

LAURIE BERKNER'S SONG AND STORY KITCHEN

RECIPES & CREDITS

CHAPTER 1: LAYLA AND THE RAIN

APPLE AND CHEDDAR CHEESE MUFFINS

(adapted from the book, *How to Cook Everything*, by Mark Bittman)

When I was writing this chapter, I was trying to think of something fun to make with cheese that Layla Meeska, and kids, might like. I had the idea of a savory muffin with apples and cheddar cheese because I remembered having something like them as a kid myself though I had never made them before. I started searching online and found that apple and cheddar cheese muffins did indeed exist, and was very excited. This recipe is one that I developed using ideas from Mark Bittman's amazing cookbook (and one of my cooking bibles) *How to Cook Everything*.

2 cups flour (can use any combination of white and wheat, or use gluten-free)

½ tsp salt

3 tsp baking powder

3 tbsps butter or olive oil

1 egg

1 cup milk (any kind)

1 cup grated apple (Granny Smith or similarly tart)

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Grease a 12-muffin tin.
- Mix flour, salt, and baking powder in a bowl.
- Separately beat the egg, butter (or oil), and milk together.
- Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour the wet ingredients in, folding together swiftly with a rubber spatula - only until combined. The batter should still be lumpy!
- Gently mix in the apple and cheddar cheese.
- Spoon the batter into each muffin tin two-thirds full and bake for 20-30 minutes (tops should be browned and toothpick come out clean when inserted into the center).



CHAPTER 2: THE PICNIC

FRIED HONEY BANANAS

(Adapted from paleoleap.com)

What would be a delicious, honey-flavored dessert to bring on a picnic for Oscar Beebee the Bumblebee? Why, honey-fried bananas of course! Ok, maybe they aren't the most travel-friendly treat ever - but they are certainly delicious!

1 tbsp honey
¼ cup warm water
1 banana, sliced
1 tbsp coconut oil (or butter)
Cinnamon to taste

- Mix the honey with ¼ cup of warm water and set aside.
- Heat the coconut oil or butter in a pan on medium-high heat.
- Add the banana slices to the pan and fry for 2 minutes on each side.
- Remove the pan from the heat and pour the honey mixture on top.
- Sprinkle with cinnamon if desired, and serve!



CHAPTER 3: TALLULAH TIES HER SHOES

OVEN-BAKED CRISPY SHOESTRING FRIES

(adapted from minimalistbaker.com)

I really wanted to write a chapter about a character learning to tie their shoes, and one of the amazing people I work with had the suggestion that it should be Tallulah. Because, how much fun is it to imagine a dinosaur tying their shoes?! As I was trying to think of something Thelonius and I could make in the kitchen that would “tie” into this story, *another* one of those amazing people came up with this suggestion! The high oven temperature and shoestring skinny-ness of the fries in this recipe help to make them extra brown and crispy, just like Thelonius likes them.

3-4 medium russet potatoes (scrubbed clean and dried)

Non-stick olive oil spray

1-2 tbsp olive or avocado oil

salt to taste

- Preheat oven to 450°F.
- Slice potatoes into very thin strips.
- Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and generously spray with nonstick spray.
- Toss potatoes, oil, and salt to taste in a bowl.
- Arrange the fries on the baking sheets in a single layer making sure they aren't touching too much. This will help make them extra crispy.
- Bake for 25-35 minutes and flip them at least once so they bake evenly.



CHAPTER 4: OSCAR'S MYSTERY

HONEY GRANOLA BARS

(adapted from glutenfreeonashoestring.com)

I needed another snack with honey for Oscar, and originally planned to have the friends in Juniper Fields eating honey granola bars that came in a box. Then I realized that of course, in Juniper Fields they would make their own! That's when I decided that Thelonius and I should also make them in the Song and Story Kitchen. Here's a little behind-the-scenes tidbit for you - I wrote the chapter forgetting that you can't actually "cut-cut-cut them into bars" until they are cooked! So, in your kitchen, be sure to wait until they are cooled to cut these, and have lots of fun making and eating these yummy treats!

1 cup ground raw nuts (you can use any combination of nuts, like almonds, macadamias, cashews, pecans. Just grind the whole nuts in a high-powered blender or food processor if they aren't already ground.)

1 tsp salt

1/2 cup brown sugar (use granulated coconut sugar for a less-sweet treat)

2 cups old fashioned rolled oats

2 cups puffed brown rice cereal

4 tbsp honey

5 tbsp olive, avocado, or warmed coconut oil

- Preheat your oven to 325°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Mix the ground nuts, salt, and sugar in a large bowl.
- Add the oats and puffed rice cereal.
- Add the oil and honey (be sure not to confuse them like Thelonius did!) and mix to combine well.
- Scrape the mixture onto the parchment paper and spread into an even layer. Here's another cool thing I learned from glutenfreeonashoestring.com:
Cover the baking sheet with another sheet of parchment, and place another baking sheet pan on top of the top sheet of parchment paper. Apply as much even pressure as possible on the top sheet pan to compress the mixture as much as possible. This makes them come out very neatly!
- Remove the top pan and top piece of parchment paper, and place the baking sheet in the center of the oven.
- Bake for about 25 minutes, bars should be golden brown.
- Remove the baking sheet from the oven and allow the treat to cool for 5 minutes before slicing into bars. Then let cool completely before separating the bars. They will get crispier and hold together better as they cool off.



CHAPTER 5: VICTOR TAKES A BATH

GREEN SMOOTHIES

(adapted from cookingclassy.com)

Smoothies! So fun, so yummy! Here is an easy way to add some greens to them. You could also experiment with all kinds of substitutions/additions, like kale, yogurt, coconut water, different berries, or using frozen fruit. And they really do turn out to have a very pretty green color! (It's even greener if you add spirulina as well!) This recipe makes 2 servings.

1 1/2 ripe bananas

10 strawberries (about)

2 mandarin oranges or clementines, peeled and separated into sections

3 cups packed BABY spinach

1 cup cold water

1 cup ice

- Put bananas, strawberries, oranges, spinach, water, and half the ice in a blender.
- Blend until combined.
- Add remaining ice and blend until smooth.



CHAPTER 6: FREDDIE RIDES FAST AND SLOW

PEACHES WITH WHIPPED CREAM

(adapted from errenskitchen.com)

This is one of my very favorite desserts. I think it's also wonderful with fresh peaches that aren't cooked, but the warm peaches here make it even more special. And the small amount of added butter and sugar make it even more decadent.

4 ripe peaches
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp of your choice of sugar
2 cups heavy cream
mint leaves (optional)

- Cut the peaches into slices.
- Add the peaches, sugar, and butter to a large skillet over medium heat.
- Stir for a few minutes until the sugar dissolves into the butter to make a sauce and the peaches soften.
- Remove from heat (chill if desired or serve warm).
- Whip the cream with a mixer until soft peaks form.
- Spoon the peaches and sauce into bowls and serve with the whipped cream on top.
- Optional: garnish with mint leaves.



CHAPTER 7: LAYLA MEESKA AND OSCAR BEEBEE ARE FRIENDS

ICED LEMON BALM “SUNSHINE” TEA

Making sunshine tea takes all day, but it's a really fun way to make tea. It also creates an opportunity to think about waiting - and being rewarded for our patience - thanks to the slow and steady power of our majestic sun! You can use tea bags for super easy sunshine tea, or if you're lucky enough to have fresh herbs, you can try using mint, chocolate mint, chamomile, lavender, and of course, lemon balm - like we do in this chapter!

½ - 1 cup fresh herbs (or to taste)

1 glass jar (a ½ gallon sized mason jar works well)

honey to taste (optional)

- Rinse and pack the lemon balm loosely into the glass jar.
- Fill the jar to the top with water and leave it outside, where it will get full sun.
- After 6-8 hours, strain the herbs from the tea (you can now compost them if that's available to you).
- If you like your tea a little sweet, Oscar would suggest adding a little honey.
- Serve it over ice, and you have iced lemon balm sunshine tea!



CHAPTER 8: OSCAR AND THE MOON

WARM MAPLE MILK

This was such a close-to-my-heart addition to the list of recipes for the series. As I mention during the chapter to T-Pig, I really did (and still do) make this for my daughter when she would have trouble falling asleep. The L-tryptophan in the milk, the warmth of the drink, and the slight sweetness of the maple all seemed to help soothe and relax her.

1 mug of milk of your choice (We usually used whole cow's milk.)

1 tsp (or so) of real maple syrup, to taste

- Warm the milk either on the stovetop or in the microwave.
- Add the maple syrup to the warm milk.
- Stir and serve!



CHAPTER 9: TALLULAH WANTS A HOUSE

GUACAMOLE WITH CUCUMBER SLICES

Avocados are one of my favorite foods ever. I eat some almost every day and make this version of guacamole for dinner for myself and my family almost every night. I also ate guacamole a lot as a kid - and it was often my job to prepare it for our appetizer table. I used to experiment with all kinds of variations like adding tomatoes or salsa, onions and garlic, cumin or dill. Then, in college, I realized that making it with just lemon and salt really was my favorite way. It's so easy and so delicious. Plus, it's fun to sing while I'm mashing up the avocado!

1 medium-sized ripe Haas avocado
juice of ½ lemon (or to taste)
salt to taste
1 medium-sized cucumber, sliced

- Remove the skin and seed from the avocado and place in a medium sized bowl (or molcajete!)
- Use two spoons to “cut” across the avocado from each direction to mash it evenly (or the pestle inside the molcajete).
- Squeeze in the lemon juice.
- Add the salt.
- Continue to mash the avocado until the lemon and salt are evenly distributed and it is a consistency you like (leave some chunks, or make it uniformly smooth and creamy).
- Serve with cucumber slices for dipping.



CHAPTER 10: OSCAR'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

T-PIG'S CHOC-O-LOT MUD-CAKE WITH BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

(Cake adapted from: bestrecipes.com. Frosting adapted from wosisterscrafting.com)

When I was a kid, my birthday dessert of choice was ALWAYS chocolate cake with buttercream frosting. In fact, I used to make buttercream frosting (in many colors) just for fun after school because I loved it so much. I decided that for his birthday, T-Pig would love this cake not only being called "Choc-o-lot" - like my song, "Choc-o-lot in my Pock-o-lot" - but also it being a MUD cake. Because he's a pig. (See what I did there?!) Yum.

Chocolate Mud Cake

- 1 1/2 sticks (or 12 tbsp)** butter
- 7 oz** unsweetened baking chocolate
- 1/4 cup** unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 cups** granulated sugar
- 2 tsp** vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups** hot water (does not need to be boiling)
- 2** eggs lightly beaten
- 1 1/2 cups** self-rising flour (this is flour containing baking powder and salt)



- Preheat oven to 300° F.
- In a saucepan over low heat, melt the butter, chocolate, cocoa, sugar and vanilla. Stir together and then add the hot water.
- Let cool, add the flour and the beaten eggs and mix well. It should be a pretty thin consistency.
- Pour into a 12 inch cake pan, either greased or lined with parchment paper, and bake at 300° F for 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- Let the cake cool for 5 minutes before taking it out of the pan.
- When completely cool, frost with the buttercream frosting below!

Buttercream Frosting

- 2 sticks (or 16 tbsp)** butter, softened
 - 4 cups** powdered sugar
 - 2 tsp** vanilla extract
 - 2 tbsp (ish)** milk (any kind)
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- With a mixer, combine the softened butter and vanilla.
 - Add the powdered sugar and beat on low to medium speed until it is fully incorporated.
 - Scrape down the sides of the bowl to be sure it is all mixed together. When done it might look dry or crumbly.
 - Add the milk a little bit at a time until the frosting is the consistency you want (add more milk if you'd like).

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