



Home & Family  
*Christmas*  
*Cookbook*



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## **Athena Calderone's Butterscotch Pots De Crème with Salted Caramel Tahini Sauce and Toasted Kasha**

*I first encountered butterscotch pots de crème at Gjelina - the super-swoony restaurant in Venice, California - and then re-created them for Christmas a few years ago, adding my own twist with toasted kasha and salted caramel tahini sauce. Because oven temps and ramekins vary, you have to keep an eye on these little custards. You'll know they're ready when they're thick but still wobble in the center. They'll firm up further in the fridge.*

**Makes 6 Servings**

### **For the Pots De Crème**

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups (480 ml) heavy cream
- 1 cup (240 ml) whole milk
- 1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise and scraped
- ½ stick (2 ounces/55 g) unsalted butter
- ¾ cup (165 g) packed light brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 large egg yolks, at room temperature
- Flaky sea salt, for serving
- Unsweetened fresh whipped cream, for serving
- 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds, toasted, for serving
- 1 recipe Toasted Kasha (below), for serving

## For the Caramel Sauce

- ¾ cup (150 g) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (120 ml) heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- ½ teaspoon fresh lemon juice

## Directions:

1. *Make the pots de crème:* Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Put six (6-ounce/180-ml) ramekins into a baking pan.
2. Bring the cream and milk to a boil over medium heat in a small saucepan and then remove them from heat. Add the vanilla bean seeds and pod, cover, and infuse while you prepare the custard.
3. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Whisk in the brown sugar. Cook, without stirring, for about 5 minutes or until the mixture is amber hued, the consistency of sand, and smells mildly nutty. Discard the vanilla pod and slowly whisk in the cream and milk over low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and stir in the salt.
4. Bring a kettle of water to a boil and then set it aside. In a large bowl, whisk the egg yolks until they are pale and thickened, about 3 minutes. Add the cream mixture in a slow, steady stream, stirring constantly, until it's fully combined with the yolks. Strain the custard through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, then divide it evenly among the ramekins; each one should be about three-quarters full. Skim away any foam from the surface. Fill the baking pan with the hot water until it comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Cover the pan with foil and prick the foil with a fork. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until the custards are set on the sides but still jiggle in the center. Transfer the ramekins to a wire rack and cool to room temperature. Cover each ramekin with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 4 hours or up to overnight.
5. *Make the caramel sauce:* In a medium saucepan, heat the sugar and 2 tablespoons water over medium heat. Cook, swirling occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring the liquid to a boil, gently swirling but never stirring it. If the sugar starts to crystalize, use a pastry brush dipped in water to wipe down the sides of the pan. After about five minutes, when the sugar is deep amber, remove it from the heat and whisk in the cream, butter, salt, tahini, and lemon juice. Set aside and let it cool to room temperature.
6. Before serving, bring the custards to room temperature. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt and serve topped with a dollop of whipped cream, a drizzle of caramel sauce, a sprinkle of toasted kasha, and sesame seeds.

## **Toasted Kasha**

Nutty, crunchy, and absolutely addictive, this buckwheat topping is fantastic sprinkled on yogurt or any creamy dessert.

**Makes about 1 cup (180 g)**

### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or coconut oil
- 1 cup (165 g) kasha
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

### Directions:

1. In a small saucepan, heat the butter over medium heat until melted.
2. Add the kasha and salt and sauté, tossing continuously, until the grain releases a nutty fragrance and becomes golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Season with additional salt to taste and set aside to cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a week.



## **Christy Vega's Chocolate Caramel Apple Taquitos**

*Recipe Courtesy Christy Vega of Casa Vega Restaurant*

*Prep Time: 20 minutes*

*Cook Time: 15 minutes*

*Yield: 4*

### Ingredients:

- 8 Granny Smith apples, diced
- ½ cup granulated sugar, reserved
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon, reserved
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 6 tablespoons butter, reserved
- 8 (6-inch) flour tortillas
- whipped cream for garnish
- chocolate caramel sauce for garnish

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 8x8 dish and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, combine ¼ cup sugar and cinnamon.
3. In another small bowl, combine ¼ cup sugar, ½ tablespoon cinnamon, and nutmeg. Toss with apples.
4. In a medium size pan, melt 2 tablespoons butter. Sauté apples until tender.
5. Warm tortillas slightly. Fill each tortilla with sautéed apples. Roll up each tortilla and place seam side down.

6. Melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter. Using a pastry brush, brush butter all over the tops of taquitos. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar mixture.
7. Bake for 5-10 minutes.
8. Serve with whipped cream and chocolate caramel sauce.



## Theodore Leaf's Slow Cooker Beef Bourguignon

### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 8 ounces slab bacon cut into 1/2 inch pieces
- 2½ pounds chuck beef cut into 1-inch cubes
- Kosher salt
- 1 can (2 cups) beef broth
- 1 pound carrots, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 yellow onions, sliced
- 2 teaspoons chopped garlic (2 cloves)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ cup Brandy
- 1 14.5oz can of diced tomatoes
- 1 (750 ml.) bottle dry red wine
- 2 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- parchment paper

### Garnish:

- 1 pound frozen whole onions
- 1 pound fresh cremini mushrooms, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 12oz package egg noodles.
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- Fresh parsley, chopped

Directions:

1. Preheat the slow cooker to Low.
2. Heat the canola oil in a large skillet. Add the bacon and cook over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the bacon is lightly browned. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towel.
3. Dry the beef cubes with paper towels and then sprinkle them with salt. Sear the beef in one layer in the hot oil (3 to 5 minutes) till brown on all sides. Remove the seared beef to the slow cooker and continue searing until all the beef is browned. Add the beef stock to the slow cooker and cover.
4. Add the carrots, and onions, 2 teaspoons of salt and 1 teaspoon of pepper to the fat in the pan and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are lightly browned. Add the garlic and cook for 1 more minute. Add the tomato paste and flour, cook until lightly toasted. Add the Brandy, scrape the browned bits off of the pan and cook until the alcohol has burned off.
5. Add the browned vegetables, tomatoes, bottle of wine, thyme and bay leaf to the slow cooker. Cover with a parchment paper lid and the slow cooker lid, Cook on low for about 6 hours or until the meat and vegetables are very tender.
6. Brown the onions and sauté the mushrooms in 2 tablespoons of butter for 10 minutes until lightly browned, set aside. Remove the meat to the bowl with the onions and mushrooms adding a bit of cooking liquid and cover with foil. Strain the rest of the cooking liquid into a sauce pan, reduce until it coats the back of a spoon (3-5 min)
7. Meanwhile cook the egg noodles to package instructions, drain, add butter and parsley. Season the sauce to taste.
8. To serve, warm shallow bowls and add the egg noodles, sauce, meat, mushrooms & onions, and finally the reserved bacon.



## Winter Wonderland Brownies

### Ingredients:

- 4 large Eggs
- 1 ¼ cups Dutch-process cocoa
- 1 teaspoon Salt
- 1 teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1 tablespoon Vanilla Extract
- 1 cup Unsalted Butter
- 2 cups Sugar
- 1 ½ cups All-Purpose Flour
- 1 ¼ cups White Chocolate Chips
- ½ cup Crushed Candy Canes
- Powdered Sugar to dust the top

### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9" x 13" pan
2. Crack the 4 eggs into a bowl, and beat them at medium speed with the cocoa, salt, baking powder, and vanilla for about 4 minutes. You can do this while you're melting your butter (next step).
3. In a medium-sized microwave-safe bowl, or in a saucepan set over low heat, melt the butter, then add the sugar and stir to combine. Or simply combine the butter and sugar, and heat, stirring, until the butter is melted.

4. Continue to heat (or microwave) briefly, just until the mixture is hot (about 110°F to 120°F), but not bubbling; it'll become shiny looking as you stir it. Heating the mixture to this point will dissolve more of the sugar, which will help produce a shiny top crust on your brownies.
5. Add the hot butter/sugar mixture to the egg/cocoa mixture, stirring until smooth.
6. Add the flour, chips, and candy canes, stirring until smooth.
7. Spoon the batter into a lightly greased 9" x 13" pan.
8. Bake the brownies for about 30 minutes, until a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean, or with just a few moist crumbs clinging to it. The brownies should feel set on the edges, and the center should look very moist, but not uncooked. Remove them from the oven and cool on a rack before cutting.
9. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.



## Elise Wims' Tuscan Kale and Sausage Stuffing with Fresh Herbs

### Ingredients:

- ¾-pound ciabatta bread, sliced ½ inch thick
- 1 ½ cups whole milk
- 2 pounds mild Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ cup finely chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 medium shallot finely chopped
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 ½ pounds Tuscan kale, ribs removed and leaves coarsely chopped
- 1 ¼ cups grated Parmesan reggiano cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (or 1 ½ teaspoons dried)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh sage (or ¼ teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary (or ¼ teaspoon dried)

### Directions:

1. Place sliced bread in a shallow baking dish or bowl, and drizzle with milk to saturate. Let sit for 30 minutes, gently flipping occasionally to ensure even soaking.
2. Meanwhile, warm a large cast iron skillet medium-high heat. Add sausage and brown (10 - 15 minutes). Stir in the onion, shallot, celery, parsley and garlic along with a pinch of kosher salt and several turns of black pepper. Cook until

the onion and celery soften (5 to 8 minutes), stirring occasionally. Add kale and a pinch of kosher salt, cook until wilted

3. Using your hands, break up the bread into bite sized pieces, then place in a large bowl. Add the sausage-kale mixture to the bowl along with the Parmesan cheese, basil, sage, rosemary, and generously season to taste. Gently toss the mixture until all ingredients are evenly incorporated. Spoon stuffing into a 9 by 13 baking dish.
4. Preheat an oven to 350°F. Bake uncovered until hot (at least 150° in center) and lightly browned (25 - 30 minutes).



## **“The Sexy Vegan” Brian Patton’s Perfect Mashed Potatoes**

### Ingredients:

*Makes 4 Servings*

- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plain unsweetened cashew or almond milk, at room temperature
- 1 pound russet potatoes
- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and halved
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons fine sea salt, plus more to taste
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 to 8 cups water, cold from the tap or at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegan butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon white pepper

### Directions:

1. Stir the apple cider vinegar into the milk and set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 425°F. With a fork, deeply pierce the russets a few times all around, then place directly on the middle oven rack. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until a paring knife easily passes through the center.
3. About halfway through the russets’ cooking time, add the Yukon Golds to a large pot, along with the salt, garlic, and bay leaves. Add enough water to cover the potatoes by about an inch. Turn the heat to high. Once boiling, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook the potatoes for 10 to 15 additional minutes, until a paring knife easily

passes through the centers. It's best to check several of the potatoes for doneness, but you don't have to jab every single one.

4. At this point, your russets and Yukon's have finished cooking at the same time. Remove the russets from the oven and immediately cut them in half crosswise to allow excess steam to escape.
5. Drain the Yukon's and discard the water, garlic cloves, and bay leaves. Return the Yukon's to the pot and place over low heat for 1 minute to help evaporate excess water, then turn off the heat.
6. Place a ricer over a large mixing bowl. Place each russet half into the ricer with the cut side down and the skin side facing you. As you press the potato, the flesh pushes through the holes and drops into the bowl, while the skin is left in the ricer. Have a fork or tongs standing by to easily extract the skin after each potato is processed. Pass all of the Yukon Golds through the ricer into the same bowl.
7. Once all potatoes are processed, you'll have a fluffy, white and gold pillow of potato-y goodness. Stir the melted butter into the potatoes until incorporated.
8. Add the white pepper and about two-thirds of the buttermilk mixture. Fold it into the potatoes and give them a taste.
9. Add a little more buttermilk, 1 tablespoon at a time, remembering to stir minimally so as to not release the gummy starch.
10. Once you've reached the texture you like (you will probably have 2 to 4 tablespoons of buttermilk left over), season with salt to taste and serve.



## **Clodagh McKenna's Salted Caramel Whisky Bread and Butter Pudding with Golden Raisins**

*You could say that I grew up on bread and butter pudding. My mum or dad would prepare it at least once every two weeks. It is so simple to make and great for using up stale bread. I believe that it can also be a very elegant dish - in fact, I served this very recipe at my pop-up restaurant in NYC a few years back, and it was the most requested dessert on the menu. I wasn't surprised! The salted caramel whiskey sauce is addictive and could be poured over ice cream to make an Irish sundae. This pudding can be made up to a day in advance and warmed through in the oven before serving.*

### **Ingredients:**

*Serves 6*

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup golden raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Irish whiskey
- 5 extra-large eggs
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 to 9 slices firm white bread, crusts left on
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  sticks unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for greasing

For the salted caramel whiskey sauce:

- 1 stick unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 2½ cups heavy cream
- ¼ cup Irish whiskey

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and grease an 8 ½-inch square nonreactive baking dish.
2. In a medium-size mixing bowl, combine the golden raisins and whiskey and let soak for 1 hour.
3. In a large bowl, beat together the eggs, cream, sugar, spices, and vanilla to make a custard. Spread one side of each slice of bread with the butter. Cut the slices in half diagonally and arrange half of the bread in the bottom of the baking dish, overlapping the slices. Drain the raisins and sprinkle half over the bread. Repeat with the remaining bread and raisins. Pour the custard over the bread and let soak for 30 minutes.
4. Place the baking dish in a large baking pan. Add enough hot water to come halfway up the sides of the dish. Bake in the oven for 50 to 60 minutes, or until the pudding is set and the top is golden. Remove the baking dish from the water bath and let cool slightly on a wire rack.
5. Make the salted caramel whiskey sauce: In a small saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Beat in the sugar, sea salt, cream, and whiskey. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. Serve the pudding warm with the salted caramel whiskey sauce spooned over each serving.



## Nancie McDermott's "North Carolina Persimmon Pie"

### Ingredients:

#### Pecan Streusel Topping

- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, cut in four pieces and softened to room temperature
- ½ cup chopped pecans

#### Crust

- Single-Crust Pie Pastry, store bought or homemade

#### Persimmon Filling

- 2 cups persimmon puree (such as La Vigne Organics)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. butter, melted
- ¾ cup evaporated milk or half-and-half
- 3 large eggs, well-beaten

### Directions:

1. Prepare the Pecan Streusel: Whisk together flour, sugars, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in a medium bowl. Using your fingers, rub butter into dry ingredients until mixture is crumbly and forms large, moist clumps. Add pecans, and work into clumps until incorporated. Refrigerate until mixture is very cold and firm, 1 to 2 hours. (Or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days; or freeze for 1 month).
2. Prepare the crust and place it in a pie pan. Crimp the top edges, or press with the tines of a fork.
3. Prepare the Persimmon Filling: Heat oven to 375 degrees F. Stir together sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in a small bowl until well combined. Add melted butter to sugar mixture, stirring with a fork until mixture is evenly combined and resembles damp sand.
4. In another medium bowl, stir together evaporated milk and eggs, using a whisk or a fork to mix them evenly and well. Add the sugar-butter mixture and stir until everything is smooth and creamy. Add the persimmon puree and stir until all ingredients combine into a smooth, creamy filling.
5. Pour filling into piecrust. Bake in the preheated oven (375 degrees F) until filling is partially set (it has lost its initial liquid texture and overall shiny surface), 25 to 30 minutes.
6. Carefully remove the pie from the oven --- it will still be very liquid so take care here. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees F. Remove the Pecan Streusel from the refrigerator. Use your fingers to break the cold streusel into small clumps and crumbs. Sprinkle the streusel all over the center of the pie, leaving the edges showing for their beautiful autumn color.
7. Return the streusel-covered pie to the oven to continue baking. Bake at 350 degrees F until the pie filling is firm, puffed up, and set, 25 to 30 minutes more. Transfer pie to a wire rack and cool to room temperature, about 3 hours. Cut and serve at room temperature, with Brown Sugar Whipped Cream, or vanilla ice cream, or as is.  
Makes one 9-inch pie.

### Persimmon Filling

- 1 cup very cold whipping cream or heavy cream
  - 2 Tbsp. brown sugar, light or dark
  - ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract, or almond extract
1. Using chilled beaters and a large chilled bowl, beat cream with an electric mixer on high speed until thickened and puffy, about 2 minutes. Add brown sugar and continue beating until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes more, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add vanilla and beat just until it disappears into the beautiful clouds of cream. Cover and chill until serving time.

### \*Note:

If you don't have 2 hours to chill the Pecan Streusel, spread it on a plate and place it in the freezer while you prepare the pie. You won't need it until halfway through cooking time, so this will help it set up quickly. Make a double batch and keep it in the freezer for future pies if you like it as much as I do. You could use a double batch and cover the entire pie if you really love streusel. Great on any pie filling!



## **Hallacas (Venezuelan Tamales)**

### **Recipe Courtesy Chef Alejandra Schrader**

#### **Guiso – Stew for Stuffing:**

##### Ingredients:

- 4 oz. center cut bacon, chopped
- 1.5 lb. pork, diced to ½” cubes
- 1.5 lb. beef chuck, diced to ½” cubes
- 2 tbsp. smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp. cumin
- 1 tbsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 large brown onions, chopped
- 4 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 medium leek, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- Coarse sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

## **Masa – Corn flour**

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup grapeseed oil

2 tsp annatto seeds

2 cups corn “masa” flour (Use Harina Pan or Goya brand for arepas, do not use Maseca)

1 tsp salt

$1\frac{1}{3}$  cups warm water + more for adjusting masa’s consistency

## **Preparation:**

### **Guiso**

1. In a large pot or Dutch oven, sauté bacon until fat is rendered. Add pork and beef along with cumin, paprika, turmeric, and cayenne pepper. Season with salt and pepper then cook over high heat for 5 minutes. Add onions, tomatoes, garlic, leek, celery, and bell pepper. Cover and bring to a boil. Lower heat and continue cooking until all meat is tender, about 1.5 hours.
2. Once meat is tender, add lemon juice and sugar. Stir and taste to adjust seasoning. Set aside until Guiso has cooled down completely. This may be done ahead and refrigerated.

### **Masa**

1. Over a low heat, cook oil with annatto seeds in small sauce pan. Simmer for about 5 minutes. Cool down to room temperature, strain and discard seeds.
2. In a large bowl (or food processor) mix in masa harina, salt, water, and annatto oil. Form dough into 24 balls.

### **TO ASSEMBLE**

1. Lightly oil the center of a banana leaf square. Put a ball of masa in the center of each square and flatten dough out to  $\frac{1}{8}$ ” thickness. Top each masa-coated banana leaf with meat mixture and top/garnish with a strip of pepper, onion ring, a slice of hard-boiled egg, a few raisins and capers, and two olives.
2. Fold leaf to completely encase the filling, making rectangular pockets. Hallacas can be roughly 6”x3”. Tie each Hallaca with kitchen twine. Steam in large pot, covered, for 1 hour. Serve hot.

\* Hallacas can be refrigerated (or frozen) and steamed to reheat before serving



## **Mahalia McKellar's Christmas Yule Log**

### Ingredients:

#### **CHOCOLATE SPONGE CAKE**

- 6 organic Eggs, from certified humanely pastured hens
- 3/4 cup organic Cane Sugar, divided
- 1/3 cup organic unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 2 tsp pure organic Vanilla Extract
- 1/32 tsp (a small pinch) pure Sea Salt
- Organic Powdered Sugar \*(a -- see Notes at end)

#### **VANILLA CREAM FILLING**

- 3/4 cup organic Heavy/Whipping Cream
- 1/4 cup organic Powdered Sugar
- 1/2 tsp pure organic Vanilla Extract

#### **CHOCOLATE CREAM TOPPING**

- 1 1/4 cup organic Heavy/Whipping Cream
- 1/3 cup + 1 Tabl organic Powdered Sugar
- 3 1/2 Tabl organic unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1 tsp pure organic Vanilla Extract

#### **DECORATIONS \*(b)**

- Marzipan - Red and Green Food coloring - Small water color paint brushes

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Use ghee, butter or coconut oil to lightly grease a 10" x 15" x 1" jelly roll baking pan (or sided cookie sheet). Line the bottom of the baking pan (only the bottom) with unbleached parchment paper, and then very lightly grease the parchment paper.
2. Separate egg whites from yolks. *\*(c* As you separate them, put the egg whites in a mixer bowl for making the meringue. Put the yolks in another large mixer bowl for making the batter).
3. At high speed, beat the egg whites until soft peaks form. Add only 1/4 cup sugar, 2 Table at a time, beating well after each addition, and then continuing to beat just until stiff peaks form. *\*(d)*
4. In the other mixer bowl with the egg yolks, beat the yolks at high speed, adding the remaining 1/2 cup of sugar, 2 Tbs at a time, beating until mixture is very thick, appx 3 – 5 minutes.
5. At low speed, stir in the cocoa powder, vanilla extract and sea salt. Mix just until smooth.
6. With a large spoon or rubber spatula, gently fold the cocoa mixture and egg whites together until just blended and no egg whites show. Spread the batter evenly in the baking pan.
7. Bake 12 – 15 minutes, just until the surface springs back when gently pressed with a fingertip.
8. Do not over bake or the cake will crack instead of roll.
9. Sift a tiny amount of powdered sugar on one side of a thin, clean dish towel, at least 10" x 15" in. size. Carefully turn the cake out onto the sugared towel when you take it out of the oven. Lift the pan off the cake and peel off the parchment paper from the cake and discard.
10. Roll the cake up, rolling the towel as well, into a "jelly roll", starting with the short side if you want a "fatter" log, or starting with the longer side if you want a thinner, longer log. Cool the rolled cake completely on a rack, seam side down. *\*(e)*

### TO ASSEMBLE

1. Make the VANILLA CREAM FILLING by combining the ingredients in a medium bowl.
2. Beat until thick. *\*(f* If not using immediately, cover and chill until use).
3. Make the CHOCOLATE CREAM TOPPING by combining the ingredients in a medium-large bowl. Beat until thick. *\*(f* If not using immediately, cover and chill until use).
4. Carefully unroll the cake, removing the towel as you do so. Spread the top of the cake using all of the vanilla cream filling, spreading evenly to 1/2 inch away from all the edges. Reroll the cake and place it seam side down on your serving plate.
5. Use the chocolate cream topping to cover the top, sides and ends of the log. *\*(g* Using a fork, make slightly wavy lines in the chocolate cream on the top and sides of the cake to create a bark effect. Use a spoon or spatula to make a swirl on each end, to give the look of a cut log).
6. Loosely wrap your cake in foil and refrigerate for at least one hour before serving. Bring it out about 30 minutes before serving, as the taste and texture are best at room temperature. *\*(h)*
7. Mold marzipan to create two holly clusters, each with 2 holly leaves joined with 3 or more holly berries. Use food coloring to paint the leaves green and the berries red. Allow to dry completely before using.

8. When you're about to serve your cake, if you want a "snowy" look, lightly sift powdered sugar over the log and plate. Place your holly decorations: One cluster on the log and another at the base of the log.

\*Notes

- a) Why organic powdered sugar? It's made of organic cane sugar with organic tapioca powder to prevent clumping. Conventional powdered sugar is typically GMO beet sugar with GMO cornstarch.
- b) Because there is so much sugar in marzipan, and because in our family we don't consider food dyes to be good for us to consume, we don't eat the decorations. If you're going to eat them, try to find (or make your own) natural food dyes.
- c) If you're new at separating eggs, it's a wise move to use a cup to put the egg white in first, then into the bowl. If any yolk accidentally gets into the cup, just put the cup aside, get a clean cup and continue with a new egg. This way you've spoiled only one egg white instead of your entire bowl of whites. This is important because even a tiny bit of yolk will keep the whites from becoming a meringue!
- d) Careful, over-beating will make the meringue dry and not hold its shape, and the cake will be "heavy".
- e) You can make the cake a day ahead. Once it has cooled completely, loosely wrap it (still in the towel) with aluminum foil and seal the edges well to keep fresh. To keep your cake moist, do not refrigerate.
- f) Cream whips up best if it is chilled, just out of the refrigerator. You can also put your beaters in the freezer to chill them for a few minutes before beating. If you have raw meats in the freezer, it's best to put the beaters in a baggie or wrap in a towel to keep any meat "germs" from getting on them. Save the baggie or towel for chilling them again for the topping. Also, watch out: Over beating cream will turn it into butter, and it happens in an instant.
- g) To help keep your serving plate clean, you can slide waxed paper around the edges of your cake, then carefully remove the waxed paper when you're finished putting the topping on.
- h) After serving, be sure to return the cake to the refrigerator sooner rather than later, so your filling and topping don't start to spoil. This cake will still be delicious up to 3 days later, if you keep it chilled between servings, (and it hasn't been completely eaten by then!)

FOR AN EVEN HEALTHIER YULE LOG ~

- 2 1/2 cups mashed organic ripe Avocado (about 2 medium avocados)
- 1/2 cup organic unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1/2 cup pure Maple Syrup
- 1 Tbs organic Ghee (optional)
- 1 tsp pure organic Vanilla Extract

1. In the cake batter, substitute pure maple syrup (*not* maple-flavored syrup) for the cane sugar.
2. In the filling, substitute pure maple syrup for the powdered sugar.
3. Instead of chocolate cream for the topping, use Chocolate Avocado Frosting: In a blender, food processor, mixer, or with a hand mixer and a medium bowl, combine
4. Beat well until smooth. Taste test and add more maple syrup, a little at a time, if you'd like a sweeter and refrigerate until use.



## **Courtney Thorne-Smith's Spinach & Artichoke Casserole**

### Ingredients:

- 4 8 ounce packages frozen artichoke hearts
- 4 10 ounce bags frozen chopped spinach
- 2 8 ounce packages cream cheese
- 3/4 cube of butter
- 1 cup grated Parmigiana-Reggiano cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

### Directions:

1. Spread single layer of artichoke hearts to cover bottom of baking dish. Wring all water out of spinach, layer over artichoke hearts. Finish with another layer of artichoke hearts.
2. Soften cream cheese and butter in microwave until spreadable. Spread evenly over top of casserole. Finish with grated Parmesan cheese.
3. Cover with aluminum foil and cook for 45 minutes. Remove cover and cook for 15 more minutes, until top is golden brown. If the top doesn't brown, you can turn on the broiler for a minute or two, but watch carefully, to avoid burning.