gorgeous color photos, and main dish pairing suggestions, The Big Book of Sides is sure to become a trusted staple in your kitchen.

About the Author Rick Rodgers is an award-winning cookbook author and cooking teacher and the writer of more than forty cookbooks on subjects from baking to grilling and more. Rodgers often works behind the scenes as a recipe tester, co-author, and consultant on cookbooks by other authors, including Lilly Pulitzer and Sarabeth Levine of Sarabeth's Bakery. He has also written corporate cookbooks for clients such as Kingsford Charcoal and Sur La Table, as well as many titles for Williams-Sonoma. Rodgers's recipes have appeared in Bon Appetit, Cooking Light, Mens Health, Food and Wine, and Fine Cooking, among other magazines. He has received Bon Appetit Magazine's Food and Entertaining Award as Outstanding Cooking Teacher and an IACP Cookbook Award for The Chelsea Market Cookbook. Rick Rodgers has been guest chef on all of the national morning shows. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Getting It to the Table Cooking Methods The most obvious way to vary your side dishes begins with the choice of ingredients. But choosing one cooking technique over another will also change things up. For example, roasting will add sweet, caramelized notes, while steaming retains the food's natural characteristics, and braising creates an interchange of flavors between the food and the cooking liquid. Most of these techniques refer to vegetables because they are the stars of the side dish menu. Cooking methods are separated into two large categories: moist heat and dry heat. Moist-heat methods (boiling, simmering, blanching, steaming, braising, and pan-roasting) require liquids, including water and steam, to cook the food. Dry-heat methods (sautéing, stir-frying, roasting, baking, grilling, and deep-frying) do not use water as their cooking element, and the heat source does the work. Moist-Heat Cooking Methods Boiling, Simmering, and Blanching Boiling cooks the food in strongly bubbling hot water (with a temperature of 212°F at sea level, although you won't need a thermometer!). This technique does a relatively fast job of softening tough vegetables, so it is one of the most common methods for root vegetables, corn, and the like, and boiling also does a great job of brightening the food's color. Its main drawback is that nutrients can be leached into the cooking water. Simmering uses water heated to a slightly lower temperature than boiling to create smaller bubbles for a more delicate cooking method for tender ingredients. Blanching is a technique that partially cooks the food by boiling it briefly, and then finishes the cooking later with a second method, usually sautéing. To cook by boiling, simmering, or blanching, fill a large saucepan or pot from one-half to two-thirds full with cold water. (The jury is out on whether you can use hot tap water to save time, because some experts believe that old hot-water pipes leach lead, so cold water is safer from a health perspective.) The water should be salted enough that you can taste the salt, but so that the water isn't as salty as seawater. If you require a measurement, use about 2 teaspoons kosher salt (or 1 teaspoon fine sea or table salt) for every quart of water. The salt isn't just there for flavor; it also helps soften the vegetables for quicker cooking. Cover the saucepan and bring the water to a full boil over high heat. The vegetables should be cut into uniform pieces that will cook in about 5 minutes. (Potatoes and other very hard vegetables will take longer to cook, but evenly sized pieces are still important.) Cooking in liquid breaks down the cell structure in vegetables, so whether you are boiling, simmering, or blanching, check the food occasionally to avoid overcooking. The best tool for this is the tip of a small,

sharp knife. When the food is cooked to the desired texture, drain the contents of the pot in a large colander. In most cases, the food is now ready to season and serverinsing will not set the color, so it is totally unnecessary at this point. However, if the vegetables are going to be reheated later, stop the cooking by rinsing them under cold running water. It is not always necessary to transfer them to a bowl of iced water, a step that just uses another bowl and depletes your supply of ice cubes. You can do it if you wish, but be sure to remove any unmelted ice cubes from the water after the vegetables cool. Drain the cooled vegetables well and pat them dry with clean kitchen towels before storing them in plastic zip-tight bags.

Steaming Steam, the vapor from boiling water, is actually as hot as the water itself, and can cook food on a rack in a closed pot. Steaming's gentle heat retains the vegetables' characteristics (shape, flavor, and texture) and nutrients better than boiling in water, but it can take more time. Place a collapsible steamer rack in a large saucepan. The saucepan must be large enough to contain the vegetables without crowding so the steam can travel freely around the food. Pour in enough water to come just below the insert. (If you are using a steamer-style saucepan, just add an inch or two of water to the saucepan.) Cover it tightly and bring the water to a full boil over high heat, with a visible head of steam. Add the food (be careful of the hot vapors) and cover it again. Adjust the heat to maintain the full steam. If you are steaming food (such as artichokes) for more than 15 minutes, check the water level and add more boiling water as needed so it doesn't boil away. Only check when you think it is really necessary, because opening the lid will drop the temperature.

Braising and Pan-Roasting Sturdy vegetables (such as members of the onion family and other roots) often benefit from braising, the technique of slow simmering in a moderate amount of liquid. The gentle cooking tenderizes the vegetable at a relaxed pace, helping it keep its shape. Braising also allows for an exchange of flavors, and the liquid is often turned into a sauce. Pan-roasting is similar to braising, but the vegetables are browned first for a bit of rich, caramelized flavor. Vegetables can be braised in a skillet, but for larger quantities, use a saucepan. Sometimes seasoning vegetables (onions, garlic, and their friends) are cooked in the skillet first as a base flavor. Add the main ingredient with just enough liquid (broth, water, wine, or even milk) to barely cover the vegetables, and bring it to a simmer over medium heat. Thin vegetables, such as asparagus, will use less liquid, but root vegetables will take more. Reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain the simmer, and cover the cooking vessel. Braise the vegetables until they are tender. Often, the lid is removed during the last part of cooking to reduce the liquid and intensify its flavor.

Dry-Heat Cooking Methods

Sauting One of the quickest cooking methods, sautéing cooks the food in a small amount of fat. Sauté comes from the French word to jump, and the food is tossed or stirred in the pan on a fairly constant basis to keep it from burning. Oils with high smoke points are best for sautéing. (The smoke point is the temperature where the oil begins to smoke, which detrimentally changes its chemical composition and flavor.) Canola, olive, grapeseed, or peanut oils are equally good. Choose a heavy-bottomed skillet to protect food from the high heat of the burner. Whether you use a pan with high sides to contain the food or one with sloping sides to facilitate turning the food is a matter of personal choice. Heat the fat (butter or oil) in a skillet over medium-high heat until the oil starts to shimmer or the foam from the melted butter begins to subside. (In some cases, to provide an extra-hot surface for cooking the food, the oil is added to a preheated skillet, as described below for a wok. Don't try this with butter, though, as it will burn when it comes into contact with the hot pan.) The ingredients should be dry before adding them to the skillet. Add the food and cook, stirring occasionally, until it is cooked through. How much you stir depends on the amount of browning you want.

Stir-Frying Stir-frying is synonymous with Asian cooking. The food is cooked over very high heat with constant stirring. The curved sides of a wok make turning the food over easier, but I often use a very large skillet with success. Heat the skillet or wok over high heat for a minute or two if you hold your hand an inch or two above its surface, you should feel the heat. (Do not preheat a skillet with nonstick coating over high heat as this could decompose the surface.) Add the oil and tilt the skillet to coat the inside. Add the food and cook, stirring almost constantly with a large spoon, until it is cooked through. (A note on woks: I love my spun-metal wok, but it requires special handling, just like a cast-iron skillet. To build up a natural nonstick patina, cook in it often, even if you aren't making a Chinese recipe. Any cooking technique that uses oil will help season the surface. Never wash the wok in soapy water, or you'll remove the seasoning. Just wipe it out with moist paper towels and a large sprinkle of kosher salt, and dry it immediately to prevent rusting.)

Roasting and Baking This high-temperature technique cooks uncovered food in a hot oven. If the temperature isn't high enough, the vegetables will not develop the delicious browned surface that makes them unique. Solid vegetables, from carrots and potatoes to cauliflower and winter squash, can be roasted just as successfully as tender asparagus; it's just a matter of timing. A large, rimmed baking sheet (also known as a half-sheet pan, measuring about 17 1/2 inches) is a required piece of equipment for roasting. As with the other cooking techniques, to avoid a build-up of steam that would prevent browning, the food should not be crowded on the sheet. I find that 425°F is a good average temperature for roasting; not too hot and not too cold. Cut the vegetables into uniform pieces as directed in the recipe. Toss them with a tablespoon or two of oil, and spread them on an oiled baking sheet. I do not add salt and pepper at this point because the salt can draw liquid from the vegetables and make more steam to inhibit browning. Roast until a thin, golden brown crust has formed on the undersides of the vegetables. Using a metal spatula, flip the vegetables and continue roasting them until they are tender. If you are adding flavorings, such as garlic or herbs, add them toward the end of roasting so they don't burn. Also accomplished in an oven, baking cooks food at a more moderate temperature, and browning is not

necessarily a desired outcome. For example, baked potatoes are cooked at a lower temperature than roasted, and whether or not the skins are browned is immaterial. Grilling is the only cooking method that does not require a vessel to hold the food; it is placed right on the cooking grate. Gas grills make grilling a breeze, and you can control the cooking temperature with the turn of a knob. I am a die-hard charcoal grilling fan because it gives the food a stronger smoke flavor. However, when it comes to side dishes, I turn on my gas grill to save time. Also, it takes about 20 minutes for smoke to really infuse the food, and since most side dishes cook in less time, there is no need to build a charcoal fire for flavor reasons. If you are cooking with a charcoal grill, build the fire and let it burn until the coals are covered with white ash. Spread the coals out, but leave a border around the edge of the fire. At this point, the coals are very hot, about 550F. In fact, while it is a good temperature for searing steaks, it is too hot for cooking vegetables. Let the coals burn down, uncovered, until they have reached medium heat: You should be able to hold your palm about an inch away from the grill grate surface for 3 to 4 seconds. If you have a thermometer in the grill lid, it should register 350 to 450F. For a gas grill, ignite the heat source and let the grill preheat with the lid closed for at least 15 minutes. Now adjust the heat as needed to the desired temperature, about 400F. If your grill thermometer doesn't give precise numerical temperatures, go for the medium range. Grilled food is cooked with either direct or indirect heat. Direct cooking, where the food is placed directly over the heat source, is used when the food is thin and delicate and will cook in less than 15 minutes or so. With indirect cooking, only one side of the grill is heated, and the food is placed away from the heat source to be cooked by the radiant heat. For both charcoal and gas grills, always cook with the lid closed, which traps the heat inside of the grill and reduces the oxygen that feeds the fire and can encourage flare-ups. But do open the top and bottom vents of a charcoal grill to provide some oxygen, or you could extinguish the flame altogether. Use a wire grill brush to thoroughly clean the grill grate before adding the food. I never oil the grill grates because the oil only burns and leaves ashy marks on the food. It is much better to oil the food itself, or let the oil in a marinade do the lubricating. Deep-Frying Deep-frying is only considered a dry-heat method because it does not use water. Instead, the cooking medium is hot oil. Most cooks use deep-frying as an infrequent treat, but it is still important to know how to do it well, as nothing gives food such an irresistibly crisp exterior. The ideal temperature for deep-frying is 365F, which allows the outer crust to form while the food cooks through. A deep-frying thermometer is really indispensable. A low-tech alternative is to dip the handle of a wooden spoon or chopstick in the oil. If tiny bubbles form immediately around the wood, the oil is hot enough. I like an instant-read probe thermometer (the kind with a wire cord leading to a digital display unit) because, unlike the standing clip-on model, it can be used to read the temperature in a shallow skillet. Depending on the size of the food (it needs to float on the oil surface without touching the bottom of the pan), use either a large, heavy skillet or saucepan. I have come to prefer a skillet because it uses less oil. To hold and drain the fried food, place a large wire cooling rack on a large rimmed baking sheet. This works better than draining on paper towels because steam collects and softens the food where it comes in contact with the towels. The type of oil is immaterial; any neutral-flavored one is fine. Pour in enough oil to come about halfway up the sides of the skillet or saucepan and heat over high heat until the oil reads 365F on the instant-read thermometer. In batches, add the food to the hot oil without crowding, and cook according to the recipe directions until it is golden brown. Use a wire spider (a very large mesh strainer on a handle) or a slotted spoon to transfer the food to the wire cooling rack. Keep the food warm in a preheated 200F oven until it has all been cooked, and then serve it immediately. Never reuse deep-frying oil. It will probably go rancid before you have the chance to use it again, even if stored in the refrigerator. Just let it cool and discard it.

Picking Sides

Perhaps part of the problem of choosing a side dish or two (or more) for a main course is simply that the cook is faced with so many delicious options. Here are some different approaches for zeroing in on the ones that are right for the meal at hand.

Seasonal:

Many cooks start the selection process by using produce at the height of its traditional season. We can buy many vegetables and fruits year-round, but that doesn't mean they are at their flavorful best. Pink tomatoes in January, flavorless asparagus in November... most of us have eaten these foods, but with little true enjoyment. Serve locally harvested food during its true season and the side dish will sing with flavor.

Ethnic Flavors:

Matching dishes from the same cuisine is an obvious method for choosing side dishes. An Italian pasta dinner cries out for focaccia and a crisp salad with Mediterranean flavors. But you can reach beyond a cuisine's boundaries. For example, all Mediterranean foods share some basic flavor profiles: wine, garlic, and herbs are three common ingredients. In Asian cooking, soy sauce and ginger might be a recurring flavor combination. You don't want to be monotonous by repeating too many flavors, but there should be a running thread.

Accenting Flavors:

A good meal has balance and can fail when its flavors compete. Often, it is a case of overkill with too many chilies, herbs, or garlic on everything, not giving the palate a change to refresh itself. Look for ways to accent one dish with another one that may be its culinary opposite. Acidic foods are especially useful in this way: pickles, sauces, and salads all have a sharp edge that balances out blander foods.

Cooking with Umami:

In addition to the big four tastes of sweet, sour, bitter, and salty, umami is the fifth taste. It is the deep, rounded (but often indefinable) flavor that you find in such ingredients as soy sauce, anchovies, Parmesan cheese, ketchup, canned tomatoes, mushrooms, fermented foods, and others. These foods have a high proportion of naturally occurring glutamates and certain amino acids, receptors that signal deliciousness to the brain. (Monosodium glutamate is specifically processed to be a food additive.) There is a reason why we find bacon so irresistible: it is loaded with

umami, and crispy, salty umami at that. Serving a simple main course (say, pan-cooked chicken breast) with a side that is umami rich (roasted broccoli sprinkled with Parmesan) is a sure-fire way to enhance the entire meal.

Color: When choosing a menu, every cook has to face a culinary fact of life: There is a lot of brown food. Look for side dishes to brighten up the plate. Orange carrots, magenta beets, green spinach, and red radishes are appreciated not only for their flavor, but for the color they bring to the table. The old adage, You eat with your eyes, has never been so true as we are faced with images of food in the media at every turn.

Texture: Our palates respond positively to crispy foods, and their satisfying crunch sets off a yummy (a word I use very selectively) alarm in our brains. I often use chopped nuts to add texture and flavor to side dishes for this reason. But we would get tired of a meal where everything had a snap, crackle, or a pop when we bit into it. Use textures to balance the meal, just as you use seasonings. The comforting smoothness of a puree is the perfect match for a firm cut of meat or chicken, yet roasted oven fries might be a better pairing with delicate fish.

Sauce: Is your main course cooked in a sauce? Then you probably want to avoid another sauce in the side dish. They will only run into each other on the plate and fight in your mouth for attention.

Serving It Up It can be a bit of a challenge to keep side dishes from cooling off before everyone at the table has been served. This is especially an issue at big holiday feasts, where a lot of people are being served. But a home kitchen is not a restaurant, and it doesn't have the same capabilities. Nonetheless, there are a few tricks that will help you keep your hot food hot for a longer period of time. The most obvious thing is to serve the food from warm serving vessels. Even at weeknight meals, this isn't as difficult as it seems. Before heating it, be sure that the vessel is heatproof. Most modern tableware can withstand changes in temperature, but delicate china could crack if exposed to very hot water. Fill the bowl or platter with hot tap water and let it stand for a few minutes; toss out the water and dry the vessel. Fill a microwave-safe bowl with hot water and microwave on High for 30 to 45 seconds; let the vessel stand for up to 5 minutes. Toss out the water and dry the vessel. If serving pasta or other boiled foods, put the serving vessel in the sink, then put the colander in the vessel. Drain the food in the colander, letting the hot water fill and warm the vessel. Let the vessel stand while finishing the recipe, then empty and dry it before adding the food. Heat the serving vessels in a very low oven (200F) for 5 to 10 minutes. If you have a warming drawer, put it into action. To keep food warm on a buffet, use electric hot plates, fuel-heated chafing dishes, and other appliances or tools. I have used a fondue pot to keep a sauce warm, and a slow cooker to hold mashed potatoes or other vegetables. However, a hot serving bowl or platter can be too warm to pass comfortably. Be sure to have clean pot holders or kitchen towels at the table to protect your guests' hands. For a holiday dinner, when I am out shopping, I always pick up an inexpensive pair or two of pot holders at the local dollar store, and set them aside so I don't get them dirty. The pot holders can do double-duty as trivets, too. At a large party, check to be sure that you have enough trivets to protect the table from the hot vessels and spoons (both solid and slotted) for serving.

SPECIAL OCCASION MENUS I have chosen some of the most common occurrences when you may need some help with selecting side dishes. They are listed in chronological order, starting with New Year's Day in January, and include some year-round menus that I have positioned according to the season in which I serve them most often. I have also provided a list of vegetarian side dishes that can be served as main courses, too.

NEW YEAR'S DAY OPEN HOUSE This menu goes very well with smoked turkey, ham, or salmon. Black-Eyed Peas and Kale Salad with warm Bacon vinaigrette Potatoes Au Gratin Overnight Focaccia Deviled Eggs with Horseradish and Bacon Stuffed Celery with Liptauer Cheese Spread

SUNDAY ROAST PORK DINNER Whenever I smell the mouthwatering aroma of roasting pork, it reminds me of Sunday dinners at my grandparents' house. This has become one of my most reliable menus for both casual suppers and holiday dinners. Haricots Verts with Shiitakes and Shallots Baby Carrots and Apple Saut with Rosemary Celery Root, Potato, and Garlic Gratin

VALENTINES DAY STEAK DINNER Here are some variations on the classic steakhouse sides to complement a sizzling steak. The tomatoes can be made ahead and warmed up with the potatoes. Roasties (Oven-Fried Potatoes) with Rosemary Salt Tomatoes with Mascarpone Spinach Sautéed Mushrooms with Garlic and Rosemary

SAINT PATRICKS CORNED BEEF The Irish-American celebration calls for corned beef. While many cooks simply boil root vegetables and cabbage in the beef's cooking water, I find that preparing them separately gives much better results. Farmhouse Green Cabbage with Root Vegetables and Bacon Champ Potato Mash with Buttery Scallions Currant and Caraway Soda Bread Homemade Sweet and Hot Ale Mustard

EASTER LEG OF LAMB DINNER Although lamb, asparagus, and peas are available year-round, they symbolize spring and are always on my Easter menu... along with eggs, of course. Steamed Asparagus with Blender Hollandaise Sauce Buttered Fresh Peas with Lettuce Celery Root, Potato, and Garlic Gratin Buttermilk Cloverleaf Rolls Deviled Eggs with Horseradish and Bacon

BAKED HAM BUFFETA juicy baked ham is one of the most reliable main courses to feed a crowd. I use this menu for Easter and Mother's Day brunch, as well as New Year's open house. These side dishes round out the bill of fare beautifully. Smothered Collard Greens Butternut Squash and Potato Gratin Angel Biscuits Bread and Butter Pickles Bacon, Onion, and Bourbon Marmalade

PASSOVER When I was a caterer, I was often hired to cook Passover seders for my clients, so even though I am not Jewish, I gathered some very good recipes as a result. Asparagus and Pine Nut Saut Potato and Leek Kugel Oranges, Dates, and Shallots on Baby Arugula Root Vegetable and Fruit Tsimmis

AL FRESCO DINNER When the weather turns warmer, these sides will go with many grilled meats, chicken, and seafood, especially when they have Mediterranean marinades and herb rubs. Tomato-Stuffed Bell Peppers Almost Cobb Salad with Sugar Snap Peas

and Corn Overnight Focaccia Giardiniera Italian Salsa Verde

FOURTH OF JULY PICNIC

When hamburgers and hot dogs are on the menu, you can't do better than this menu of delicious versions of old favorites. Blue Ribbon Potato Salad, Marinated Sweet and Tangy Slaw, Three-Bean Salad with Honey Vinaigrette, Buttermilk Corn Bread, Bread and Butter Pickles.

BARBECUED RIBS COOKOUT

This is a menu for the dead of summer when smoky, tender ribs are on the menu. If I don't want to deep-fry in the kitchen, I set up an electric skillet outside. And if I don't want to turn on the oven, I bake the casserole and beans on the gas grill with indirect medium heat. Southern-Style Summer Squash Casserole, Sweet and Tangy Beans, Tomato, Grilled Corn, and Basil Salad, Barbecue Shack Chopped Slaw, Scallion and Jalapeño Hush Puppies.

OLD-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING

At Thanksgiving, many families demand that nostalgia is served up in heaping portions along with the turkey. Here is a menu that traditionalists will love. Classic Herb Stuffing, Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Bacon and Maple Syrup, Retro Green Bean Casserole, Make-Ahead Mashed Potato Casserole, Retro Cranberry Gelatin Salad, Old-Fashioned Dinner Rolls.

NEW-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING

The flip side of a traditional turkey menu, this spread features old favorites in new guises. Sourdough and Roasted Root Vegetables Stuffing, Rutabaga, Apple, and Walnut Gratin, Homemade Green Bean and Mushroom Casserole with Crispy Shallots, Lemon Sweet Potatoes with Meringue Topping, Cranberry and Dried Pineapple Mostarda, Brazilian Cheese Rolls.

SOUTHERN-STYLE THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a great occasion to cook the satisfying, old-fashioned dishes of the Deep South to accompany a roasted, grilled, or deep-fried turkey. Ham, Kale, and Corn Bread Dressing, Southern Stewed Green Beans with Bacon and Tomatoes, Chipotle Corn Pudding, Buttermilk Mashed Potatoes, Southern Cranberry Sauce, Sweet Potato and Pecan Dinner Rolls.

CHRISTMAS EVE BUFFET

The bounty of winter is celebrated in this festive menu that would be great with platters of sliced beef tenderloin or sliced ham. Mexican Christmas Eve Salad, Annie's Two-Rice Pizza Casserole, Carrot Ribbons with Pomegranate Dressing, Pumpernickel Ale Rolls.

CHRISTMAS GOOSE

Many families celebrate the holiday season with roast goose, a bird that looks large, but really has enough meat for only about six servings. To stretch the meal, hearty side dishes are in order. Italian Red Cabbage with Red Wine and Chestnuts, Braised Kohlrabi and Carrots with Lemon and Caraway, German Potato Dumplings, Pumpernickel Ale Rolls.

ROAST BEEF CHRISTMAS DINNER

The centuries-old tradition of roast beef for Christmas is still strong. I usually serve a light first course, such as a Celery Rmoulade topped with fresh shrimp. Brussels Sprouts Chiffonade with Pancetta and Parmesan, Classic Glazed Carrots, Vichy Potato and Fennel Gratin, Herbed Yorkshire Puddings.

LABOR DAY IN THE BACKYARD

Smoked brisket, pulled pork, or grilled tri-tip are three main courses that would match up well with this array of all-American sides. You could leave the bacon out of the muffins, and replace the bacon fat with melted butter, but for my guests, there is no such thing as too much bacon. Dill Pickle Potato Salad, Root Beer Baked Beans, Raw Broccoli Salad with Bacon, Sunflower Seeds, and Raisins, Boiled Corn with BBQ Butter, Jalapeño, Bacon, and Corn Muffins, Pickled Okra.