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Skip the store-bought stuff and make simple syrup at home with just two ingredients you already have on hand. Simple syrup is made by cooking equal parts sugar and water until the mixture is slightly thickened. It can be used as a sweetener in cooking and baking, but it's most commonly used as an ingredient in cocktails. Basic simple syrup consists of equal amounts of white sugar and water. You can infuse homemade simple syrup with fresh herbs like rosemary, mint, or lavender. Making simple syrup at home couldn't be, well, simpler. Here's a very brief overview of what you can expect: Combine the sugar and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Allow to cool and store in the fridge in a clean jar with a tight-fitting lid. Put your homemade simple syrup to good use with one of these impressive cocktail recipes: Classic Old Fashioned Easy Homemade Whiskey Sour Tom Collins Cocktail Gimlet Cocktail Watermelon Margaritas Your simple syrup shouldn't be limited to cocktails! You can also use simple syrup to make sorbet, to sweeten tea and lemonade, or to keep cakes moist. Allow the simple syrup to cool completely, then transfer to an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator for up to one month. "Super easy to make," says Richard O. "Used it to sweeten some homemade cocktails and it was perfect! I might try adding some fruit or mint to it next time while boiling for a different taste!" "Easy peasy and a very nice alternative to plain sugar for iced tea," according to MO City Reviewer. "I'll be keeping a bottle of this on hand in the fridge from now on." "I use this simple syrup to sweeten my tea all the time," says Casey. "Quicker, cheaper, and easier to make than to go to the store to buy it. And of course it's super versatile, as it also works great in cocktails and to help moisten a cake." Editorial contributions by Corey Williams Perfect pancakes are easier to make than you think. This pancake recipe produces thick, fluffy, and all-around delicious pancakes with just a few ingredients that are probably already in your kitchen (and it's so much better than the boxed stuff). You'll find a detailed ingredient list and step-by-step instructions in the recipe below, but let's go over the basics. You likely already have everything you need to make this pancake recipe. If not, here's what to add to your grocery list. Flour: This homemade pancake recipe starts with all-purpose flour. Baking powder: Baking powder, a leavener, is the secret to fluffy pancakes. Sugar: Just a tablespoon of white sugar is all you'll need for subtly sweet pancakes. Salt: A pinch of salt will enhance the overall flavor without making your pancakes taste salty. Milk and butter: Milk and butter add moisture and richness to the pancakes. Egg: A whole egg lends even more moisture. Plus, it helps bind the pancake batter together. It's not hard to make homemade pancakes you just need a good recipe. That's where we come in! You'll find the step-by-step recipe below, but here's a brief overview of what you can expect: 1. Sift the dry ingredients together.2. Make a well, then add the wet ingredients. Stir to combine.3. Scoop the batter onto a hot griddle or pan.4. Cook for two to three minutes, then flip.5. Continue cooking until brown on both sides. Your pancake will tell you when it's ready to flip. Wait until bubbles start to form on the top and the edges look dry and set. This will usually take about two to three minutes on each side. Store leftover pancakes in an airtight container in the fridge for about a week. Refrain from adding toppings (such as syrup) until right before you serve them so the pancakes don't get soggy. angela Don't let leftover pancake batter go to waste! Store the batter in an airtight container in the fridge for up to two days. If you plan to keep it longer than that, it's best to freeze the batter. Yes, you can freeze pancakes and pancake batter. To freeze cooked pancakes: Allow the pancakes to cool completely, then arrange them in a single layer on a baking sheet (make sure the edges aren't touching). Flash freeze for a few hours or up to overnight. Reheat in an oven set to 350 degrees F until warmed through. To freeze pancake batter: Ladle the pancake batter in serving size portions into freezer bags, then wrap the bags in foil. Freeze flat for up to one month. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight. "This recipe is one to hand down to your grandkids," raves ashleyalbertine. "Fluffy and delicious. Haven't bought a box of pancake mix in months! Just add a bit of vanilla and poof! Magic." "Perfect," according to Laura W. "Delicious! If you're looking for some thick, hearty pancakes these are the ones to make! Made them exactly as the recipe states and then added mini-chocolate chips to each cake as they were on the frying pan (before flipping)." "I made this recipe exactly as written...the kids were eating them off the plate faster than I could cook them," says aellis1970. "They are so delicious, they were eaten without syrup." Editorial contributions by Corey Williams Summer has arrived and so has our need for new recipes to bring to potlucks, barbecues, and family gatherings. Obviously, every summer get-together needs hamburgers, hot dogs, macaroni salad, and pasta salad, but if you're looking for a new side dish to wow your guests, this five-ingredient Southern cabbage recipe is the way to go. You probably equate summer cabbage sides with coleslaw or cabbage salad. We love those too, but this quick-and-easy, warm side is a great way to switch it up and its grandma-approved. Dotdash Meredith Food Studios The sure-fire, Southern way to enjoy cabbage is tenderized in hot bacon grease. Our top-rated Southern Fried Cabbage recipe has earned over 500 5-star reviews thanks to its flavorful cooking method. It starts by frying up bacon in vegetable oil, then wilting cabbage and onions in the leftover drippings. For even more flavor, you finish off the dish with a pinch of salt, pepper, and sugar. Fried cabbage is a favorite at Mammaw's house! It's terrific with cornbread, said recipe creator JNADX3. The whole side comes together in 20 minutes and creates a savory dish that even cabbage haters won't stop eating. The beauty of Southern Fried Cabbage is that simple changes don't take away from how delicious it is. If you don't have bacon, try adding andouille sausage or ground Italian sausage. Don't like white onion? Sweet or red work, too. Think its too greasy? Skip the vegetable oil and fry the cabbage in your leftover bacon grease. No matter what suits you and your crowd, you're sure to have a winner with this Southern classic. Seriouslyyou don't have to take it from us. Just look at all those rave reviews. My family loves this recipe. It has a wonderful taste and so good with ribs or steak. We have a lot of get-togethers with friends and family and there are never any leftovers, says recipe reviewer Kaylene. Get the Recipe: Southern Fried Cabbage Matthew McConaughey has proven to be a whiz in the kitchen. He knows how to upgrade everyday burgers (with onion soup mix, of course) and can pair together the perfect two-ingredient snack. And he has fun with italways cooking something up with his wife, Camila Alves McConaughey. But those aren't the only recipes the Texan makes on the regular. Luckily, he's happy to share his wild ways with the world, and his latest revelation has the internet in a tizzy. Recently, on the "2 Bears, 1 Cave" podcast with Bert Kreischer and Tom Segura, McConaughey shared the go-to tuna salad recipe he makes every Sunday and even dubbed himself the tuna fish salad master maker. It starts with the base, he explained. You get your good tuna. Next, you want to watch how much lemon and vinegar you add. Add the mayo mixed with some wasabi and then all the rest of the stuff: chopped red onions, dill pickle gherkinsI'll finely chop the dill pickle gherkinsand crispy jalapeo chips to give it a little bit of a crunch. And as if that wasn't enough, McConaughey likes to add some chopped apples and a touch of agave syrup for some sweetness, as well as some corn and frozen green peas. The recipe has taken the internet by storm due to the unusual ingredients the actor calls for. So, naturally, we had to try it, too. Our resident chef Nicole McLaughlin took a chance on the tuna salad in her recent recreation, and the results were surprising. Not only did she write out the recipe herself (since McConaughey didn't give us a written how-to) but she also caught that under the actors breath, he mentions adding just a little bit of Italian dressing. As she measures with her heart and gives it a final taste, McLaughlin calls the dish delicious. It was so good, she later told me. The wasabi really does make it. It has some [of the] usual suspects [in a tuna salad] that I knew I lovedlike pickles, red onion, and mayo. Some of the surprising ingredients were my favorite because they added a variety of textures, like peas, fresh corn, and apple. I've been too boring in my tuna salad game...Until now. Thanks to McLaughlin, we have a written version of McConaugheys somewhat untinged (in the best way) tuna salad. The best part of this whole experiment is that you can add more (or fewer) ingredients to suit your taste. 1/2 cup mayonnaise, plus more as desired2 teaspoons white wine vinegar1 tablespoon lemon juice2 teaspoons wasabi paste2 teaspoons Italian dressing3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion3 tablespoons finely chopped dill pickles1/3 cup crispy jalapeo chips1/4 cup chopped apple1/2 cup fresh corn kernels1/2 cup frozen peas10 ounces tuna packed in olive oil, drained Stir mayonnaise together with vinegar, lemon juice, wasabi, and Italian dressing in a medium bowl until combined. Add in onion, pickles, jalapeo chips, apple, corn, and peas, and stir.Fold in the tuna until well combined.Add more mayonnaise if desired. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve. Ready to up your kitchen game but aren't sure where to start? Look no further than these recipes. Many teach a basic technique like stir-frying, cooking under a broiler, or glazing chicken as it roasts. Others are super simple yet so satisfying something any cook can make. Use these dinners as a starting point: Once you've gotten the hang of them, you can change the ingredients based on what you have and the flavors you like. Looking to impress friends or family with your new skills? Dishes like shrimp scampi and roasted pork tenderloin are company-worthy yet surprisingly easy. Dotdash Meredith Food Studios "This easy chicken and stuffing bake is comfort in a casserole," says Nicole McLaughlin. "The chicken is tender and juicy, the stuffing topping contrasts with the creamy sauce, and the added onion soup mix brings so much flavor. A little bit of parsley on top is a nice bright note." Dotdash Meredith Food Studios "The definition of a cozy, flavorful, hearty dump meal," says Nicole Hopper. "A handful of ingredients turns an ordinary package of ramen into a comforting bowl of goodness," says thedailygourmet. France C "This is the speedy, easy version of boeuf Bourguignon, the classic French slow-cooked beef dish. Delicious over cooked egg noodles or mashed potatoes," says Pam Lolley. Alberta Rose All-purpose crispy chicken breasts are perfect as a stand-alone main. You can also top with jarred marinara and mozzarella for chicken Parmesan or slice and top salads or sandwiches. "This is going to become a regular meal in our house!" says Udjsey. France C If cooking fish feels a bit intimidating, this easy recipe will make you a pro. It's also a great way to learn how to use your broiler. The soy and honey glaze caramelizes as the salmon cooks through, all in about 10 minutes.22 Best Seafood Recipes for Beginner Cooks naples34102 Hosting friends or family for dinner? They'll be wowed by this Italian restaurant classic that's easy for cooks of all skill levels. The shrimp take just 2-3 minutes to cook any longer and they can become rubbery. "Very easy and extremely tasty!" says reviewer Marcelino. Raquel Teixeira The sweet and savory marinade for these roasted chicken thighs doubles as a sticky glaze, maximizing the flavor. The chili garlic sauce has a vinegary kick that balances the honey. "Definitely need to double the recipe next time!" says fan Lizuett Cruz Hernandez. Vegan Sweet Potato Chickpea Curry.Allrecipes As a beginning cook, it's a good idea to have a couple vegetarian mains in your back pocket. This one-pot vegetable curry tastes just like takeout. You can swap in any veggies you like, such as cauliflower, white potatoes, and kale. Sugarplum No flipping is needed in this family-sized baked omelet. Classic Denver stir-ins like bell pepper and ham are used here, but you could use leftover ground beef, flaked salmon, or cooked sausage. Or keep it vegetarian with whatever veggies you have on hand. naples34102 Dinner doesn't get much faster than a skillet stir-fry. Use this veggie-loaded version as a jumping off point: Add other veggies, chopped fresh ginger, scallions, teriyaki sauce, or a little chili garlic sauce. France C This simple-yet-special recipe is great for entertaining or for cooking pork tenderloin any night of the week. Searing first before roasting gives the pork aMo great crust. Using the drippings after roasting adds rich flavor to the pan sauce. Dav'yea Love tacos, enchiladas, and nachos? This casserole marries them all with next to no prep a meal that will feed and please a crowd. Do as many reviewers and add taco seasoning to the beef, then finish each serving with a dollop of sour cream and fresh salsa.20 Best Ground Beef Recipes for Beginner Cooks Spicy Asian Ramen Noodles.lutziCat Create a no-cook sauce with a handful of basic pantry ingredients (like peanut butter, chili-garlic sauce, and soy sauce). You'll simply combine the sauce with cooked ramen noodles and garnish with peanuts and green onions. Dinner's on the table in 15 minutes. "Fast, easy, and spicy with salty, sweet, and sour flavors kicking in," says lutziCat. Culinary HitMan Step up your staple spaghetti and jarred sauce by starting with refrigerated or frozen cheese tortellini. The quick homemade tomato sauce is enriched with cream and Parmesan for a rich taste. "I have never received so many compliments on a meal before," says Robin. Sarah Seiftpour Using only five ingredients makes this chili very different from most recipes (some have 12 ingredients or more!) yet just as delicious. The pepper Jack cheese is stirred in for richness and heat. "I have made this recipe many times and it's always a favorite," says reviewer TX2Boys4Me. Gord Linder Another vegetarian recipe for a beginner cook's arsenal. The veggies in these hearty burgers are chopped in the food processor, making them even easier to assemble. Double the batch and freeze for a burger dinner any night of the week. CC