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5 MUST-TRY AMERICAN RECIPES OF 2026

Easy • Tasty • Homemade

FREE RECIPE EBOOK

Five crowd-pleasing recipes created for busy home cooks: cheesy pasta, a creamy chicken skillet, slow-cooker chicken, classic mac & cheese, and soft chocolate chip cookies.

A free collection from Amanda's kitchen

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Welcome to the Kitchen

These five original recipes were selected around the flavors American home cooks are loving in 2026: easy weeknight meals, cozy pasta, slow-cooker convenience, and nostalgic classics. Each recipe is written from scratch for this ebook.

Inside this free ebook

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5. Soft & Chewy Chocolate Chip Cookies - Dessert • Classic • Freezer-Friendly

Kitchen note: Cooking times can vary by appliance and ingredient size. For food safety, cook poultry to 165°F (74°C) and ground beef to 160°F (71°C).

Million Dollar Spaghetti

CHEESY • FAMILY-FRIENDLY • MAKE-AHEAD

A rich baked spaghetti casserole with a creamy cheese layer, savory beef sauce, and a bubbling mozzarella-Parmesan finish.

Prep 20 min | Cook 45 min | Serves 8

Ingredients

- 12 oz spaghetti
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 24 oz marinara sauce
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350°F (175°C). Cook spaghetti until just al dente; drain.
2. Heat olive oil in a skillet. Brown beef and onion for 6-8 minutes. Add garlic, marinara, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper; simmer 5 minutes.
3. Mix cream cheese, ricotta, and sour cream until smooth.
4. Spread half the spaghetti in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Add the creamy cheese mixture, then the remaining spaghetti.
5. Spoon beef sauce over the top. Finish with mozzarella and Parmesan.
6. Bake 30-35 minutes, until hot and bubbling. Rest 10 minutes before slicing.

Amanda's tip: Assemble it a day ahead, refrigerate, then add about 10 extra minutes to the baking time.

Creamy Garlic Chicken & Broccoli Skillet

ONE PAN • HIGH-PROTEIN • 30-MINUTE DINNER

Tender chicken and crisp-tender broccoli in a silky garlic-Parmesan sauce - weeknight comfort without a sink full of dishes.

Prep 10 min | Cook 20 min | Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 lb boneless skinless chicken breast, bite-size pieces
- 4 cups broccoli florets
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Season chicken with salt, pepper, paprika, and Italian seasoning.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Cook chicken 5-7 minutes until browned and cooked through; transfer to a plate.
3. Reduce heat to medium. Add butter and garlic; stir for 30 seconds.
4. Add broth and broccoli. Cover and cook 3-4 minutes until broccoli is bright green and just tender.
5. Stir in cream and Parmesan. Simmer gently 2-3 minutes until slightly thickened.
6. Return chicken to the skillet, toss to coat, and warm through. Serve immediately.

Amanda's tip: Add a squeeze of lemon at the end to brighten the creamy sauce.

Slow Cooker Salsa Chicken

5-INGREDIENT • SLOW COOKER • MEAL PREP

Juicy shredded chicken with salsa, corn, beans, and taco seasoning. Use it for tacos, rice bowls, nachos, or meal prep.

Prep 10 min | Cook 4-6 hr | Serves 6

Ingredients

- 2 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts or thighs
- 16 oz chunky salsa
- 15 oz black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 2 tbsp taco seasoning
- Optional: lime, cilantro, shredded cheese for serving

Instructions

1. Place chicken in the slow cooker and sprinkle with taco seasoning.
2. Pour salsa over the chicken, then add black beans and corn.
3. Cover and cook on LOW for 5-6 hours or HIGH for 3-4 hours, until the chicken shreds easily.
4. Shred chicken directly in the cooker with two forks and stir into the sauce.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning. Finish with lime and cilantro if desired.

Amanda's tip: For thicker taco filling, uncover the slow cooker for the final 15-20 minutes.

Ultimate Stovetop Mac & Cheese

CLASSIC • CREAMY • KID-FRIENDLY

A smooth, ultra-creamy American favorite made with sharp cheddar and a touch of Dijon for extra depth.

Prep 10 min | Cook 20 min | Serves 6

Ingredients

- 12 oz elbow macaroni
- 3 tbsp butter
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 cups whole milk, warmed
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar
- 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp smoked paprika
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook macaroni in salted water until al dente. Drain and set aside.
2. Melt butter in the pot over medium heat. Whisk in flour and cook 1 minute.
3. Slowly whisk in warm milk. Cook 3-5 minutes, whisking, until the sauce lightly coats a spoon.
4. Turn heat to low. Add cheddar and Monterey Jack a handful at a time, stirring until smooth.
5. Stir in Dijon, garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper.
6. Fold in macaroni. If needed, loosen with a splash of milk and serve hot.

Amanda's tip: Shred cheese from a block. Pre-shredded cheese can make the sauce less silky.

Soft & Chewy Chocolate Chip Cookies

DESSERT • CLASSIC • FREEZER-FRIENDLY

Golden edges, soft centers, plenty of chocolate, and a hint of brown sugar caramel flavor.

Prep 15 min + chill 30 min | Bake 10-12 min | Makes 20

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg + 1 egg yolk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp fine salt
- 1 1/4 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Whisk melted butter with both sugars until glossy. Whisk in egg, yolk, and vanilla.
2. In another bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt.
3. Fold dry ingredients into wet ingredients just until combined, then fold in chocolate chips.
4. Chill dough for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, heat oven to 350°F (175°C) and line baking sheets.
5. Scoop 2-tablespoon portions about 2 inches apart.
6. Bake 10-12 minutes until edges are golden but centers still look soft. Cool 5 minutes on the pan before moving to a rack.

Amanda's tip: Pull the cookies while the centers still look slightly underdone - they finish setting on the hot pan.

Cook Something Delicious Tonight

Save this ebook, pick a recipe, and make it your own. For more easy American dinners, slow-cooker favorites, desserts, and comfort food inspiration, visit:

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