



In The Kitchen

with **Cortney Kelley**

July 2025 – Backyard Fish Fry



Rhubarb-Vanilla Bread Pudding

2 tablespoons unsalted butter,
plus more for the baking dish
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup whole milk
1 whole vanilla bean, split lengthwise
½ cup packed brown sugar
1 cup seedless red raspberry preserves

1 pound rhubarb, cut into ½-inch pieces
3 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
½ pound day-old rustic white bread, crusts
removed, torn into large bite sized pieces

Butter a 2 quart baking dish.

In a saucepan, combine the 2 tablespoons butter, cream and milk. With the flat side of a butter knife, scrape the vanilla seeds into the cream and toss in the pods. Add the brown sugar, heat over medium-low heat until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat and allow to infuse and cool for 15 minutes.

In a saucepan, combine the preserves with 1 cup water over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer. Add the rhubarb and lower the heat, simmer for 5 minutes or until the rhubarb is starting to become tender. Remove from the heat and set aside.

In a bowl, whisk the eggs, vanilla extract and cloves together.

Remove the vanilla pods from the cream mixture and discard. Slowly whisk the cream mixture into the egg mixture.

Layer half of the bread in the prepared baking dish. Scoop the rhubarb out of its poaching liquid and layer ⅔ of the rhubarb over the bread. Reserve the poaching liquid.

Layer the remaining bread over the rhubarb. Pour the egg/cream mixture over the bread. Press down gently to make sure all of the bread has absorbed the cream mixture.

Set the baking dish aside for 30 minutes to allow the bread to absorb the liquids fully. Layer the remaining rhubarb over top.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Place the baking dish inside a large roasting pan and fill the roasting pan with enough water to reach half-way up the side of the bread pudding dish. Bake for one hour or until the pudding is golden brown and set.

While the bread pudding is baking, simmer the poaching liquid over high heat until reduced, about 10 minutes. Serve the syrup alongside or drizzled over the bread pudding. Serves 6-8.

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Raspberry Cocktail

10 fresh raspberries
1 ounce runny honey

Few dashes orange bitters
8 ounces Champagne or Cava Brut

In a cocktail shaker, muddle the raspberries, honey and orange bitters together.

Pour the fruit mixture into two tall champagne flutes, then top with the bubbly. Enjoy!
Makes 2 cocktails.

Coco's Clam Dip

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
to room temperature
1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon finely minced garlic
1 tablespoon mayonnaise
1 6-ounce can of chopped clams, drained,
1 tablespoon of juice reserved

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Maldon salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of cayenne pepper
2 pieces of thick cut bacon, cooked and crumbled
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the sour cream, mayo and garlic, beating until fluffy. Scrape down the sides as needed. Add the clams, reserved clam juice, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice and mix on low speed until just combined. Season with salt and black pepper, adjusting to taste. Add the cayenne and one last whirl to combine.

Pour the dip into a serving bowl, garnish with the crumbled bacon and the chopped chives. Serve with thick potato chips.

Weeknight Fish Fry

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
1 cup beer, lager or light ale

Neutral oil, for deep-frying
2 pounds cod fillets, cut into 1-inch x 4-inch "fingers"
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a shallow bowl, whisk together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour and 2 tablespoons cornstarch and the paprika. In another shallow bowl, whisk together the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cornstarch. Add the beer to the second bowl and whisk until the batter is smooth.

In a deep fryer or large, deep skillet, bring a few inches of oil to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with paper towels and set near the frying station.

Season the fish "fingers" with salt and pepper. Working in batches, dredge the fish in the flour mix, followed by the beer batter. Gently lower the battered fish into the hot oil and fry, turning as needed, until golden brown, about 4-5 minutes. Transfer fried fish to the prepared baking sheet to drain.

Serve with oven roasted Yukon gold potatoes and your favorite tartar sauce. Serves 6.

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