

LONGEVITY NOODLES

PG tested

One of the most clicked-on recipes stories this year appeared in January to celebrate Chinese New Year — something of a surprise considering it includes a very long list of ingredients (which are easy to find at Asian markets such as Lotus Food Co. in the Strip District). The original recipe in “A Very Chinese Cookbook” calls for boneless, country-style pork ribs, but I substituted chicken thigh with great results.

1 pound boneless chicken thighs
3 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons oyster sauce
2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
¼ teaspoon five-spice powder
½ cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon chili garlic sauce or chili crisp
1 teaspoon cornstarch
5 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided
¼ cup Shaoxing wine, divided
8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and quartered
½ small head napa or green cabbage, thinly sliced
10 scallions, white parts sliced thin, green parts cut into 1-inch strips
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons fresh minced ginger
12 ounces fresh lo mein noodles

Cut chicken into bite-sized chunks.

Whisk soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin, sesame oil and five-spice powder together in a bowl. Transfer 3 tablespoons mixture to another bowl and add chicken pieces; stir to combine. Cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes or up to an hour.

Whisk broth, chili-garlic sauce and cornstarch into remaining soy sauce mixture and set aside.

Heat empty 14-inch flat



Gretchen McKay/Post-Gazette

-bottomed wok or pan over high heat until just beginning to smoke. Drizzle 1 teaspoon oil around perimeter and heat until just smoking. Add half the chicken mixture and cook, tossing slowly but constantly, until meat is lightly browned, 2-3 minutes.

Add 2 tablespoons wine and cook stirring constantly, until liquid is reduced and chicken is well coated, 30-60 seconds. Transfer mixture to a clean medium bowl and repeat, with 1 teaspoon oil, remaining chicken mixture and remaining 2 tablespoons wine.

Wipe wok clean with damp paper towels.

Heat now-empty wok over high heat until just beginning to smoke. Drizzle 1 teaspoon oil around perimeter of wok and heat until just smoking. Add mushrooms and cook, tossing slowly but constantly, until light golden brown, 4-6 minutes. Transfer to bowl with chicken.

Add 1 teaspoon oil and cabbage to now-empty wok

and cook, tossing slowly but constantly, until spotty brown, 3-5 minutes. Push cabbage to side and add remaining 1 teaspoon oil, scallions, garlic and ginger to clearing in pan and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir scallion mixture into cabbage. Add chicken mixture and reserved chicken broth mixture and cook, stirring frequently, until sauce is thickened, about 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to boil in a large pot. Add noodles and cook, stirring often, until almost tender (center should be firm). Drain noodles and add to wok, and cook over medium-high heat, tossing gently, until noodles are tender and evenly coated with sauce.

Serve hot.

Serves 4-6.

— “A Very Chinese Cookbook: 100 Recipes from China and Not China (But Still Really Chinese)” by Kevin Pang and Jeffrey Pang (America’s Test Kitchen, October 2023)

A look back at 8 popular recipes, plus the food editor’s pick

RECIPES, FROM E-1

are made, or June, when weddings and vacations demand a slimmer physique — that they want to be healthier and eat less butter, sugar and carbs.

Then again, some foods never go out of style — no matter how often they appear in rotation on the dinner table. That’s especially true on holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter, when eat-

ing the same dishes bring back happy childhood memories.

We get a little help via the internet: If you count clicks on a story — and what paper doesn’t? — there’s a digital record of what resonates with readers, and also what leaves them thinking “no thanks!”

Thanks to several new features in our new Sunday food section that launched in September, we tested, photographed and tasted more than

150 recipes in the PG Test Kitchen in 2024. I’m happy to report there wasn’t a stinker among them. There were, however, some favorites, both expected and unexpected, with readers. We share them below.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and delicious New Year!

Gretchen McKay on Twitter @gtmckay and IG @gmckay.

RITUAL HOUSE POTATO SALAD

PG tested

Who among us doesn’t wish they could cook as well as a professional chef? This easy, homestyle recipe from Ritual House executive chef Edwin Smith, which kicked off the Sunday section’s “Chef’s Table” feature in August, made those dreams possible.

To increase the recipe’s versatility, you can use any type of bacon, even turkey, but Smith personally prefers Nueske’s award-winning applewood smoked bacon. “It’s the best bacon you can buy,” he says.

3 pounds red-skinned potatoes, scrubbed clean
½ pound bacon
1 cup mayonnaise (preferably Duke’s)
1 cup sour cream
6 ounces shredded cheddar



Ritual House

cheese

1 teaspoon seasoning salt**½ teaspoon black pepper**

Place scrubbed potatoes into a large pot and cover with salted water. Bring to a boil.

Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until fork tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and cool, then cut into bite-sized pieces.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a skillet until crisp. Drain off the bacon drippings,

then crumble or cut into pieces.

In large bowl, stir together mayonnaise and sour cream. Add potatoes, bacon and shredded cheddar cheese and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper.

Cover and refrigerate at least an hour before serving to allow flavors to mingle.

Serves 6 to 8.
 — Executive Chef Edwin Smith, Ritual House

MUDDY WATERS OYSTER BAR CHAR-GRILLED OYSTERS

PG tested

I was torn between three recipes for my personal favorite recipe in 2024: a delicate, leaf-shaped maple cookie, a budget “Marry Me” chicken dish made with sundried tomatoes and cream, and a char-grilled oyster dish that evoked memories of a trip to the Wellfleet OysterFest in October.

The oyster recipe, which Muddy Waters Oyster Bar executive chef Adam Kucenic generously shared, ended up winning. I love it both because it’s super easy and incredibly delicious.

I used Blue Point oysters from Whole Foods.

1 dozen fresh oysters, shucked (with the flat side up)
1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter, melted
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh oregano, finely chopped



Gretchen McKay/Post-Gazette

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon hot sauce (adjust to taste)
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
Lemon wedges for serving
French bread for serving

Heat your grill to medium high.

Shuck the oysters, ensuring they remain in their bottom shell and that none of the liquid spills out.

In a mixing bowl, combine melted butter, minced garlic, parsley, oregano, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce and black pepper.

Stir well to combine.

Spoon a generous amount of the garlic butter mixture onto each oyster, then top each one with Parmesan cheese.

Place oysters directly on the grill grates (as flat as possible) and grill for 5-7 minutes, or until the butter is bubbling, the cheese is melted and the edges of the oyster start to curl.

Remove the oysters from the grill and drizzle with any leftover butter mixture.

Serve immediately with lemon wedges and crusty bread.

Makes 12 oysters.
 — Adam Kucenic, Muddy Waters Oyster Bar

FRIED COD SANDWICH

PG tested

Pittsburgh goes crazy during Lent over the city’s many fish fries. This year, Ash Wednesday just happened to fall on Valentine’s Day; to show our love for both special days, we offered this elevated take on a classic Lenten fish fry.

Featured in February, the dressed-up sandwich gets extra crunch from panko bread crumbs seasoned with Italian herbs. It’s great on a super soft and buttery brioche roll, but you also can serve it alone to avoid the extra calories.

2 pounds fresh cod, cut into serving size pieces
2 cups plain panko bread crumbs, finely crumbled
2 teaspoons Italian herb seasoning
2 eggs, beaten
½ cup all-purpose flour
Vegetable oil, for frying
Butter, for frying
6 brioche rolls, split and toasted, if desired
Coleslaw, for serving
Homemade tartar sauce, for serving (recipe follows)
French fries, for serving
Lemon wedges, for serving

Set up an assembly line for coating fish: Place flour



Gretchen McKay/Post-Gazette

on one plate, beaten eggs in a bowl and combine panko and Italian herb seasoning on another large plate.

Dredge fish in flour, dip in beaten egg (allow extra to drip off) and firmly press into panko to coat. Repeat until all fish is coated.

Heat about 1 inch oil in a heavy-bottom or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. If desired, add a couple pats of butter. Once the oil is hot and shiny, but not smoking, add fish gently, being careful not to splatter. Lower the heat to medium and cook for 2-3 minutes, until underside is golden brown.

Using a spatula, carefully flip and continue cooking on the second side until it also is golden brown and crispy,

another 2-3 minutes. (You’ll know it’s done if it cuts easily and flakes a bit.)

Remove fish from pan and drain on a wire rack set over a paper-towel lined sheet.

Assemble sandwiches: Place cod on the bottom burger bun, spread a little tartar sauce on top and add top bun. Serve with coleslaw, french fries and a slice of lemon.

Makes 4-6 sandwiches.
To make homemade tartar sauce, stir together ½ cup mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon dill pickle relish, 2 teaspoons fresh chopped dill, 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice and season to taste with salt and black pepper.

— Gretchen McKay, Post-Gazette



Downtown

Holiday Hop

HOLIDAY HOP TICKET: \$20

KEEP THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT GOING A BIT LONGER
Saturday, Dec. 28, 2024 | 12-4 p.m.

FOOD, DRINK AND ACTIVITY STOPS WILL INCLUDE:

- Experience **AURORA** at Mellon Square
- Try Blitzen’s Reindeer Mix at the Omni William Penn
- Warm up at the Hot Cocoa Cart in Mellon Square Park
- Make Your Own Ornament and New Year’s Wishing Wand with WQED
- Try 1:11 Juice’s Cranberry Oat Balls and Holiday Juice
- Take Home a Book from Made in PGH
- Snack on Meatballs at The Speckled Egg PGH
- Make a Bookmark during Story Time with WQED
- Sip on Something Sweet at the MilkShake Factory
- Choose Your Own Kids’ Cone at Millie’s Homemade Ice Cream
- Try a Pittsburgh Classic at Primanti Bros.
- Get Mac Attack Balls at The Yard

Get your tickets now!

madeinpg.com/holidayhop

