
Caldo Gallego—Galician White Bean Soup

I first tasted caldo gallego on a trip to Santiago de Compostela more years ago than I want to count. It was love at first slurp: the combination of the slightly spicy chorizo sausage, the bland starch of the potato, and the tang of the greens was perfectly suited to that northern Spanish town where they boast they have made rainfall an art form. I was thrilled to discover it on the menu at El Faro, where many chowed down on shrimp in green sauce and other shellfishy delights. It rapidly became my go-to order: comfort in a bowl. Even today, one spoonful takes me time-traveling back to the scarred wooden booths in the restaurant's back room and reminds me of my youth.

– Serves six –

1 ham hock (about ½ pound)	2 cups small white turnips, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil	
1 medium yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch-thick slices	2 cans cannellini beans and their liquid
¼ pound chorizo, cut into ¼-inch-thick rounds	4 cups chopped kale
¾ pound Yukon Gold potatoes (about 2 medium), peeled and cut into ¾-inch-thick cubes	Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Prepare the ham hock by cooking it in water to cover for 2 hours. Reserve the cooking liquid and add enough water to make 10 cups.

In a large, heavy saucepot over medium-high heat, heat the oil. Add the onions and chorizo and cook until the onions soften and the chorizo starts to brown, about five minutes.

Add the ham hock and liquid, the potatoes, and the turnips. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, skim-

ming off and discarding any foam that rises to the surface, until the ham, potatoes, and turnips soften, about 1½ hours.

Add the beans and the kale and cook until the greens are tender, about 20 minutes.

Remove the ham hock. Pull the meat off the bone and discard the bone. Stir the meat into the pot. Adjust seasonings and serve.

Mommy's Sunday Roast Chicken

The southern tradition of chicken on Sunday was often respected at my house when I was growing up. It was usually either fried or roasted. My mother, the former dietitian, made sure that however it was served, it was accompanied by at least two vegetables and a salad. (Back then, that meant iceberg lettuce with a few cottony tomatoes and a slice of onion.) Fried chicken was my childhood favorite, but as I got older, I began to appreciate the virtues of a good roast chicken, and it was one of the first dishes I mastered when I moved out on my own. It's still one on which I pride myself and judge other cooks.

– Serves six –

1 chicken (3½ to 4 pounds)	2 teaspoons finely ground sea
4 tablespoons butter	salt
2 tablespoons olive oil	½ teaspoon finely ground black
1½ tablespoons Bell's Poultry Seasoning	pepper
	1 medium onion, peeled

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Remove the bag of giblets from the cavity of the chicken and wash the bird thoroughly inside and out. Pat dry.

Place half the butter in a small saucepan and melt it. Add the olive oil. Cut the remaining butter into small pieces and insert it under the breast and leg skin of the chicken.

Mix the poultry seasoning, sea salt, and pepper together in a small bowl. Roll the onion in the butter and oil and then roll it in the seasoning mixture and place it in the cavity of the chicken. Pour the remaining butter over the chicken and rub the remaining seasonings into it.

Place the chicken in a roasting pan in the preheated oven. After 15 minutes, lower the heat to 350°F and roast, checking occasionally, for 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until the chicken juices run clear when pricked with a fork at the leg joint. Serve hot.

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Roast Goose

When I think of Sam's cooking, the one dish that comes immediately to mind is the memorable roast goose that he prepared one Christmas. I can admit that I have never and probably at this stage am never going to prepare a roast goose. However, if I should get the notion to do so, I would turn to one of my favorite French cookbooks that I acquired back in the 1970s during my French cooking phase. While Julia Child had recipes that were complex, incredibly detailed, and required many steps, French Cooking for Everyone by Alfred Guérot took a more Gallic approach to directions and assumed that the cook knew something about the kitchen. The recipe for roast goose is a scant paragraph. There is no ingredients list or methodology parsed out in small, easy-to-follow sentences—rather, basic instructions on how to cook the bird. This is my version.

Season, truss, and place the goose on a rack in a shallow roasting pan in a 325°F oven. Roast until the leg joints move freely. While the goose is cooking, periodically spoon off the fat as it accumulates, reserving it for later uses. It will take an oven-ready eight-pound goose about four hours to roast.

Choucroute Garnie à Ma Manière

I love the Alsatian sauerkraut dish known as choucroute garnie that I sampled on my first trip to the City of Light. Somehow it just means Paris to me. I will always cringe at the thought of my early version of this classic. Now I'm a bit more sophisticated and yes, I make a point of using juniper berries.

– Serves ten to twelve –

1¾ pounds smoked meaty ham hocks	3 bay leaves
8 ounces thick-sliced bacon strips, cut into 1-inch pieces	2 (2-pound) jars sauerkraut, rinsed and then squeezed dry
2 large onions, chopped	2½ cups dry white wine
1 teaspoon juniper berries (you may substitute ½ cup gin)	2 pounds kielbasa and knockwurst, cut into 4-inch pieces
1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns	1 pound frankfurters with natural casings
10 whole cloves	1½ pounds small Yukon Gold potatoes
8 whole allspice berries	

Place the ham hocks in large saucepan. Add enough water to well cover the hocks. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer until the meat is very tender, about 2 hours. Transfer the hocks to a medium bowl. Reserve 2½ cups of the broth. Remove the meat from the bones. Discard the bones and place the meat back in the bowl.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Heat a large, heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add the bacon and sauté until it is crisp. Using a slotted spoon, place the bacon in the bowl with the meat.

Add the onions, juniper berries, peppercorns, cloves, allspice, and bay leaves to the same pot in which you cooked the bacon. Sauté until the onions are tender, about 5 minutes. Mix in the sauerkraut. Add

the reserved broth, the wine, and the gin, if using. Add all the meats and press to submerge them. Boil for 10 minutes, then cover the *choucroute*, place in the oven, and bake for 1½ hours.

Meanwhile, cook the potatoes separately in a pot of boiling salted water until tender. Remove the bay leaves and arrange the sauerkraut, meats, and potatoes on one large, deep platter. Serve with a variety of mustards.

Goujonnettes de Sole with Ersatz Sauce Gribiche

An after-opera dinner at Le Poulailier was always a joyous meal. But it was usually around midnight, so light fare was called for. These bites of sole were perfect: fish sticks for the gods. They satisfied the need for food and yet weren't so heavy that they prevented sleep. At Le Poulailier, they were served with a sauce gribiche, a creamy mayonnaise-like sauce prepared from hard-boiled egg yolks, oil, and vinegar with mustard, chervil, tarragon, capers, and chopped gherkins. I cheat and add the ingredients to a very good store-bought mayonnaise.

– **Serves four** –

6 flounder or sole fillets, about 1¼ pounds	¼ cup flour 3 cups bread crumbs
1 medium egg	4 cups canola oil, or enough for deep-frying
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste	1 lemon, cut into thin slices

There is an indentation down the center of each fillet. Place the fillets on a flat surface and cut down the center, making two parallel slices on either side of the bone line. Remove and discard the bone line. Cut each fillet half on the diagonal into ½-inch-thick strips.

Combine the egg, salt, pepper, and 2 tablespoons of water in a small bowl and beat well with a whisk. Pour the mixture into a flat dish for dipping.

Place the flour on one plate and the bread crumbs on another.

Season the fish strips with salt and pepper and dredge first in the flour. (Each piece should be coated with flour, but shake to remove excess.)

Then dip the fish strips in the egg mixture and coat with the bread crumbs. Press lightly with a knife to make the bread crumbs adhere. Roll on a flat surface using one palm.

Heat the oil in a skillet or wok to 375°F and add the fish strips, about twelve at a time. Turn gently as they cook. Do not overcrowd the pieces in the oil or they will not brown evenly. Cooking time is about 2 minutes per batch.

Continue cooking until all the pieces are done. Drain on paper towels and serve with the lemon slices and the sauce.

Ersatz Sauce Gribiche

Makes about 1½ cups

1 cup very good mayonnaise
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon minced chervil
1 teaspoon minced tarragon

1 teaspoon chopped capers
3 French small cornichon pickles,
minced

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl, stirring to make sure the herbs, capers, and pickles are evenly distributed throughout. Serve room temperature along with the *goujonnettes*.

Ten Boy Curry

There is no way I could even attempt to match the virtuoso performance that Maya Angelou put on when she prepared her curry for me in her Sonoma kitchen over four decades ago. My own curry, from my book Sky Juice and Flying Fish: Traditional Caribbean Cooking, is more of a West Indian-type curry that includes potatoes along with the chicken. They serve to not only stretch the chicken, but also to lend substance to the curry. While this is traditionally eaten with roti, I like to serve it with rice (yes, I know two starches, but why not) and then add as many of the “boys”—mango chutney, tomato chutney, chopped peanuts, raisins, finely grated coconut, lime pickle, fresh pineapple pieces, kachumber salad, raita, and papadum—as I can get.

– Serves four to six –

3 tablespoons butter	½ cup or more cane vinegar
1 large onion, minced	3 pounds skinless, boneless
4 garlic cloves, minced	chicken breasts cut into strips
2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger	3 large potatoes coarsely
3 tablespoons Madras-style curry powder	chopped
½ teaspoon crushed red chiles, or to taste	

In a large frying pan, heat the butter and sauté the onion, garlic, and ginger until the onion is soft but not brown. Add the curry powder and the chiles, stirring so that they do not stick or burn. Add the vinegar. There should be enough to make a smooth paste. (If not, you may need as much as ¼ cup more.)

Cover the chicken pieces with the paste and place them in a covered bowl in the refrigerator. Allow the chicken pieces to marinate for at least 2 hours. When ready to cook, place the chicken pieces in

a large frying pan and add enough water to reconstitute the paste and prevent scorching. Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes, checking occasionally. (You may find that you will have to add more water to prevent scorching.)

After 30 minutes, add the potatoes, cover, and continue to cook for an additional 15 minutes or until the chicken and potatoes are cooked through. Serve with white rice accompanied by the “boys.”

Soupe au Pistou

Any meal with James Baldwin was bound to be unforgettable, but my first meal in St. Paul-de-Vence, outside under the tall cypress trees at Jimmy's house, is one that lives in my head, heart, and taste buds more than forty years later. The outdoor dining room centered around what I would later learn he called his welcome table. The summer day boasted the cerulean blue sky of the sort that is produced only in Provence and the air was fragrant with the heady mix of citrus, lavender, and sea that is the region's hallmark scent. The meal was a Mediterranean classic: soupe au pistou. This soup will always mean Jimmy and Sam and that wondrous week to me.

– Serves four to six –

1 large leek (white and pale green parts only), scrubbed and thinly sliced	¼ teaspoon pepper
1 celery rib, cut into ½-inch pieces	½ pound boiling potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
1 large carrot, cut into ½-inch pieces	¾ pound kale, coarsely chopped
1 garlic clove, minced	½ pound zucchini, cut into ½-inch pieces
1 large sprig of thyme	½ pound string beans, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	¾ cup medium elbow pasta shells
½ teaspoon salt	

Cook the leek, celery, carrot, garlic, and thyme in oil in a 5- or 6-quart heavy pot with ½ teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of pepper over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables brown, about 5 minutes.

Add the potatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add 8 cups of water and bring to a boil, stir-

ring and scraping up any brown bits. Stir in the kale, zucchini, string beans, pasta, and salt to taste. Simmer, uncovered, until the pasta is al dente and the vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Discard the thyme and adjust the seasoning.

Remove the soup from the heat, stir in half of the *pistou*, and adjust the seasoning to taste. Serve hot with the remaining *pistou* stirred in as desired.

Pistou

Makes about 2 cups

1 small tomato	2 tablespoons extra-virgin
1 cup packed basil leaves	olive oil
½ cup packed flat-leaf parsley leaves	3 ounces Gruyère cheese, coarsely grated
2 garlic cloves, minced	

Core the tomato, then purée it with the basil, parsley, and garlic in a food processor. Slowly drizzle in the oil, add the cheese, and blend well.

I can't cook now. I'll just drink.

While the crowd may have done their mourning with Johnnie (Walker), Jack (Daniel's), and Jim (Beam), I sustained myself with red wine and lots of it. I'd moved from the jug wines and reduced-for-sale-bin bottles into my Merlot moment and was developing a palate. Now I've gone beyond that into the occasional very good Burgundy and American Pinot Noir. So crack open the piggy bank and pour a Baccarat goblet full of Gevrey-Chambertin, Romanée-Conti, or some ruby velvet liquid from Willamette Valley to celebrate the full life that was Sam's.

Maya Angelou's New Year's Kale

Greens are traditional on African American New Year's tables. If Hoppin' John means luck, the greens are for folding money. The type of greens is not specified and different families have their own traditions. My family went with collards, so that's what I crave on January first. In her cookbook Hallelujah! The Welcome Table, Maya Angelou gave us her recipe for collard greens. It uses turkey wings. However, according to her personal assistant of many years, Lydia Stuckey, she preferred the taste of kale and usually served kale at her expansive table on New Year's Day—and she prepared it with a ham hock. It was not your healthy kale that is currently of the moment, but a down-home rendition of a holiday classic. The non-swine-eating folks didn't mind in the least; there were so many other dishes in her lavish spread and plenty of delights for them to savor.

– Serves four –

1 meaty ham hock	Salt and freshly ground black
4 pounds fresh kale, picked over and cleaned, with the tough center stem removed	pepper, to taste
2 medium onions, finely chopped	Hot sauce, to taste
¼ teaspoon minced hot red chiles, or to taste	Vinegar, to taste

Place the ham hock in water to cover, bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 1½ hours. Add the kale, half of the chopped onions, the chiles, salt, pepper, and more water, if needed and continue to cook until the ham hock is falling off the bone and the greens are done. Serve with the hot sauce, vinegar, and the remaining chopped onions.

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Leg of Lamb with Spicy Mint Sauce

I do much of my entertaining these days in the house that my parents bought more than fifty years ago on Martha's Vineyard. Both the island and I have changed a great deal in those years, but the gingerbread cottage overlooking the tennis courts will always be family home to me: a place that houses memories of people loved, friends made, and great meals shared. Many of the friends still summer on the Vineyard, and I celebrate the beginning of each new holiday with a shared Bastille Day meal that has leg of lamb as its centerpiece. It's my salute to memories of the past and friends of the present, and I try each year to include someone new as a look toward the future.

– Serves four to six –

1 shank-end, half-bone-in leg of lamb, 4 or 5 pounds	1½ tablespoons finely ground sea salt
6 large garlic cloves	2 tablespoons mixed peppercorns
1½ teaspoons dried lavender flowers	1 tablespoon dried rosemary
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves	1 tablespoon <i>herbes de Provence</i>

Preheat the oven to 450°F. If the butcher has not already removed the fell (parchmentlike membrane) from the lamb leg, trim it away along with all excess fat. Using the tip of a sharp knife, make 15 or so small incisions in the leg, spacing them evenly.

Place the garlic, lavender, and thyme in a small food processor and pulse until you have a thick paste. Poke a bit of the paste into each of the incisions in the lamb. Place the salt, peppercorns, dried rosemary, and *herbes de Provence* in a spice grinder and pulse until you have a coarse mix. Rub the mix all over the lamb, covering it evenly. Place the lamb on a rack in a roasting pan.

Roast the lamb for 15 minutes. Lower the heat to 350°F and con-

tinue to roast for about 1 hour, or until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part away from the bone registers 130°F for rare, 140° to 145°F for medium-rare, or 160°F for well-done. Cooking times will vary depending on the shape of the lamb and the consistent heat of your oven. Remove the lamb from the oven and let it rest for 15 minutes before carving.

Carve the lamb parallel to the bone in long, thin slices and arrange the slices on a platter. Transfer the warm sauce to a sauceboat and serve immediately.

Spicy Mint Sauce

Makes about 1 cup

1 (8-ounce) jar mint jelly ¼ cup dark rum, or to taste
1 small jalapeño chile, seeded
and minced, or to taste

While the lamb is resting, combine the mint jelly, chile, and rum in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes, or until the jelly liquefies and the sauce is warmed through.

PLAYLIST

Music was very much a part of this experience and there was a lot of it, ranging across genres and time frames from the gutbucket blues of Bessie Smith that Sam taught me to listen to and love, to Maceo Woods's growling gospel organ, to the shining trills of Martina Arroyo and Leontyne Price. When I was back in my apartment? I was listening to Carole King, who seemed to be talking to me—"You've Got a Friend." When I was trying to hang in there no matter what, Aretha explained why I hung in—"You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman" (or at least how I thought a natural woman should feel). Or if I was feeling unsure, Jacques Brel and Nina Simone agreed—"Ne Me Quitte Pas." I caterwauled my way up and down my emotional roller coaster in my Jane Street apartment. At other times, my emotions changed my mental playlists. I had a mental wedding playlist (although the word had not yet been coined) that included Curtis Mayfield songs like "We've Only Just Begun" and my all-time West African favorite, "Il N'est Jamais Trop Tard," and a playlist for bad days that included every maudlin ballad known. From the dancing tunes of our raucous parties to the wailing notes of

PLAYLIST

CHAPTER ONE: CLUB 81—SAMMY AND JIMMY

“Tuna de Letras”—Will Tura and Bart Peeters

“Tenth and Greenwich (Women’s House of Detention)”

—Melvin Van Peebles

“Memories Are Made of This”—Dean Martin

“Try to Remember”—Tom Jones and Jerry Orbach

“Come and Get These Memories”—Martha and the

Vandellas

“The Way We Were”—Barbra Streisand

“Memory”—Betty Buckley

CHAPTER TWO: AND THE BABY MADE THREE

“Mockin’ Hill”—Patti Page

“Tired of Being Alone”—Al Green

“Je Cherche un Homme”—Eartha Kitt

“To Be Young, Gifted and Black”—Nina Simone

“Mama Didn’t Lie”—Jan Bradley

“Father and Daughter”—Paul Simon

“Fame”—Irene Cara

“Ego Tripping (There May Be a Reason Why)”—Nikki

Giovanni

“Just Like a Woman”—Nina Simone

PLAYLIST

CHAPTER THREE: BANTAM SAM WAS THE MAN

- “Home Is Where the Hatred Is”—Esther Phillips
“Your Love Is So Doggone Good”—Esther Phillips
“Peace Be Still”—James Cleveland and the Southern
California Community Choir
“Send in the Clowns”—Mabel Mercer
“Solitude”—Billie Holiday
“Amazing Grace”—Maceo Woods
“T’ain’t Nobody’s Bizness If I Do”—Bessie Smith
“Me and My Gin”—Bessie Smith
“I Shall Be Released”—Nina Simone
“A City Called Heaven, ‘I Am a Poor Pilgrim of
Sorrow’ ”—Martina Arroyo

CHAPTER FOUR: OH, THE PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET!

- “We’ve Only Just Begun”—Curtis Mayfield
“You’ve Got a Friend”—Carole King
“Send in the Clowns”—Mabel Mercer
“Why Did I Choose You?”—Mabel Mercer
“This Joint Is Jumpin’ ”—Fats Waller
“Love and Happiness”—Al Green
“Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours”
—Stevie Wonder
“Superstition”—Stevie Wonder
“Suzanne”—Nina Simone

PLAYLIST

“(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman”

—Aretha Franklin

“At Last”—Etta James

CHAPTER FIVE: OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO! WEST SIDE RAMBLES

“Let’s Stay Together”—Al Green

“Midnight Train to Georgia”—Gladys Knight and
the Pips

“Dixie/Up on the Roof”—Stuff

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”—Stuff

“Sunday in Savannah”—Mabel Mercer

“Chase Me, Charlie”—Mabel Mercer

“Wait ’til You’re 65”—Mabel Mercer

“Der Erlkönig”—Jessye Norman

“Vissi d’Arte”—Leontyne Price

“Dio Che Nell’alma Infondere”—Plácido Domingo

CHAPTER SIX: WANDERLUST: SONOMA, HAITI, AND PARIS

“*Choucounne*”—Moune de Rivel

“*Haiti Chéri*”—Jacques Sauveur Jean

“Haiti”—Lolita Cuevas

“*Marabout de mon coeure-bonsoir dam*”—Toto Bissainthe

“Ain’t No Mountain High Enough”—Marvin Gaye,
Tammi Terrell

“Paris au Mois d’Août”—Charles Aznavour

“I Love Paris”—Ella Fitzgerald

PLAYLIST

“J’ai Deux Amours”—Josephine Baker
“California Dreamin’”—The Mamas and the Papas
“California Love”—Tupac Shakur

CHAPTER SEVEN: TITINE AND TABASCO

“Tous les Garçons et les Filles”—François Hardy
“Ne Me Quitte Pas”—Jacques Brel or Nina Simone
“Un Homme et une Femme”—Francis Lai
“Neither One of Us”—Gladys Knight and the Pips
“Didn’t We”—Barbra Streisand
“La Mer”—Yves Montand
“Les Marchés de Provence”—Gilbert Bécaud
“Je Cherche après Titine”—Yves Montand
“Non, Je ne Regrette Rien”—Edith Piaf
“Lilac Wine”—Nina Simone

CHAPTER EIGHT: SOUL-FULL

“I Will Survive”—Gloria Gaynor
“There Is a Balm in Gilead”—Martina Arroyo and
Dorothy Maynor
“Come Ye Disconsolate”—Roberta Flack and Donny
Hathaway
“O Death (Death in the Morning)”—Marion Williams
“Ain’t No Sunshine”—Bill Withers
“I’ll Fly Away”—The Blind Boys of Alabama or the
Preservation Hall Jazz Band

PLAYLIST

- “Amazing Grace”—Aretha Franklin
“Who Is He (And What Is He to You)?”—Bill Withers
“Drown in My Own Tears”—Aretha Franklin or Ray
Charles
“For the Good Times”—Al Green

CHAPTER NINE: AFTERMATH

- “Solid”—Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson
“Go Tell It on the Mountain”—Smokey Robinson and the
Miracles
“Scandal in the Family”—Maya Angelou
“Peas and Rice”—Maya Angelou
“Three Little Birds”—Bob Marley
“How Can You Mend a Broken Heart”—Al Green
“Blame It on My Youth”—Mabel Mercer

CHAPTER TEN: IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER!

- “Just My Imagination”—The Temptations
“It Is Well with My Soul”—Harding University Concert
Choir
“Hallelujah”—Leonard Cohen
“Hallelujah Chorus”—George Frideric Handel
“Doni Doni”—Bembeya Jazz National
“How I Got Over”—Stars of Faith
“Here Comes the Sun”—Nina Simone