

THE HEALTHY HOMESTEADER

Kitchen Club

July 2026 Recipe Booklet

Take Back the Table

43 summer dinner recipes

Every dinner from the July meal calendar, print-ready

meganmoos.com · @healthyhomesteader

Crockpot Honey Garlic Chicken

Prep 10 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 3 lbs
Honey — 1/3 cup
Soy sauce — 1/4 cup
Garlic, minced — 5 cloves
Ketchup — 3 tbsp
Sesame oil — 1 tbsp
Cornstarch — 2 tbsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
White rice — 2 cups cooked
Broccoli florets — 3 cups

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk honey, soy sauce, garlic, ketchup and sesame oil together. Season chicken with salt and pepper.
2. Place chicken in slow cooker. Pour sauce over the top.
3. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.
4. Remove chicken and shred or leave whole. Mix cornstarch with cold water and stir into slow cooker juices. Replace lid 10 minutes to thicken.
5. Steam broccoli. Serve chicken over white rice with sauce spooned over everything and broccoli on the side.

Classic Carne Asada Street Tacos

Prep 10 min + marinate · Cook 15 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Flank steak or skirt steak — 2 lbs
Orange juice — 1/4 cup
Lime juice — 3 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Cumin — 1 tsp
Chili powder — 1 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Olive oil — 2 tbsp
Corn tortillas — 12-16
Fresh cilantro, white onion, limes — to serve
Street corn on the side — see bonus recipe

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix orange juice, lime juice, garlic, cumin, chili powder, salt, pepper and olive oil. Marinate steak at least 30 minutes or overnight in the fridge.
2. Preheat Blackstone or cast iron on HIGH until smoking hot.
3. Cook steak 4-5 minutes per side for medium. Rest 5 minutes before slicing.
4. Slice very thin against the grain. Chop into small pieces.
5. Warm corn tortillas directly on the hot surface 30 seconds per side. Fill with carne asada, fresh cilantro, diced white onion and a squeeze of lime.

Megan's Tip: Slice the steak against the grain and thin. This is the single most important thing for tender carne asada. Cut with the grain and it will be chewy no matter what.

WEEK 1 WEDNESDAY DINNER

Big Mac Salad

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Romaine lettuce, chopped — 2 heads
American cheese, chopped — 4 slices
Pickle chips, chopped — 1/2 cup
White onion, diced fine — 1/2 cup
Cherry tomatoes, halved — 1 cup
Sesame seeds — 1 tbsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Mayo — 1/2 cup
Ketchup — 2 tbsp
Yellow mustard — 1 tbsp
Pickle juice — 1 tbsp
Flour tortillas for kids option — 4-6

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make special sauce: whisk mayo, ketchup, mustard and pickle juice. Refrigerate.
2. Brown ground beef over medium-high, breaking it up. Season generously with salt and pepper. Drain fat.
3. Chop romaine, halve tomatoes, dice onion, chop pickles and cheese.
4. Build salad: romaine base, warm ground beef on top, then tomatoes, onion, pickles and cheese.
5. Drizzle special sauce over everything. Sprinkle sesame seeds. For kids: scoop into a warm flour tortilla and wrap it up.

Megan's Tip: For picky eaters just scoop the filling into a warm flour tortilla and call it a Big Mac wrap. Same flavors, zero complaints, dinner done.

WEEK 1 THURSDAY DINNER

Garlic Butter Shrimp Tacos

Prep 10 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Large shrimp, peeled and deveined — 1.5 lbs
Butter — 4 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Chili powder — 1 tsp
Cumin — 1/2 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Corn or flour tortillas — 12
Green cabbage, shredded — 2 cups
Avocado — 2 ripe
Sour cream — 1/4 cup
Lime juice — 3 tbsp
Fresh cilantro — 1/4 cup
Limes for serving — 4

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make avocado crema: blend avocado, sour cream, lime juice, cilantro and salt until smooth. Refrigerate.
2. Pat shrimp dry. Season with chili powder, cumin, salt and pepper.
3. Melt butter in a large skillet over HIGH heat. Add garlic 30 seconds. Add shrimp in a single layer.
4. Cook 1-2 minutes per side until pink. Do not overcrowd the pan.
5. Warm tortillas. Fill with shrimp, shredded cabbage, avocado crema and a big squeeze of fresh lime.

Megan's Tip: Shrimp cooks fast. Two minutes per side maximum. Pink and curled into a C shape means done. Curled into an O means overcooked and rubbery.

Blackstone Smash Burgers

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 2 lbs
American cheese slices — 8
Brioche buns — 6-8
Butter for buns — 2 tbsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Mayo — 1/2 cup
Ketchup — 2 tbsp
Yellow mustard — 1 tbsp
Pickle juice — 1 tbsp
Lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make special sauce: whisk mayo, ketchup, mustard and pickle juice. Refrigerate.
2. Divide beef into loose 2.5 oz balls. Do not pack them tight.
3. Preheat Blackstone on HIGH 10 full minutes. Toast buttered buns until golden. Set aside.
4. Place beef balls on hot surface. Smash HARD and flat immediately. Season with salt and pepper. Cook 2 minutes without touching.
5. Flip, add cheese, cook 1 more minute. Stack double patties per bun with special sauce and all the toppings.

Megan's Tip: Preheat the Blackstone on HIGH for a full 10 minutes. You want it screaming hot. That heat is what creates those crispy lacy edges that make smash burgers so good.

Cold Italian Pasta Salad

Prep 20 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 6-8 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Rotini pasta — 1 lb
Salami, halved — 6 oz
Black olives, sliced — 1 can
Pepperoncini, sliced — 1/2 cup
Cherry tomatoes, halved — 1 pint
Cucumber, diced — 1 large
Bell pepper, diced — 1
Red onion, diced fine — 1/4 cup
Italian dressing — 3/4 cup
Parmesan, grated — 1/2 cup
Italian seasoning — 1 tsp
Salt and black pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta in well salted water until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water immediately.
2. Toss cooled pasta with half the Italian dressing. Let sit 5 minutes.
3. Add salami, olives, pepperoncini, tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper and red onion.
4. Toss with remaining dressing, parmesan and Italian seasoning. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving. Toss again and add more dressing if needed. Serve cold.

Megan's Tip: Make this in the morning and refrigerate all day. The pasta soaks up the dressing and the flavors get even better by dinnertime. This is the best no effort summer dinner.

Fluffy Buttermilk Pancakes

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

All purpose flour — 2 cups
Baking powder — 2 tsp
Baking soda — 1/2 tsp
Sugar — 2 tbsp
Salt — 1/2 tsp
Buttermilk — 2 cups
Eggs — 2 large
Butter, melted — 4 tbsp
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
Bacon and eggs to serve — as needed
Maple syrup — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar and salt in a large bowl.
2. Whisk buttermilk, eggs, melted butter and vanilla in a separate bowl.
3. Fold wet into dry until just combined. Do not overmix. Lumps are fine.
4. Cook bacon until crispy. Keep warm in a 200F oven.
5. Heat a griddle over medium. Pour 1/4 cup batter per pancake. Cook until bubbles form and edges look set, about 2-3 minutes. Flip and cook 1-2 more. Serve with maple syrup.

Megan's Tip: Do not overmix the batter. Lumps are your friend. Overmixing develops gluten and makes pancakes tough instead of fluffy. Stir just until combined and walk away.

Crockpot BBQ Pulled Chicken

Prep 10 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6-8 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 3 lbs
BBQ sauce — 1 cup plus more to serve
Chicken broth — 1/4 cup
Brown sugar — 2 tbsp
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Smoked paprika — 1 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Brioche buns — 1 package
Bagged coleslaw mix — 1 bag
Mayo, apple cider vinegar, sugar for slaw — to taste
Pickle chips — 1 jar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chicken with garlic powder, paprika, salt and pepper.
2. Place in slow cooker. Pour BBQ sauce, broth and brown sugar over the top.
3. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.
4. Remove and shred with two forks. Return to slow cooker juices. Add more BBQ sauce to taste.
5. Make quick coleslaw with mix, mayo, apple cider vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper. Pile chicken high on brioche buns with coleslaw and pickle chips.

Megan's Tip: Add more BBQ sauce after shredding than you think you need. The chicken soaks it up fast and you want every bite to be saucy and flavorful.

Shrimp Street Tacos with Mango Salsa

Prep 15 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Large shrimp, peeled and deveined — 1.5 lbs
Chili powder — 1 tsp
Cumin — 1/2 tsp
Garlic powder — 1/2 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Olive oil — 2 tbsp
Corn tortillas — 12
Mango, diced — 2 ripe
Red onion, diced fine — 1/4 cup
Fresh cilantro, chopped — 1/4 cup
Lime juice — 3 tbsp
Jalapeño, minced optional — 1
Cabbage, shredded — 2 cups
Avocado crema — see Week 1 Thursday recipe

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make mango salsa: toss diced mango, red onion, cilantro, lime juice and jalapeño. Set aside.
2. Pat shrimp dry. Toss with chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
3. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over HIGH. Add shrimp in a single layer.
4. Cook 1-2 minutes per side until pink. Remove immediately.
5. Warm corn tortillas. Fill with shrimp, shredded cabbage, mango salsa and avocado crema. Finish with fresh lime.

Megan's Tip: Make the mango salsa first and let it sit at room temperature while you cook the shrimp. The flavors come together beautifully at room temperature.

Blackstone Smash Burger Bowls

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 2 lbs
American cheese slices — 8
Romaine lettuce, chopped — 2 heads
Cherry tomatoes, halved — 1 pint
Pickle chips — 1 cup
White onion, diced fine — 1/2 cup
Salt and black pepper — generously
Mayo — 1/2 cup
Ketchup — 2 tbsp
Yellow mustard — 1 tbsp
Pickle juice — 1 tbsp
Frozen fries for the side — 1 bag

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make special sauce: whisk mayo, ketchup, mustard and pickle juice. Refrigerate.
2. Cook frozen fries in the air fryer per package directions.
3. Divide beef into loose 2.5 oz balls. Preheat Blackstone on HIGH 10 minutes.
4. Smash beef flat immediately. Season with salt and pepper. Cook 2 minutes without touching. Flip and add cheese. Cook 1 more minute.
5. Build bowls: romaine base, burger patties on top, tomatoes, pickles and onion. Drizzle special sauce over everything. Fries on the side.

Megan's Tip: Frozen fries in the air fryer while you cook the burgers. Everything finishes at the same time and nobody misses the bun when the bowl looks this good.

Honey Garlic Salmon

Prep 5 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Salmon fillets — 4 pieces
Honey — 3 tbsp
Soy sauce — 3 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Butter — 2 tbsp
Lemon juice — 1 tbsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
White rice — 2 cups cooked
Cucumber, sliced thin — 2
Rice wine vinegar — 2 tbsp
Sesame oil — 1 tsp
Sesame seeds — 1 tbsp

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make cucumber salad: toss sliced cucumber with rice wine vinegar, sesame oil, salt and sesame seeds. Refrigerate.
2. Whisk honey, soy sauce, garlic and lemon juice for the glaze.
3. Pat salmon dry. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Heat butter in an oven-safe skillet over medium-high. Sear salmon skin side up 3 minutes. Flip.
5. Pour glaze over salmon. Transfer to 400F oven 5-7 minutes until it flakes easily. Serve over rice with cucumber salad.

Carne Asada Steak Bites with Chimichurri

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Ribeye or skirt steak, cut into 1 inch pieces — 2 lbs
Olive oil — 2 tbsp
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Cumin — 1 tsp
Chili powder — 1 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Fresh parsley, packed — 1 cup
Fresh cilantro — 1/4 cup
Garlic — 3 cloves
Red wine vinegar — 2 tbsp
Olive oil for chimichurri — 1/3 cup
Warm tortillas or rice — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make chimichurri: blend parsley, cilantro, garlic, red wine vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper. Set aside.
2. Pat steak pieces dry. Season with garlic powder, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper.
3. Preheat Blackstone or cast iron on HIGH until smoking.
4. Cook steak bites in a single layer 2-3 minutes per side until deeply browned. Do not crowd the pan.
5. Serve over warm rice or in tortillas with chimichurri drizzled over everything.

Megan's Tip: Pat the steak pieces completely dry before cooking. Dry meat browns beautifully. Wet meat steams and you lose all that gorgeous caramelized crust.

Grilled Pizza Night

Prep 20 min + rise · Cook 12 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Fun

INGREDIENTS

All purpose flour — 3 cups
Active dry yeast — 1 packet
Warm water — 1 cup
Olive oil — 2 tbsp plus more for grill
Sugar — 1 tsp
Salt — 1 tsp
Pizza sauce — 1 jar
Shredded mozzarella — 2 cups
Toppings of your choice — pepperoni, veggies, sausage

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make dough in the morning: dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water 5 minutes. Add flour, olive oil and salt. Knead 5 minutes. Refrigerate all day.
2. Pull dough out 1 hour before dinner. Preheat grill to medium-high.
3. Divide dough. Stretch thin on a floured surface.
4. Brush grill grates with olive oil. Grill dough 2-3 minutes until bubbles form and underside has grill marks.
5. Flip. Working quickly add sauce, cheese and toppings. Close grill lid 3-4 minutes until cheese melts. Slide off and serve immediately.

Megan's Tip: Grill one side of the dough first then flip and add toppings. That first side gets crispy and golden and becomes the base. It is the secret to a perfect grilled pizza.

Classic French Toast

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Brioche or thick bread, day old is best — 8-10 slices
Eggs — 4 large
Whole milk — 1/2 cup
Heavy cream — 1/4 cup
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
Cinnamon — 1/2 tsp
Butter — 2 tbsp
Maple syrup and powdered sugar — to serve
Fresh berries — 1 pint
Breakfast sausage links — 1 package

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk eggs, milk, cream, vanilla and cinnamon in a shallow bowl.
2. Cook sausage links per package directions. Keep warm in a 200F oven.
3. Heat a skillet or griddle over medium. Add butter and let foam.
4. Dip each bread slice 15-20 seconds per side. Do not rush this step.
5. Cook 2-3 minutes per side until deep golden brown. Keep warm in 200F oven. Serve with maple syrup, powdered sugar and fresh berries.

Megan's Tip: Day old brioche is the secret weapon here. Slightly stale bread soaks up the custard without falling apart and makes the richest most golden French toast you have ever had.

Crockpot Beef Tacos

Prep 10 min · Cook 8-10 hrs · Serves 6-8 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Chuck roast or beef stew meat — 3 lbs
Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
Beef broth — 1/2 cup
Salsa — 1 cup
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Cumin — 1 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Flour or corn tortillas — 12-16
Shredded cheddar, sour cream, salsa — to serve
Shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, avocado — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chuck roast with taco seasoning, cumin, salt and pepper on all sides.
2. Place in slow cooker. Add broth, salsa and garlic.
3. Cook on LOW 8-10 hours until beef shreds easily with a fork.
4. Shred directly in the slow cooker. Stir into the juices.
5. Warm tortillas. Set out all toppings in bowls. Save at least a third of the meat for Wednesday lunch piggyback.

Megan's Tip: Make a big batch tonight. Wednesday lunch becomes Korean beef bowls with the exact same meat seasoned slightly differently. Two meals from one cook. That is the system working.

Crispy Pan Fried Fish Tacos

Prep 15 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Tilapia or cod fillets — 4-6 pieces
Panko breadcrumbs — 1 cup
All purpose flour — 1/2 cup
Eggs, beaten — 2
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Cumin — 1/2 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Olive oil for pan frying — 3 tbsp
Corn tortillas — 12
Cabbage, shredded — 2 cups
Chipotle peppers in adobo — 2
Sour cream — 1/2 cup
Lime juice — 2 tbsp
Fresh cilantro and limes — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make chipotle crema: blend chipotle peppers, sour cream and lime juice until smooth. Season with salt.
2. Set up breading station: flour in one bowl, beaten eggs in another, panko mixed with garlic powder and cumin in a third.
3. Coat fish in flour, then egg, then panko. Press the coating firmly onto each piece.
4. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Cook fish 3-4 minutes per side until golden and cooked through.
5. Warm corn tortillas. Break fish into pieces and fill tortillas with cabbage, fish and chipotle crema. Finish with fresh lime and cilantro.

Megan's Tip: Press the panko coating firmly onto the fish. Really press it in. That contact is what keeps the crust on and creates that perfect crunch.

Korean Ground Beef Bowls

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Soy sauce — 1/4 cup
Brown sugar — 2 tbsp
Sesame oil — 1 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Fresh ginger, grated — 1 tsp
Red pepper flakes — 1/4 tsp
White rice — 2 cups cooked
Cucumber, sliced thin — 2
Carrots, shredded — 2
Sesame seeds — 1 tbsp
Green onions, sliced — 3

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk soy sauce, brown sugar, sesame oil, garlic, ginger and red pepper flakes for the sauce.
2. Cook rice per package directions. Prep cucumber and carrots.
3. Heat a large skillet or wok over HIGH until smoking.
4. Add ground beef and cook breaking it up until deeply browned. Drain most of the fat.
5. Add sauce and toss to coat. Cook 2 more minutes until sauce thickens slightly. Serve over rice with cucumber, carrots, sesame seeds and green onions.

Megan's Tip: Get the pan really hot before adding the beef. You want it to sizzle immediately when it hits the pan. That caramelization on the outside is where all the flavor lives.

Garlic Butter Shrimp and Summer Corn Skillet

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Large shrimp, peeled and deveined — 1.5 lbs
Fresh corn, cut from 4 cobs — 4 ears
Cherry tomatoes, halved — 1 pint
Butter — 4 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Fresh basil or parsley — 1/4 cup
Lemon juice — 2 tbsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Olive oil — 1 tbsp
Crusty bread to serve — 1 loaf

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut corn off the cob. Halve cherry tomatoes. Chop herbs.
2. Pat shrimp dry and season with salt and pepper.
3. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over HIGH. Add shrimp in a single layer. Cook 1-2 minutes per side. Remove and set aside.
4. Melt butter in same skillet over medium. Add garlic 1 minute. Add corn and cook 3-4 minutes until slightly golden.
5. Add cherry tomatoes and cook 2 minutes. Return shrimp. Add lemon juice and herbs. Toss together. Serve straight from the pan with crusty bread.

Megan's Tip: Cut the corn straight off the cob directly into the pan. Fresh summer corn makes all the difference here. The corn releases its natural sweetness into the butter and it is absolutely incredible.

Traeger Smoked Brisket Sliders

Prep 15 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 8-10 · Level Medium

INGREDIENTS

Beef brisket flat — 3-4 lbs
 Salt — 2 tbsp
 Black pepper — 2 tbsp
 Garlic powder — 1 tbsp
 Smoked paprika — 1 tsp
 Brioche slider buns — 1 package
 BBQ sauce — 1 cup
 Pickle chips — 1 jar
 White onion, sliced thin — 1
 Butcher paper for wrapping — 1 roll

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix salt, pepper, garlic powder and paprika. Rub generously all over brisket the night before. Refrigerate uncovered overnight.
2. Preheat Traeger to 225F. Place brisket fat side up directly on grates.
3. Smoke until internal temp reaches 165F, about 4-5 hours. Wrap tightly in butcher paper.
4. Return to Traeger and cook until 203F internal, another 2-3 hours. Remove and rest in a cooler 1 hour minimum.
5. Slice against the grain. Pile on brioche buns with BBQ sauce, pickles and sliced onion.

Megan's Tip: Start this one early. Brisket needs time and patience but it rewards you with the most incredible flavor. Once it hits 165F internal wrap it in butcher paper and return it to the Traeger until 203F.

BLT Pasta Salad

Prep 20 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 6-8 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Rotini pasta — 1 lb
 Bacon — 1 package
 Romaine lettuce, chopped — 2 heads
 Cherry tomatoes, halved — 1 pint
 Ranch dressing — 3/4 cup
 Mayo — 1/4 cup
 Salt and black pepper — to taste
 Shredded cheddar — 1 cup
 Green onions, sliced — 3

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook bacon until crispy. Drain on paper towels reserving 1 tbsp of fat. Crumble when cool.
2. Cook pasta in salted water until al dente. Drain and toss warm pasta with reserved bacon fat.
3. Let pasta cool completely. Rinse under cold water.
4. Toss cooled pasta with ranch, mayo, salt and pepper.
5. Add romaine, tomatoes, crumbled bacon, cheddar and green onions. Toss gently. Refrigerate 1 hour before serving.

Megan's Tip: Cook and crumble the bacon first then use a little of the bacon fat to toss with the warm pasta before adding dressing. That bacon fat coating is what makes this pasta salad extraordinary.

Homemade Waffles

Prep 10 min · Cook 25 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

All purpose flour — 2 cups
 Baking powder — 1 tbsp
 Sugar — 2 tbsp
 Salt — 1/2 tsp
 Eggs, separated — 2 large
 Whole milk — 1.75 cups
 Butter, melted — 1/2 cup
 Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
 Butter, softened for honey butter — 4 tbsp
 Honey for honey butter — 2 tbsp
 Fresh strawberries — 1 quart
 Breakfast sausage patties — 1 package

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make honey butter: beat softened butter with honey until fluffy. Set aside.
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. Whisk milk, melted butter, egg yolks and vanilla separately. Combine wet and dry until just mixed.
3. Beat egg whites to stiff peaks. Gently fold into batter.
4. Cook sausage patties until done. Keep warm in a 200F oven.
5. Cook waffles in a preheated waffle iron until golden and crispy. Slice strawberries. Serve waffles with honey butter melted on top and fresh strawberries alongside.

Megan's Tip: Beat egg whites separately to stiff peaks and fold them into the batter last. This one extra step is what makes waffles light and crispy on the outside instead of dense and soft.

Crockpot Salsa Verde Chicken

Prep 5 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 3 lbs
 Salsa verde jarred — 1 jar 16 oz
 Chicken broth — 1/4 cup
 Cumin — 1 tsp
 Garlic powder — 1 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 White rice or flour tortillas — to serve
 Sour cream, shredded cheese, avocado — to serve
 Fresh cilantro and limes — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place chicken thighs in slow cooker. Season with cumin, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
2. Pour salsa verde and broth over the top.
3. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.
4. Shred chicken directly in the slow cooker and stir into the sauce.
5. Serve over white rice or in warm flour tortillas with sour cream, shredded cheese, avocado, cilantro and lime.

Megan's Tip: This is the easiest meal of the month. Four ingredients in the slow cooker and dinner is completely done. The salsa verde does all the heavy lifting while you live your life.

Birria Street Tacos

Prep 20 min · Cook 3-4 hrs · Serves 6-8 · Level Medium

INGREDIENTS

Chuck roast — 3 lbs
 Dried guajillo chiles — 6 stemmed and seeded
 Dried ancho chiles — 4 stemmed and seeded
 Beef broth — 32 oz
 Whole tomatoes canned — 1 can
 Garlic cloves — 6
 White onion — 1 quartered
 Cumin — 2 tsp
 Dried oregano — 1 tsp
 Apple cider vinegar — 2 tbsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Corn tortillas — 16-20
 Shredded mozzarella — 2 cups
 White onion, diced and cilantro — to serve
 Lime wedges — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toast dried chiles in a dry skillet 30 seconds per side. Soak in boiling water 20 minutes until soft.
2. Blend soaked chiles with broth, tomatoes, garlic, onion, cumin, oregano and vinegar until smooth.
3. Season chuck roast generously. Place in Dutch oven or Instant Pot. Pour chile sauce over everything.
4. Dutch oven: braise covered at 325F for 3-4 hours. Instant Pot: high pressure 60 minutes. Shred beef and return to the consomme.
5. Dip corn tortillas in the consomme. Cook in a hot skillet with a little fat until crispy. Fill with beef and mozzarella. Fold and cook until cheese melts. Serve with consomme for dipping, diced onion, cilantro and lime.

Megan's Tip: Dip the tortilla in the consomme before frying it. That is the signature move that makes birria tacos different from every other taco. The corn tortilla fries in beef fat and gets crispy and golden and full of flavor.

Blackstone Quesadillas

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
 Taco seasoning — 2 tbsp
 Shredded Mexican cheese blend — 2 cups
 Large flour tortillas — 8
 Butter for the Blackstone — 2 tbsp
 Sour cream, guacamole, salsa — to serve
 Salt and black pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef over medium-high, breaking it up. Add taco seasoning and water. Simmer 3 minutes. Set aside.
2. Preheat Blackstone to medium. Butter the surface lightly.
3. Place a flour tortilla on the Blackstone. Add seasoned beef and shredded cheese to one half.
4. Fold over and press firmly with a spatula. Cook 2-3 minutes until golden and crispy on the bottom.
5. Flip carefully and cook 2 more minutes until the other side is golden. Cut into wedges. Serve with sour cream, guacamole and salsa.

Megan's Tip: Press down firmly on the quesadilla with a spatula while it cooks. That pressure is what gives you an evenly crispy golden exterior instead of a soft chewy one.

Coconut Lime Shrimp

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Large shrimp, peeled and deveined — 1.5 lbs
 Coconut milk full fat — 1 can
 Lime juice — 3 tbsp
 Lime zest — 1 lime
 Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
 Fresh ginger, grated — 1 tsp
 Butter — 2 tbsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Jasmine rice — 2 cups cooked
 Mango salsa — see Week 2 Tuesday recipe
 Fresh cilantro — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook jasmine rice per package directions. Make mango salsa.
2. Pat shrimp dry and season with salt and pepper.
3. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high. Add garlic and ginger 1 minute.
4. Add shrimp in a single layer. Cook 1-2 minutes per side until pink. Remove.
5. Add coconut milk and lime juice to the same skillet. Simmer 3-4 minutes until slightly thickened. Return shrimp and toss to coat. Serve over jasmine rice with mango salsa and fresh cilantro.

Megan's Tip: Use full fat coconut milk. Light coconut milk will not give you that rich creamy sauce that makes this dish taste like a restaurant. Full fat is the only way.

Blackstone Philly Cheesesteak

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Ribeye steak, shaved very thin — 2 lbs
 Hoagie rolls — 4-6
 Provolone cheese slices — 8-10 slices
 Green bell pepper, sliced — 2
 White onion, sliced thin — 2
 Mushrooms, sliced optional — 1 cup
 Butter — 3 tbsp
 Garlic powder — 1 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Mayo for the rolls — to spread

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Slice ribeye paper thin. Freeze 30 minutes first if needed.
2. Preheat Blackstone to medium-high. Add butter. Cook peppers and onions 5-7 minutes until soft and caramelized.
3. Push vegetables to the side. Add shaved ribeye to the hot surface. Season with garlic powder, salt and pepper. Chop and toss as it cooks.
4. Combine beef and vegetables on the Blackstone. Lay provolone slices over the pile. Let melt 1 minute.
5. Spread mayo on hoagie rolls. Scoop the cheesesteak mixture into rolls with a spatula. Serve immediately.

Megan's Tip: Freeze the ribeye for 30 minutes before slicing. A slightly frozen steak is so much easier to slice paper thin. Thin slices are everything in a Philly cheesesteak.

Grilled Chicken Caesar Wraps

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless chicken breasts — 2 lbs
 Olive oil — 2 tbsp
 Garlic powder — 1 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Large flour tortillas — 4-6
 Romaine lettuce, chopped — 2 heads
 Caesar dressing — 1/2 cup
 Parmesan, grated — 1/2 cup
 Croutons crushed lightly — 1 cup
 Lemon wedges — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pound chicken breasts to even thickness. Drizzle with olive oil and season with garlic powder, salt and pepper.
2. Grill over medium-high heat 5-7 minutes per side until cooked through at 165F.
3. Rest chicken 5 minutes then slice thin.
4. Toss chopped romaine with Caesar dressing, parmesan and croutons.
5. Warm flour tortillas. Fill with Caesar salad and sliced chicken. Roll tightly and slice in half. Serve with lemon wedges.

Megan's Tip: Season the chicken simply. Salt pepper garlic. The Caesar dressing and parmesan inside the wrap do all the flavor heavy lifting. Simple chicken lets everything else shine.

German Pancakes

Prep 5 min · Cook 22 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Farm eggs — 6 large
 Whole milk — 1 cup
 All purpose flour — 1 cup
 Butter — 4 tbsp
 Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
 Salt — 1/4 tsp
 Powdered sugar — generous amount
 Lemons — 2
 Summer sausage links — 1-2 packages
 Maple syrup optional — on the table

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425F with a large cast iron skillet inside. The hot skillet is essential.
2. Blend eggs, milk, flour, vanilla and salt until completely smooth. Rest 5 minutes.
3. Cook summer sausage in a separate skillet until caramelized. Keep warm.
4. Remove hot cast iron from oven. Add butter and swirl to coat the entire pan immediately.
5. Pour batter into the hot buttered skillet. Return to oven. Bake 18-22 minutes until dramatically puffed and golden. Do not open the oven. Serve immediately with powdered sugar and fresh lemon squeezed over the top.

Megan's Tip: Do not open the oven door while it bakes. The dramatic puff is the whole show. Opening the door causes it to collapse. They will deflate slightly when you take them out and that is completely normal.

JUNE BONUS JUNE 29 MONDAY DINNER

Crockpot Beef Tips and Gravy

Prep 10 min · Cook 8-10 hrs · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Beef stew meat or chuck roast — 3 lbs
Beef broth — 2 cups
Cream of mushroom soup — 1 can
Onion soup mix — 1 packet
Worcestershire sauce — 2 tbsp
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Cornstarch — 2 tbsp
Egg noodles — 1 lb
Fresh parsley for serving — optional

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season beef with garlic powder, salt and pepper.
2. Place beef in slow cooker. Add broth, cream of mushroom soup, onion soup mix and Worcestershire. Stir to combine.
3. Cook on LOW 8-10 hours or HIGH 4-5 hours until beef is very tender.
4. Mix cornstarch with cold water. Stir into slow cooker and replace lid 15 minutes to thicken the gravy.
5. Cook egg noodles per package directions. Serve beef tips and gravy over egg noodles with fresh parsley if desired.

Megan's Tip: Do not cut the beef too small before cooking. Larger chunks hold together better through the long slow cook and shred into beautiful tender pieces at the end.

JUNE BONUS JUNE 30 TUESDAY DINNER

Ground Beef Street Tacos

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 2 lbs
Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
Water — 1/3 cup
Corn tortillas — 12-16
Fresh cilantro, white onion, lime — to serve
Shredded cheddar, sour cream, salsa — to serve
Avocado or guacamole — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef over medium-high, breaking it up as it cooks. Drain excess fat.
2. Add taco seasoning and water. Stir and simmer 5 minutes until sauce thickens and coats the meat.
3. Warm corn tortillas directly on a gas flame 20 seconds per side or in a dry skillet.
4. Set out all toppings in small bowls on the table.
5. Fill tortillas with seasoned beef and all the toppings. Finish with fresh lime juice.

Megan's Tip: Warm the corn tortillas directly on the flame of your gas stove for 20 seconds per side. You get beautiful char marks and they become soft and pliable and taste like a restaurant. Game changer.

Blackstone Steak Fajitas

Prep 15 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Skirt steak or flank steak — 2 lbs
 Lime juice — 3 tbsp
 Olive oil — 3 tbsp
 Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
 Cumin — 1 tsp
 Chili powder — 1 tsp
 Smoked paprika — 1 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Bell peppers assorted, sliced — 3
 White onion, sliced thin — 2
 Flour tortillas, warmed — 12-16
 Sour cream, guacamole, salsa, shredded cheese — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix lime juice, olive oil, garlic, cumin, chili powder, smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Marinate steak at least 30 minutes or overnight in the fridge.
2. Preheat Blackstone to HIGH. Let it get screaming hot before anything goes on it.
3. Cook peppers and onions with a little butter or oil on one side of the Blackstone 5-7 minutes until caramelized and slightly charred. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Cook steak on the other side of the Blackstone 3-4 minutes per side for medium. Remove and rest 5 minutes.
5. Slice steak very thin against the grain. Warm tortillas directly on the Blackstone 30 seconds per side. Set out all toppings and let everyone build their own.

Megan's Tip: Slice the steak against the grain and let it rest 5 minutes before cutting. This is the single most important thing for tender juicy fajita meat. Cutting with the grain will make it chewy no matter what.

Crockpot Creamy Italian Chicken

Prep 10 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 3 lbs
 Chicken broth — 1 cup
 Italian seasoning — 2 tsp
 Garlic powder — 1 tsp
 Onion powder — 1 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Sun dried tomatoes in oil, drained — 1/2 cup
 Cream cheese, cubed — 8 oz
 Parmesan, grated — 1/2 cup
 Fresh spinach — 3 oz
 Penne pasta, cooked — 1 lb

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chicken thighs with Italian seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper.
2. Place chicken in slow cooker. Add broth and sun dried tomatoes. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.
3. In the last 30 minutes add cream cheese cubes and parmesan. Stir to combine as it melts.
4. Shred chicken directly in the slow cooker. Add fresh spinach and stir until wilted.
5. Cook penne per package directions. Serve chicken and sauce over pasta. Top with extra parmesan.

Megan's Tip: Add the cream cheese in the last 30 minutes not at the beginning. If you add it too early it can break and go grainy. Last 30 minutes and it melts into the most silky incredible sauce.

Cold Summer Pasta Salad with Grilled Chicken

Prep 15 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless chicken breasts or thighs — 2 lbs
 Rotini or penne pasta — 1 lb
 Cherry tomatoes, halved — 1 pint
 Fresh mozzarella balls or cubed — 8 oz
 Fresh basil, torn — 1/2 cup
 Cucumber, diced — 1 large
 Lemon juice — 4 tbsp
 Olive oil — 1/3 cup
 Garlic powder — 1/2 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Parmesan grated, optional — 1/4 cup

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chicken with olive oil, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Grill over medium-high 5-7 minutes per side until 165F. Rest and slice thin.
2. Cook pasta in salted water until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water immediately. Toss with a drizzle of olive oil so it does not stick.
3. Whisk lemon juice, olive oil, garlic powder, salt and pepper for the dressing.
4. Combine cooled pasta, sliced chicken, cherry tomatoes, mozzarella, cucumber and basil in a large bowl.
5. Pour dressing over everything and toss gently. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving. Top with parmesan and extra basil.

Megan's Tip: Make this in the morning and refrigerate all day. The pasta soaks up the lemon dressing and the flavors get even better by dinnertime. This is the best no effort summer dinner you will make all month.

Blackstone Steak Tacos

Prep 10 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Skirt steak or flank steak — 2 lbs
 Lime juice — 3 tbsp
 Olive oil — 2 tbsp
 Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
 Cumin — 1 tsp
 Chili powder — 1 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Corn tortillas, warmed — 12-16
 Fresh cilantro, white onion, diced — to serve
 Limes for serving — 4
 Avocado or guacamole — to serve
 Salsa of your choice — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix lime juice, olive oil, garlic, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper. Marinate steak at least 30 minutes or overnight in the fridge.
2. Blackstone: preheat on HIGH 10 minutes until smoking. Cast iron option: heat a large cast iron skillet over HIGH until smoking hot.
3. Cook steak 3-4 minutes per side for medium. Do not move it while cooking. Let it develop a beautiful crust.
4. Rest steak 5 minutes. Slice very thin against the grain. This step is everything for tender steak tacos.
5. Warm corn tortillas directly on the Blackstone or in a dry skillet 30 seconds per side. Fill with steak, cilantro, diced white onion, avocado and a big squeeze of fresh lime.

Megan's Tip: No Blackstone? No problem. A screaming hot cast iron skillet works just as well. Get it ripping hot over high heat, cook the steak 3-4 minutes per side and you will get a beautiful crust every time.

Crockpot Honey Mustard Chicken

Prep 5 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 3 lbs
 Honey — 1/3 cup
 Dijon or whole grain mustard — 3 tbsp
 Chicken broth — 1/4 cup
 Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
 Apple cider vinegar — 1 tbsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Cornstarch — 2 tbsp
 Russet potatoes for mashing or white rice — 3 lbs or 2 cups
 Fresh parsley for serving — optional

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk honey, mustard, broth, garlic and apple cider vinegar together. Season chicken with salt and pepper.
2. Place chicken in slow cooker. Pour honey mustard sauce over the top.
3. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours until chicken is tender and cooked through.
4. Mix cornstarch with cold water. Stir into the slow cooker sauce to thicken. Replace lid 10 minutes.
5. Serve over mashed potatoes or white rice with sauce spooned generously over everything. Garnish with fresh parsley if desired.

Megan's Tip: Use whole grain mustard if you have it. It adds little pops of texture and flavor that make this dish feel really elevated without any extra effort. Dijon works perfectly too.

Shrimp Tacos

Prep 10 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 4 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Large shrimp, peeled and deveined — 1.5 lbs
 Chili powder — 1 tsp
 Cumin — 1/2 tsp
 Garlic powder — 1/2 tsp
 Salt and black pepper — generously
 Butter or olive oil — 2 tbsp
 Corn tortillas — 12
 Green cabbage, shredded — 2 cups
 Avocado, ripe — 2
 Sour cream — 1/4 cup
 Lime juice — 3 tbsp
 Fresh cilantro and limes to serve — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make avocado crema: blend avocado, sour cream, lime juice and a pinch of salt until smooth. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
2. Pat shrimp completely dry. Toss with chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
3. Heat butter or olive oil in a large skillet over HIGH heat until shimmering. Add shrimp in a single layer. Do not crowd the pan.
4. Cook 1-2 minutes per side until pink and cooked through. Remove immediately from heat.
5. Warm corn tortillas in a dry skillet 30 seconds per side. Fill with shrimp, shredded cabbage and avocado crema. Finish with a big squeeze of fresh lime and fresh cilantro.

Megan's Tip: Shrimp is done in two minutes per side. Watch for it to turn pink and curl into a C shape. If it curls into a tight O it is overcooked. Pull it fast and it will be perfect every time.

Slow Cooker Pulled Chicken Tacos

Prep 5 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6-8 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 3 lbs
 Chicken broth — 1/2 cup
 Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
 Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
 Lime juice — 2 tbsp
 Salsa — 1/2 cup
 Corn or flour tortillas, warmed — 12-16
 Shredded cheddar, sour cream, salsa — to serve
 Shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, avocado — to serve
 Fresh limes — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place chicken thighs in slow cooker. Season with taco seasoning on both sides.
2. Add broth, garlic, lime juice and salsa. Stir to combine around the chicken.
3. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours until chicken shreds easily with a fork.
4. Shred chicken directly in the slow cooker with two forks. Let soak in the juices 10 more minutes.
5. Warm tortillas. Set out all toppings in small bowls. Let everyone build their own and close out July in the best possible way.

Megan's Tip: Shred the chicken right in the slow cooker with two forks and let it soak up all those juices for 10 more minutes before serving. That extra soak makes the most flavorful pulled chicken you have ever put in a taco.

Baby Back Ribs

Prep 15 min · Cook 3-4 hrs · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Baby back ribs, membrane removed — 2 racks
 Brown sugar — 3 tbsp
 Smoked paprika — 2 tbsp
 Garlic powder — 1 tbsp
 Onion powder — 1 tbsp
 Salt — 1 tbsp
 Black pepper — 2 tsp
 Cayenne pepper optional — 1/4 tsp
 Apple juice for wrapping — 1/4 cup
 BBQ sauce for finishing — 1 cup

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remove the membrane from the back of the ribs. Mix all dry rub ingredients. Coat ribs generously on all sides. Let sit at room temperature 30 minutes or refrigerate overnight.
2. Traeger: preheat to 225F. Place ribs bone side down. Smoke 3 hours. Oven: preheat to 275F. Place on a foil-lined baking sheet bone side down. Cook 2 hours uncovered.
3. Wrap ribs tightly in foil with apple juice. Traeger: return to 225F for 2 more hours. Oven: return to 275F for 1.5 more hours.
4. Unwrap and brush generously with BBQ sauce. Traeger: 350F for 30-45 minutes until sauce caramelizes. Oven: broil 5-10 minutes watching closely.
5. Rest 10 minutes before slicing. Serve with extra BBQ sauce, coleslaw and corn on the cob.

Megan's Tip: The 3-2-1 method is your best friend. 3 hours smoke, 2 hours wrapped in foil with a little apple juice, 1 hour unwrapped to set the bark. Fall off the bone every single time and it works in both the Traeger and the oven.

Blackstone Sausage Dogs

Prep 5 min · Cook 15 min · Serves 4-6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Smoked sausage links or brats — 2 packages
Hot dog or hoagie buns — 1 package
Butter for buns — 2 tbsp
Yellow mustard, ketchup, relish — to serve
Diced white onion — 1
Sauerkraut optional — 1 can
Shredded cheddar optional — 1 cup
Chips and potato salad for sides — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Score sausages with a sharp knife, 3-4 shallow cuts per side. This speeds cooking and creates better caramelization.
2. Preheat Blackstone or grill to medium-high. No Blackstone? Use a cast iron grill pan or your outdoor grill.
3. Cook sausages 12-15 minutes turning every few minutes until deeply caramelized and heated through.
4. Toast buttered buns directly on the Blackstone 60 seconds until golden.
5. Set out all toppings in little bowls. Let everyone build their own. Serve with chips, potato salad and all the summer sides.

Megan's Tip: Score the sausages with a sharp knife before they hit the Blackstone. Three or four shallow cuts on each side. This lets the heat get inside faster and gives you those gorgeous caramelized grill marks all the way through.

Sausage and Homemade Mac and Cheese

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Elbow macaroni — 1 lb
Butter — 4 tbsp
All purpose flour — 3 tbsp
Whole milk — 2 cups
Heavy cream — 1 cup
Sharp cheddar, freshly shredded — 2.5 cups
Cream cheese, cubed — 4 oz
Mustard powder — 1/4 tsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
Smoked sausage links — 2 packages

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta in well salted water until al dente. Reserve 1 cup pasta water. Drain and set aside.
2. Slice sausage into coins. Cook in a skillet over medium-high until caramelized on both sides. Set aside and keep warm.
3. In a large pot melt butter over medium. Whisk in flour and cook 2 minutes. Slowly whisk in milk and cream until smooth. Bring to a gentle simmer.
4. Add cream cheese and stir until melted. Remove from heat. Add shredded cheddar gradually stirring after each addition. Add mustard powder, salt and pepper.
5. Fold in cooked pasta and toss to coat. Add a splash of pasta water if needed to loosen. Top with caramelized sausage slices and serve immediately.

Megan's Tip: Shred your own cheddar from a block. Pre-shredded cheese has anti-caking agents that make the sauce grainy. A block of sharp cheddar and a box grater is the difference between good mac and cheese and absolutely incredible mac and cheese.

Slow Cooker Pepper Steak

Prep 10 min · Cook 6-8 hrs · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Flank steak or chuck steak, sliced thin — 2.5 lbs
Beef broth — 1 cup
Soy sauce — 3 tbsp
Worcestershire sauce — 1 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Onion, sliced — 1 large
Bell peppers assorted, sliced — 3
Tomato paste — 2 tbsp
Cornstarch — 3 tbsp
Salt and black pepper — generously
White rice, cooked — 2 cups

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season sliced steak generously with salt and pepper. Place in slow cooker with onions.
2. Whisk beef broth, soy sauce, Worcestershire, garlic and tomato paste. Pour over steak.
3. Cook on LOW 6-8 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.
4. In the last hour add sliced bell peppers. Replace lid and cook until tender but still slightly crisp.
5. Mix cornstarch with cold water. Stir into slow cooker to thicken the gravy. Cook 15 more minutes. Serve over white rice with extra gravy spooned over everything.

Megan's Tip: Add the bell peppers in the last hour only. If you add them at the beginning they turn mushy and lose all their color. Last hour keeps them tender with a little bite and bright and beautiful on the plate.

Mississippi Pot Roast Hoagies

Prep 5 min · Cook 8-10 hrs · Serves 6-8 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

Chuck roast — 3-4 lbs
Ranch seasoning packet or homemade — 1 packet
Au jus or brown gravy packet — 1 packet
Butter — 1 stick
Pepperoncini peppers with juice — 8-10 peppers plus 1/4 cup juice
Hoagie rolls — 6-8 rolls
Provolone cheese slices — 8-10 slices
Butter for toasting rolls — 2 tbsp

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place chuck roast in slow cooker. Sprinkle ranch packet and au jus packet over the top.
2. Place butter stick on top of the roast. Add pepperoncini peppers and juice around the roast.
3. Do not add any other liquid. Cook on LOW 8-10 hours. Do not open the lid.
4. Shred the beef directly in the slow cooker with two forks. It will fall apart completely. Stir everything together.
5. Butter and toast hoagie rolls in a skillet or under the broiler. Pile high with shredded beef. Add provolone and broil 1 minute until melted. Drizzle slow cooker juices over the top before serving.

Megan's Tip: Do not add any liquid. I know it feels wrong but trust the process. The butter, ranch packet and pepperoncini juice create the most incredible au jus on their own. It is the most asked about slow cooker recipe for a reason.

Skillet Summer Lasagna

Prep 10 min · Cook 25 min · Serves 6 · Level Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Lasagna noodles, broken into thirds — 8 noodles
Crushed tomatoes — 28 oz can
Chicken or beef broth — 2 cups
Tomato paste — 2 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Italian seasoning — 2 tsp
Ricotta cheese — 1 cup
Shredded mozzarella — 1.5 cups
Salt and black pepper — generously
Fresh basil or parsley — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef in a large deep skillet over medium-high, breaking it up. Drain excess fat. Add garlic and cook 1 minute.
2. Add crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, broth and Italian seasoning. Stir to combine. Season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Bring to a boil. Add broken lasagna noodles and stir to submerge. Reduce heat to medium-low.
4. Cover and cook 15-18 minutes stirring occasionally until noodles are tender and sauce has thickened. Add a splash more broth if needed.
5. Drop spoonfuls of ricotta over the top. Sprinkle mozzarella over everything. Cover and cook 3-4 more minutes until cheese melts. Serve straight from the skillet garnished with fresh basil.

Megan's Tip: Break the lasagna noodles into thirds before adding them to the skillet. They cook right in the sauce and soak up all that flavor. You get all the taste of lasagna in half the time with zero baking dishes to scrub.